

# A Gate For Many, and A Gate For Few

By Shawn Reynolds

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Matthew 7:13,14; Micah 2:12,13

**Preached on:** Sunday, June 8, 2014

## **Grace Particular Baptist Church**

5725 Imperial Lakes Blvd

Mulberry, FL 33860

**Website:** [www.onefoldoneshepherd.org](http://www.onefoldoneshepherd.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/graceparticular](http://www.sermonaudio.com/graceparticular)

*Dear heavenly Father and most gracious and holy and just and righteous Lord, we thank thee, O Lord, for this morning that you have given us, that you have brought us here together. Lord, may it be a day of worship, may it be a day of worship in Spirit and in truth and, Lord, may thy presence be felt and known, may thy presence be understood this day. May you instruct us, Lord, by thy Spirit and may you lead us to thy Son. Bless this day, Lord, for thy glory. For thy name's sake, bless the words that will come in this hour and the hour to come. May they be edifying to thy people and, Lord, may they be of thee and by thee and for thy glory alone. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

This morning we will return to the Sermon on the Mount for a very short passage that the Lord has impressed upon me lately and when we come to this sermon, the Lord in his great mercy for his people, for his disciples that were immediately in front of him, for the people throughout all the ages, he left these words, he spoke these words for the comfort of their souls to tell them, to instruct them of what life in him was all about, what experiencing Christ is all about. From the Beatitudes to take no thought for the morrow, to how we judge righteously in Christ Jesus to the passage we have today, all of these things that the Lord left, he left for the edification of his people and to witness of himself of how he works in the lives of his children and how he is the life of his children.

Today, if you will, turn with me to Matthew 7 and we will read verses 13 and 14 which is our text this morning. The text reads as follows,

“13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

The Lord said these words many, many years ago and they ring so true today. The path of the wideness of the destruction of mankind is wide. You want to know if you're in trouble? See if you're in the path where all the people are going; see if you're in the path of the world. Examine yourselves today to see if the path that you are on is a narrow path or is it a wide path. This morning, I pray unto the power of the Holy Ghost, I want to look at both gates. After we look at both gates, I would like to answer the question of how we get to and through the right gate.

We'll begin in verse 13, "Enter ye in at the strait," the Greek there is "narrow." "Enter ye in at the narrow gate." That's the whole beginning of these two gates. The Lord's instruction is to make sure that you know there is one gate for the people of God. Now, when he spoke these words, it is truly a truth to sit and look at them and to say, "Listen, there's a gate for the sheep that is very narrow and there's a gate for the goats that is very wide." That's true. That's a very true statement and if we examine this life today and we examine everything that we see and we examine the masses and the gate that they're going to, we understand that, we experience that. The gate is wide and not only – I want you to look at the characteristics of this gate: it's wide, it's broad, it leads to destruction and as I mentioned at the beginning, many are there.

Those are the characteristics of this gate but today I want to focus also on the experiential meaning of this passage because for the child of God in this walk that we have, we experience going through both gates. We are suffered at times to walk the broad gate. The broad gate: we look around and the world is with us. In fact, we fall subject to the flesh, we fall subject to ourselves, we fall subject to Satan, we fall subject to the world and we find great comfort that there are many people walking in this way and we look at their lives and we may not say it audibly but we'll say it inside ourselves and say, "You know, something must be right with the way that these people are going because a lot of people are going that way." There is safety in numbers, you've heard that. But for the child of God, what Christ is saying to the souls of his people, there is a narrow gate and it's a hard gate, I'm not going to lie to you. The Lord didn't lie to his people. He told them what this gate was. The narrowness of it meant that it was a difficult gate and there's a reason that few find it, few are found in it, I should say. Few are found to walk that way.

