

The Narrow Way of the Kingdom

Kingdom Living #14 - Pastor Gary Combs - June 29, 2025 - Matthew 7:13-14

INTRO: Good morning church! Today, we're continuing our sermon series today entitled, KINGDOM LIVING. It's an expositional study of Christ's Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. Many have described it as the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher who ever lived.

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount Jesus has been teaching us what it looks like to live as citizens of the Kingdom of God, but as He brings the sermon to a close, He shifts His focus. He ends His sermon with a four-part conclusion about entrance into the Kingdom of God. First, He speaks of two different gates or paths (7:13-14). That's our text today. Then, He speaks of two different kinds of fruit (7:15-20). Followed by two different professions of faith (7:21-23) and finally two different kinds of builders who build on different foundations (7:24-27). While each of these contrasts emphasizes something slightly different, they all tell us something about how to enter the Kingdom of God.

As we've studied His sermon, we've seen how Jesus has laid out what it looks like to live as citizens of the Kingdom of God. Now, as He closes, He calls us to a decision, to a choice. Whose kingdom will you choose? And it's this choice that we're discussing today. It's a simple choice. For Jesus only offers two options: the wide gate or the narrow gate. Yet, it's so simple that it causes many of us a problem...

Need: Why? Because we live in a culture that celebrates options. Whether it's picking a streaming service, a coffee order, or a spiritual path, people want choices. And the more options, the better. When it comes to religion, the popular belief is that all roads eventually lead to God—as if heaven is at the top of a mountain and every trail gets you there eventually.

But then we come to the words of Jesus—and He doesn't give us a menu. He doesn't offer a buffet of spiritual paths or a customized journey. He gives us two gates. Two roads. Two destinies. And only one way leads to life. That confronts our desire for spiritual autonomy. It challenges the mindset that we can take a little bit of Christianity, a little bit of self-help, and maybe sprinkle in some Eastern philosophy and end up just fine. But Jesus doesn't leave room for a middle path!

Trans: And that's why we need this message today. Because the narrow way isn't just hard to find—it's easy to reject. Not because it's unclear, but because it's unpopular. And yet, it's the only way that leads to real and lasting life. We need to hear this, not just because of what's at stake, but because many may be walking the wide road without even realizing it.

BODY: In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus began to conclude His sermon by warning His first-century Jewish audience that there were only two spiritual paths, the broad way that leads to destruction and the narrow way that leads to life, and He instructed them to enter through the narrow gate. We can heed Christ's warning that the narrow way is the only one that leads to life. Why is the narrow way the only one that leads to life? In these verses, Jesus gives us three reasons the narrow way is the only way to life.

Read text: Matthew 7:13-14 (ESV) ¹³ "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. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

JESUS SAID THE NARROW WAY IS THE ONLY WAY TO LIFE...

1. Because it requires an individual choice.

EXP: (13-14) The command "enter" is imperative. Jesus places the responsibility on each person. This is not a group decision or a cultural default. No one is born on the narrow road. We must each decide whether to follow Christ. The narrow way is entered by a conscious, individual choice. You don't stumble through this gate. You don't drift onto this path. No one can choose it for you. You must choose it yourself.

"Enter" (13) (εἰσερχομαι, *eiserchomai*, *Imp*) - to come in: to enter; as into a house or a city. Jesus instructs us to enter the narrow gate, then He then describes two "gates" and "ways."

"Narrow gate" (13, 14) (στενός, *stenos*) - narrow (from obstacles close about):—strait. Like the camel though the eye of the needle (Luke 18:25). VS. "Wide gate" (13) (πλατύς, *platus*) - broad or wide.

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“Many” (13) (πολύς, *polus*) - many, much, large VS “Few” (14) (ὀλίγος, *oligos*) - little, small, few.

“Find it” (14) (εὐρίσκω, *heuriskō*) - to come upon, hit upon, after searching, to find a thing sought

ARG: Joshua put a clear choice before the Israelites.

Joshua 24:15 (ESV) “Choose this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Christ’s claim is an exclusive claim. He claims to be the “gate.”

