

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: Two Gates, Two Ways, Two Destinations, Two Groups

Text: Matthew 7:13-14

Sermon Aim, Proposition: To show the one, true way to eternal life.

Introduction: From Matthew 5:21 through Matthew 7:12, Jesus brings the law to a personal application. It's not longer not physically committing adultery or murder, it's a matter of the heart. He clearly defines the difference between the hypocrites and their life. How to treat others. How to give. How to pray. How to respond. But now we see a transition. In vs. 13-29 we have clear and precise truths about eternal life and eternal hell. Of course, truth isn't popular today, unless of course you're a post modernist, where truth is subjective to what you want it to be. But I'm not.

THE AORIST ACTIVE IMPERATIVE - VS. 13A

The Greek word “enter” is the aorist tense and means they are “*commands that are expected to be followed a single time.*” This is a command of Jesus is to enter. Not to gaze upon. Not to admire the elegance of the gate. Nor to stare upon it. The command is to enter. Also it does not mean to linger around or be told a second time. Your parents, and you, likely have said “*I’m only telling you once.*”

Jesus begins this discourse with this one time command, and it's clear where to enter. It's a narrow gate. The AV says “*straight*” and where we may get the term “*straight and narrow.*” The gate is an entrance. It leads to something. It's not huge or wide, but the command is to enter through this gate.

JESUS GIVES US THE DETAILS OF THESE GATES (VS. 13B-14)

You have a wide gate and a narrow gate. And these gates lead to a narrow way and a broad way. The description is “*narrow*” and “*broad*” and the ESV translates the word for broad “*easy.*” In vs. 14 the way to life is described as “*difficult, narrow, hard.*” These are clear and precise terms. They are non-negotiable. The description of these two ways are the same then as today. No amount of post modern, charismatic, prosperity, ted talking, feel good, sharing words, will help you on your way message will change this. There is no other way to view this text. No hermeneutical gymnastics can define optional ways to heaven.

These two ways have only two destinations. Not multiple ones, not ones where you can change your mind after you've stayed a few days. Jesus made this plain to Nicodemus “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”¹ It was after Jesus began telling those following Him in John 6 that He was the bread of life and no man could come to Him unless the Father sent them. Their response in John 6:66-69 “*As a result of this many of his disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. So Jesus said to the twelve, ‘You do not want to go away also. Do you?’ Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the worlds of eternal life.’*”

¹ John 3:3; NASB95

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THE TWO THINGS JESUS IS POINTING OUT (VS. 13-27)

From Matthew 5:20 “**Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of God.**” In vs. 13-27, we have two gates, two ways, two destinations, two kinds of people, few and many. You have a good tree and a bad tree, good fruit and a bad fruit. Two kinds of people, those who profess Christ and those who don't. Two types of foundations, one on sand, one on a solid rock. Jesus continues to emphasize the facts of exclusiveness in the gospel way. None other exists. The world doesn't like exclusiveness. The world like choices, options to fit their ways. Even this type of thinking has made its way in the church.

TWO GATES

The small/narrow gate is not wide enough for your self righteousness or baggage. The gospel is narrow. The word comes from a root word *sten* which means “*to groan*” and the idea is it runs contrary to natural inclinations. When we sing “*Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling*” we are testifying of a gospel message. Matthew 16:24-25 “**If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.**” This is the narrow gate. It's not open to your own way of thinking.

When Jesus confronted the rich young ruler he was ample at keeping the law and the external things. But Jesus needed to strip away what was too wide to enter the narrow gate, “**One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.**”² It was this excess baggage, his true hearts desire, that was too wide to enter the narrow gate. His response was telling oh how much he tried to carry through the narrow gate, “**But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.**”³

Following through the narrow gate requires a true commitment to Him, not yourself, Deuteronomy 6:5 “**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**” To love God with everything is to rid yourself of all you think you are or need. It is to be humble about your sinful condition. You must remove your dependency of yourself. Jesus said you must be like a little child, “**Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**” Entering the narrow gate is a stripping of yourself and crying out to God as the tax collector did. Not as the Pharisee who saw his external works as pleasing to God.

The narrow gate is the way of repentance, Acts 20:21 “**Solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.**” Figuratively, you can't bring your sins with

² Luke 18:22; NASB95

³ Luke 18:23; NASB95

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you. The wide gate is for that, self righteousness, pride, self satisfaction, that's the gate that fits all your stuff. It doesn't even matter what it is, for it's wide enough.