I don't know how much we think about this passage as we walk in this life on a daily basis. This walk that the child of God and the Christian has is not a broad walk. It is not a wide walk. You're going to see that the Scriptures prove out what Jesus says here, that it is a very narrow way. The way of the cross is a narrow way. We passed up ten thousand churches, it seemed to be, with all of them with their messages on their little signs out there and all of the messages had one common element and theme to them. It didn't matter what denomination it was, there was some kind of power in the creature to do something to choose Christ, to follow him, to walk in the way. That's the broad way. I saw it. I saw it on every sign, it didn't matter if it was Presbyterian or Baptist or Methodist or Catholic. It didn't matter. The same message out there is, "Here's what you do for Christ. Have you done this today?" That's the broad gate. That's the broad way. Many men run in and fall prey to that. If by my works, we just sang that Isaac Watts hymn. Watts got it right too. "It's not by my works, Lord, it's by thy grace, it's by thy mercy, it's by thy faith, it's by you." And there's no way you and I are going to be and get to the right gate without him. This passage, as I said, is about him, the union in him. This is what he is to his children: he is the gate-keeper. He is the way and you're going to see that, Lord willing.

First, like I said, I want to focus on this wide, broad gate. Now, I said that many, we can look at that and we can look at by the masses at how many run into them but I want you

to examine how many times in your life or the times many that we struggled with, aren't those times, those precious times few? I've noticed that in my walk which is coming on 44 years that it seems like now as I grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, those few times are getting more to the minute but as I look back in my life and I look at the way that I walked and the way that I went, the way that I looked at the many and the many times that I succumbed to the things in this life, there were many times that way. Many ways, many times, many diverse ways that I walked that way and justified them in my mind and one of those justifications was easily, "This is the way everyone's going." Listen, it's the truth. Jesus said it's a truth right here. You will always see that path being the path of the many. The many. M-A-N-Y. Straight, narrow, wide, broad, leads to destruction, many are going in.

I wrote down a couple of Scriptures here. We'll begin in Proverbs 12:15. I'm not going to go there, I wrote them down. We're going to end up in a passage here in a minute. Solomon, you know I like to quote Solomon. Why? If you ever get to the Proverbs, I hope you don't look at them the way the world does. The world will put them on bumper stickers. The world looks in Proverbs, "Oh, those are cute little moralistic sayings." They're not moralistic sayings. They're Christ. The wisdom spoken of there is Christ. The Counselor spoken of there is Christ. Everything about that, Solomon is writing about his life of experiencing Christ. When he talks about rubies, when he talks about treasures, when he talks about the things that are so much more important to him in this world, then treasures and rubies, he's talking about Christ. When he speaks of wisdom and he says wisdom is greater, he's not talking about an intellectual knowledge, he's talking about Christ flooding his soul, Christ being his mind, Christ being the leader of his life.

But today, we have Proverbs 12:15 which says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes." Now listen: that's a powerful word there, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes." We all have a "discernment" of the way that we walk and live in this life. We have our ways: we have our ways that have formed us throughout our formative years and the longer that we've lived on this earth – I've seen that in my children, got to spend a lot more time with them on this vacation. I got to see some of that and then some things that have formed some of their opinions in life even from the youngest one in my house which is ten years old. He's got opinions based on the way that he sees things and I'd tell him and I'd tell everybody in my family and I'd tell the family of God that if it's right in your eyes, be very careful. The word of God says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes." We spend a lot of time justifying our actions on this earth by many being there or it feels right or it's good or I can justify this because this good thing comes out of it. Is that the way of Christ? That's what it always comes back to for the child of God. Not for the world, they never have these thoughts. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel," that counsel is Christ, the Counselor, the Mighty Counselor. "He that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Later in Proverbs 14:12, he writes, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." That's the path I'm talking about. That's the path Jesus is talking about. "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction." The lust of your flesh, the lust of your eyes, the ideas of your mind, your fallen nature, is