John 10:9-10 (NIV) ⁹ I am the **gate**; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

ILL: When we visited our missionaries in Istanbul, we did a lot of traveling on the Metro. But you couldn’t access the train in a group. You had to individually scan your ticket and pass through a turnstile. And you had to be careful to follow the signs or you’d get on the wrong train!



APP: The narrow gate is like a turnstile. Have you bought your ticket? Only one at a time! Have you made this decision personally? Being raised in a Christian home or attending church doesn’t automatically mean you’ve entered the narrow gate. Jesus invites you to enter the narrow gate. Jesus is the gate.

2. Because it demands personal heart change.

EXP: (13-14) The narrow gate leads to a narrow way. It is not just a one time, individual decision, but an ongoing lifestyle. It’s a difficult road because it requires dying to self. It involves repentance, submission, and ongoing obedience.

“Way” (13) (ὁδός, *hodos*) - a way; a travelled way, road. Metaphor., “lifestyle, way of life.”

“Easy” (13) (εὐρύχωρος, *euruchōros*) - spacious, broad; “easy” is a more dynamic translation. Have you noticed how algorithms for google or apple maps prefers highways over backroads? “Easy” VS ...

“Hard” (14) (θλίβω, *thlibō*) - a compressed way, constricted. This way is difficult and very narrow.

ARG: Not only is Jesus the “gate.” He is the only “way.” We are to walk and live in the Jesus’ way.

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

Following Jesus means dying to self and living a new life in Christ.

Luke 9:23 (ESV) And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Galatians 2:20 (NLT) My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

ILL: - Have you traveled by air lately. There are so many rules and extra fees these days. You have to be really careful when you pack because they won’t allow you to have a whole list of things in your carry-on. And when you travel internationally, the rules vary from country to country.



APP: The narrow way means we have to be ready to let go of some baggage. There are some things in our old life that don’t “fly” in the Kingdom. Are you resisting change? Are you trying to walk the narrow road without letting go of your old ways? The way of Christ will stretch you, refine you, and grow you—but it will never leave you the same.

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3. Because it leads to an eternal consequence.

EXP: (13-14) There are only two gates, two ways, and two destinations: life or destruction. The broad road is popular, easy, and comfortable—but its end is tragic. The narrow road may be difficult, but its end is glorious—abundant life both now and eternally with the Lord.

“Destruction” (13) (ἀπώλεια, *apōleia*) - This word is commonly translated as “destruction,” but it doesn’t imply annihilation or ceasing to exist. Rather, it refers to ruin, loss, or utter perishing—in a way that is both ongoing and tragic. “The ‘destruction’ in view is not merely physical death, but eschatological ruin—final rejection by God and exclusion from His presence.” (D. A. Carson)

“Life” (14) (ζωή, *zōē*) - life. In the NT, life full and overflowing, eternal life.

ARG: **The wide and easy way seems right to many, but it leads to death.**

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

Without Jesus we are all on the road to destruction, but with Jesus— eternal life!

Romans 6:23 (ESV) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16 (ESV) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

ILL: Here’s a sign on a road in Bridgewater, NJ. Could’ve easily been the Western part of NC or even in our hometown after one of the hurricanes. Jesus is giving us clear warning. Turn around, don’t drown.



APP: Where is your road leading? When Jesus says the broad way leads to ‘destruction,’ He isn’t talking about a rough patch in life or physical death. He’s talking about eternal ruin—what the Bible calls hell. A place of separation from the presence and blessing of God. Yet, the narrow way leads to eternal life. Have you found it? Better yet, has Christ found you?

CONCLUSION: Jesus says there are only two gates. Two ways (no middle way). Two destinations (no other alternative). Such talk is hard to hear today. People today don’t like to commit. Surveys and opinion polls usually include a third option along with their “yes/no” questions, like “undecided” or “don’t know.” Yet, the Word both warns and invites us to choose between the two:

Deuteronomy 30:19 (ESV) “I have set before you life and death... therefore choose life.”

Jesus isn’t vague. He is clear—and loving—in His invitation. He invites you today: “Enter the narrow gate.” Follow Him. Choose life.

Let’s pray.