

Two Gates – Two Paths – Two Destinations

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

Matthew 7:13-14

Introduction

which gate you will choose? which path you will take?

Jesus is telling us that there are *only two choices*. As God said to Moses:

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish" (Deuteronomy 30:15-18).

"Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days" (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

"choose this day whom you will serve.... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh 24:15).

"And to this people you shall say: 'Thus says the Lord: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death'" (Jeremiah 21:8).

"And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And the people did not answer him a word" (1 Kings 18:21).

"After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the Twelve, 'Do you want to go away as well?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God'" (John 6:66-69).

Jesus, who you truly believe Him to be, is the crux of every man's destiny. And the path He sets before us, is the crucible of life.

The Pharisees "trusted in themselves that they were righteous" (Luke 18:9).

"Enter by the narrow gate" (v13a)

Gk verb 2nd person plural aorist active imperative meaning, 'you all do it *now*.'

This is an absolute command for all.

"I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9).

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).

"I am the bread of life" (John 6:35, 48).

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The *narrow gate* implies singular entry, like a *turnstile*.

True salvation is only secured one way – *individually and personally*.

"For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many" (v13b)

The "gate" is the choice one makes in this lifetime—for a lifetime.

"destruction" Gk *apoleia*

It's Easier to Fall Down than Up – The Always Accommodating Wide Path to Sheol

"Sheol" Hebrew = 'the all-demanding world,' 'the abode of the dead,'

Also translated: *the grave, hell, or the pit*.

"The path of life leads upward for the prudent, that he may turn away from Sheol beneath" (Proverbs 15:24)>

"Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man" (Proverbs 27:20).

"The leech has two daughters; 'Give' and 'Give,' they cry. Three things are never satisfied; four never say, 'Enough': Sheol, the barren womb, the land never satisfied with water, and the fire that never says, 'Enough'" (Proverbs 30:15-16).

"For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it. (Proverbs 5:3-6).

"Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths, for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death" (Proverbs 7:25-27)

"Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite and opened its mouth beyond measure" (Isaiah 5:14).

"Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back. For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness. The living, the living, he thanks you, as I do this day" (Isaiah 38:17-19).

“For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life” (v14a)

Gate first, then *the way*. Meaning, the decision first (conversion), then providential testing and shaping (progressive sanctification).

Jesus has already made it clear that entering through the narrow gate has both favorable and unfavorable characteristics (5:2-12).

The path to true salvation, may be *simple*, but it is not *easy*.

Those that say it is ‘easy to get saved’ are peddling something that is dangerously untrue.

“those who find it are few” (v14b)

“You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

“Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered” (2 Chronicles 31:20-21).

“Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart” (Psalm 119:2).

“With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!” (Psalm 119:10).

Many may seek Him initially, but when they find out the cost of true discipleship, they fall away.

Count the Cost

“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27-33).

Genuine Christianity does not come easy. Grace may be *free*, but it is not *cheap*.

The entrance to the narrow gate is hard to find, “and those who find it are few” (v14).

The path to the *narrow gate* is constricted (“strait way”), “and the way is hard that leads to life” (v14).

“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12).

“Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God” (John 16:2).

“The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it” (Luke 16:16).

“strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

“And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:38).

“and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Romans 8:17).

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God” (2 Timothy 1:8).

“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12).

All that is against you – *the world, the flesh, and the devil* – make this an extremely hard road to navigate.

“and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:22).

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

“I believe that it is one of Satan’s pervasive lies is that it is easy to become a Christian” (MacArthur).

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death” (Proverbs 14:12).

“In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death” (Proverbs 12:28).

“He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to him, ‘Lord, will those who are saved be few?’ 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. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, “Lord, open to us,” then he will answer you, “I do not know where you come from.” Then you will begin to say, “We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.” But he will say, “I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!” In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out”’ (Luke 13:22-28). This is terrifying.

“Strive” is *agonizomai*; ‘fight; labor fervently.’

“*I do not know where you come from*”

“Our Lord will have no soldiers in His army on false pretenses” (Maclaren).

“*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you*” (Matt. 7:7).