the way of death. I don't care how else you want to spin it, how else you want to justify it, you will spend your whole life justifying sin and you'll do it to your loved ones and you'll do it to the ones around you but the one you'll never be able to do it to is the just and justifier of all of his children and that's the Lord Jesus Christ. You can stand in the way that this world has stood in and try to mix grace and works and sin and holiness, it's not going to be. It will never fly in the eyes of purity, in the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the righteousness of Christ. Your righteousness will never, never even be able to reach the righteousness of Christ. If the righteousness of the Pharisees couldn't do it which Jesus said, "Yours must exceed theirs." Do you sit all day in the temple? Do you study the Scriptures? Do you desire every moment to reach Jehovah through the Scriptures? No, well, your righteousness better exceed that righteousness and the only way is the righteousness of Christ. You and I can't attain to that, no matter how righteous we think we are.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." This is that broad gate. This is that wide gate. And this is where the many go and I pray to God this morning and under the anointing of the Holy Ghost I pray that he searches our hearts and he reveals what path are we on today and are we straying the wide path. It's so glamorous to us. There's a reason why the masses go that way because of this fallen nature, because of the fall, because of sin, because of the flesh, because of Satan, because of the world. All of these things are pulling to this path. That is the way and all of them will be destroyed, it's the Lord's promise right here.

The last place we'll go to speak about this gate, if you'll turn with me just for a moment over to Romans 8, beginning in verse 5. What we have before us here in this small little passage I'm going to read are the two gates. You will know them better by the flesh and the Spirit. Two gates. Verse 5, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh." That's the gate, that's the wide gate, the broad gate that leads to destruction. "But they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." That's the narrow way and the Holy Spirit teaches his children that that is a hard way, that it is the way of the cross. It is the way of denying self. It is the way of trial. It is the way of affliction. It is the way of temptation. It's the way our Lord and Savior went before us. Are you trying to concoct another way? Is there another way other than Christ? The Fool on the road in Pilgrim's Progress thought there was when he got all the way up and lept over the wall and all he got was a trap door to hell. That tells us that there is another way that we concoct. That's what Solomon said, there's another way. There's a way in our mind. There's a way in our flesh. There's a way of the world. And it leads to hell and it leads to destruction. Maybe you're not old enough to care about that this morning, maybe not. Maybe as you sit there you say, "Well, I shouldn't be burdened with this. I'm young in my life," and I can tell you today as sober as I can from this place that eternity is a heartbeat away and there's not anybody in this room that's guaranteed tomorrow.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death." Isn't that what we heard? The ways of man, the ways of this destruction, the ways of this gate, "to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." As you sit there

and carnally reason this and say, “Well, wait a minute, the ways of the world seem to be a lot better for me. I enjoy those things. I don't like trials. I don't like afflictions. I don't like...” Listen, it's the way of life and peace because that's the way of the cross but it's the way that Christ brings his children to him.

My wife and I were talking about that yesterday. Listen, this vacation we had was a blessed vacation. The time we got to spend with the Pastor and his wife, priceless. Absolutely wonderful time but, you know, by the time that last day came with the plague that was upon us, we were ready to go. I looked at that and I knew that was the hand of the Lord's mercy. Do you know why? Because he's not going to have us to take these things of the world and takes these places in the world and set them up as places of lust and idolatry. I'm very happy the Lord said to me, “No, there's something about that place that isn't heaven.” You're right, there's not. It's only in him. And the same closeness I felt with them, I better feel that today because that's the unity of the Spirit. And the same closeness I felt with my family, hopefully that's the unity of the Spirit.

That's where Christ is and all of those things that we think are so wonderful and so enjoyable, there's a reason. There's a reason that they're marred in this life because the Lord does that for his people. We won't have our claws in this life. We won't even compare it and say, “Oh, this is something. This is where I need to be to be with the Lord.” Oh no, the Lord is with his people wherever they go because he leads them which we'll see here in a few minutes.

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Get that through your head. May the Holy Spirit impress that upon us that your flesh and your carnal mind is not going to be reformed. It's not going to be exercised in Christ, okay? We're not going to find Christ in the world. We're not going to find Christ in these places where that broad gate is. That's what you're going to see and what Christ's word today is: I'm not there. I'm not there. It's the gate of destruction and guess who the destroyer is? He is. “Neither indeed can be.”

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” Paul writing to believers. “If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” No matter how you spin it. You can have a knowledge, you can read these Scriptures, you can say “I believe.” Many of them did. Many of them followed Christ wherever he went and then all of a sudden, they didn't anymore because there was no spiritual life in them. There was a carnal understanding of things, “Oh, this is okay with me. I'll walk this way for a while,” and that's about as far as you're going to go.