There's the wide gate that's able to accommodate anything you wish to get through. There's no restrictions. No requirements. No hi defenses.

TWO WAYS

The word way is used a means of one who travels, walks a road or a path. The wide gate that leads to the broad way or easy way as some translations say. It's attractive, inclusive, indulgent, permissive, self oriented, no rules and do whatever seems right. You can even profess Jesus, be religious, post Scripture references or God-like statements on social media and you fit the broad, easy way well. It's a diverse group. Sin is not only tolerated it's redefined, truth is moderated, and humility is ignored. I think there's even a misinformation committee on this wide way.

There's no spiritual character, morals, values, no absolute truth on this way. No commitment, no sacrifice, no one judging you and your life. God's standards may even be admired, but they aren't followed. You can recognize God, say you aren't an atheist, but you do as you wish, and think God is affirming of that. You fit in well here. Talk of God, yet you do not obey Him. But it's a tragic way. Those on this way say it seems right. It's easy. It's accepting. But, Proverbs 14:12 *"There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death."* It seemed right to Adam and Eve to cover themselves, but it wasn't enough. Many cover their own sins on this path.

On this path you can make the Scriptures affirm to what "you think" not what they say. You follow pastors who say we *"don't need the OT"* and *"need to stop saying the Bible says"*. It all fits so well on this path. On this path you don't have to use the pronoun "he" when referring to God. On this path male godliness and manhood is frowned upon, biblical womanhood is a sign of weakness, not strength. On this path the culture exploits women, allowing men to identify as women and abuse and take over. God designed men and women differently and for God honoring purposes, but on this path it's wide enough to accommodate such attacks on the image and character of God.

The truth is subjective on this way, sexuality purity among all, homosexual, heterosexual are considered too narrow to this way. Therefore, immorality is accepted as long as you're committed, love each other and have a good heart. It's whatever you want to be true is able to fit on this way. Whatever you think the Bible teaches fits here. It's all about your view. And it all fits.

There's the other path, the narrow one. A Muslim man once said, *"I chose Islam because it's easier, broader than Christianity."* The ESV uses the word "hard" while others use narrow. It's the same meaning, but hard I can identify with better. The narrow way is hard. It's a demanding way. It's not your way or what you think. It's not subjective over time. It's a way of groaning. It's a tight way. It's used figuratively as compressed, constriction.

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You don't stumble on this way. You count the cost. Luke 14:27-28 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?" In Luke 13:23-24 "And someone said to Him, 'Lord, are there *just* a few who are being saved?' And He said to them, 'Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.'" The many who seek want to enter on their own requirements. They won't. They want to do it their own way.

The hard way is for those who want the kingdom at any cost and will sell all they have to buy that great treasure and that great pearl (Cf. Matthew 13:44-46). This way is for those who mourn over their own sin, weep at the wretchedness of our lives, and helpless condition we are in. We call upon Jesus. Matthew 5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." This way isn't for those that want a cheap and easy way to heaven while doing their own thing and their own way. Today, in modern day evangelicalism, ted talk sermons, therapeutic preachers and culturally accepting churches have made the narrow way impossible, so the easy way is the road.

TWO DESTINATIONS

Both roads "point" towards heaven, but only one leads to it. The easy way is decorated with misleading scenery. Assuming it's taking you to paradise, but it's leading you to hell. The word is destruction which has the idea of "loss of well being, waste" and in spiritual terms, it represents eternal perdition. And the term for destruction does not refer to annihilation or extinction, as some believe you just cease to exist, but to total ruin and loss. Matthew 3:12 "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." 2 Thessalonians 1:9 "These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." Psalms 1:6 "The way of the wicked will perish."

The narrow way, the hard way leads to life. John 14:2-3 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also." The way is difficult because it requires obedience to God, but it's the road that leads to life. Cf. 2 Timothy 4:9-18

TWO GROUPS

But what should drive us to see in this is the many that go down the easy way, and the few that go the hard way. Many has the idea of a great number or much. Friends, most people won't believe. The answer is what we have spent much of the time talking about. It's just too hard to go the narrow road and much easier to go the broad road. Many will go down this road with the clout of moralism. Many will say we have done many things in Your name. Many, not few. Many will find their "own beliefs" won't be satisfactory for the wrath of God.

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The few aren't because the gate is too narrow, it's because those who go through this gate and this road will have to do it God's way not theirs. Repentance not turning over a new leaf. God's grace is boundless and His grace is limitless, but only a few will believe. Only a few will endure. Only a few will be obedient to the commands in Scripture.