“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” Because of his righteousness. See, the Holy Spirit leads to his righteousness. It puts the righteousness of the creature down. The justification of the world, the justification of your flesh, he puts that under his feet and the Holy Spirit raises up Christ and he does that through repentance, he does that through giving humility and

humbleness to bring you so that you are teachable at the feet of Christ but the humbling must come first.

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” There's that quickening. There's that life-giver. We just desire and we desire it by this life-giver but this is what we have to have each day of our lives. Each day, the quickening and reviving of the Holy Ghost to live upon him and he's faithful to do it.

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh,” because I'm going to tell you something: you want to go through that gate? You want to live in that gate? You want to follow the masses in that gate? You will always owe the masses. You will always owe mankind. You will always feel a debt to society no matter what you get in, you're going to feel that bond with the world and say, “I owe them something. I've got to give them something.” Are you a debtor to the flesh? Are you a debtor to sin? Are you a debtor to the world?

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh,” if you walk through this gate, if you continue on the path to destruction, “ye shall die: but if ye,” and notice how this is done, “through the Spirit,” by the Spirit, by him putting down, “do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” That's what he does. There is repentance with him and do you know how it's his? You don't have pride in it. Pride doesn't get in the way of it. That's the Lord bringing repentance, breaking down that wall of self and wall of pride. Then the last verse we'll read, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they,” and they only, “are the sons of God.”

Now let's go back to our text with the two gates here because now we've looked at one gate. We've looked at verse 13, we've looked at the wide gate, we've looked at the many that go in there. We looked at the many times that we're tempted to go there, the many times that we fall and succumb to go there. Now, what does verse 14 say? “Because strait, narrow, “is the gate.” The word “narrow” there in the Greek means “constricted,” which listen to the definition of constricted: drawn together; to bind; to draw to a narrow compass. To draw, drawn together to bind. Listen to that now. “Strait is the gate,” narrow is the gate, “and constricted is the way.” How did we get in that way? We're drawn there. We aren't going to get there on our own. We're not going to walk into that path. It's narrow, it's hard, it seems to be dangerous. It seems to be dangerous to ourselves. “Oh, well, that would be hard to walk that way. This person is not going to like me. They're not going to respect me. This person is going to think this about me.” That's the way that leads to destruction.

“Strait is the gate,” narrow is the gate, “and constricted is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Do you see the contrast there? The many and the few. Does that make you want to argue that? Does that make you want to stand up and say, “No, no, no, we can have it both ways. You don't understand, if we go out into this gate, we can go in this gate and we can go in this gate the same way. We can.” Jesus said, “No, you're not. My sheep will follow my voice.” They will, I have no doubt in my mind

because the effectual power in that voice. They will follow him. We'll see that here in a minute.

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” So, what do we have? Narrow, constricted, few but many are called and few are chosen.

Proverbs 8:20 says, “I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.” Do you hear that? He leads in the way of his righteousness but it goes right through the paths of judgment, the judgment he enacts upon our sin, the judgment he enacts upon our waywardness. Praise be to God that he does. He's faithful to bring us back to that path. He leads in the way of righteousness. That was the words of Solomon again, exalting the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here's the words of David in Psalm 77:13, “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?” He asks that question, that's my question: is this the way that we are on this day? Is this the path that the Lord has chosen for my life? I can't answer that question for you, none of you. That question has to be answered in your soul. Has the Lord put you on the path and I might add, it's a teachable path. It's a path that's continuously broken down to be brought to his feet, to be led in the way of righteousness. Your righteousness will never mix with his. It must be put off. It must be shown that it's filthy rags.

Then the words of Jeremiah. As beautiful as they are, they're equally sad. Jeremiah 6:16, “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.” Ask for the old paths. Listen, if you've been quickened, if you've been born into the kingdom of God, that's the old path. Do you remember that time? Do you remember when the Lord had awakened you unto his righteousness? That's where our prayers should be, “Lord, show me that path again as I've been wayward, as I've gone off the path, as I sought myself. Lord, put that down.” “And ye shall find rest for your souls.” That's where rest is, in the finished work of Christ and what he's done.

That's the beautiful part of the verse, the tragic part is the end of it. “But they said, We will not walk therein.” Isn't that what your flesh says? “I don't like that narrow way. I don't like that path of affliction. I don't like that path.” Of course it doesn't. Of course it doesn't. And our nature would go easily where the masses go, go where the many go. They have to be right, right?

I read my brothers Philpot and Bradbury and it seems as you read them in succession to when they wrote, Irons and before Bradbury and Bradbury after that, the times they write in are getting worse and worse and the numbers that filled their churches are dwindling and dwindling and dwindling and I think about that today. I don't know where the people of God are. Sometimes I feel that way when I ask the Lord, “Lord, is it just us?” And he assures me he's got 7,000 somewhere. He assures me he has his people in every tribe and nation but it seems because the path is so wide and everybody around you is walking in that path and those enemies that are in our ear and so close in our hearts are telling us,

“Walk that way. There's safety there.” And if this Lord right here that said these words revealed himself in your soul, he will show you that the only safety is in him.

The last verse I will talk about today in reference to this narrow way is Jesus' answer to Thomas in John 14:6. Thomas said, “How will we know the way? And Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Is that your testimony today? If it is, if he is your way, if he is your truth and if he is your life, you will find that that is a narrow path. You will find that that's not the path of your neighbor, it's not the path of the one at the supermarket, it's not the path of the mailman and it sure isn't the path of this country in what we see. But has the Lord put you on that path? The path of himself being the way, the truth and the life.

The last place I want to take you today is I want to answer that question: how do we get to and through this gate? Of all places, we're going to go to Micah 2. Before we go there, though, I want to read something. This comes from William Mason and it was on his morning devotion on June 28<sup>th</sup>. I hadn't gotten there yet but I did find it because it is on Matthew 7:14. I want to read a couple of things. He said,

“Jesus is the strait gate of God's love, the only gate of righteousness. By him we enter with access to God, stand perfectly justified and graciously accepted before him. Jesus is the narrow way. By the blood of his cross, he hath made peace, atoned for the sins of transgressors by one offering, hence called strait and narrow because the only way to life is by one man, one righteousness, one atonement. Too strait a gate for blind men to see. Too narrow a way for proud natural men to submit to walk in. Hence, few there be that find it. Thus the Holy Spirit leads the blind by the way they knew not, even the right way to peace, love, holiness, happiness, eternal life and salvation. Thus, to the little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom. By his word, he directs them. By his Spirit, he guides them. By his love, he comforts them. By afflictions, he profits them. By conviction of sin, he humbles them. By the prospects of hope, he animates them. All this is to make them walk steadily in Christ who is the way.”

Now turn to Micah 2, if you will. I want to look at the last two verses of this chapter. Verse 12, “I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men.” That's us, we're bleating. We're crying, “O Lord, it's hard. It's a hard way. How will we know the way, Lord?” Just like Thomas, “Lord, how can we get to that way?” Then the answer, “The breaker is come up before them.” Have you ever known him to be a breaker? Have you ever know the Lord Jesus Christ to break down the walls of pride? To break down the walls of sin? To break down the walls of affliction? To break down the walls of the world? To break down the walls of Satan? He is the breaker. “The breaker is come up before them they have broken up.” They must be broken. They must be humbled. “And have passed through the gate.” That's how we get there. That's how we get through the gate, the breaker must come first. He must ready his children and he does that by



humbling them so that they hear his voice. Not the voice of the world, not their own voice, not the voice of Satan, not the voice of themselves, but his voice. “They have passed through the gate and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them.” He must go first. “And the LORD on the head of them.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is our breaker. He is the way. He is the way to this narrow way. He is the way in this narrow way. He is the way by this narrow way which is himself. He is the way. He must go in that way and break down all the thorny paths and make them straight. He must make all those crooked paths in our lives as hard as they are, he must do it. Not only must he do it, he does do it because if he calls you to this path, faithful is he who will do it. Has he called you to this path? Has he called you to the narrow and strait way? Or are you on the wide way? Are you on the broad way? Which gate are you walking in today? I'll leave that to the Holy Spirit to examine our souls in this hour. To him be all glory.

*Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, may you add thy power and clarity and, Lord, may you awaken us this hour to thy righteousness for thy name's sake. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*