

**The Sermon on the Mount**  
**Two Gates, One Decision, (Part 2)**  
**Matthew 7:13-14**  
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Couple of years ago, I read of an article in a British newspaper. It was reported that a Swiss van driver, just driving the family van, had just, really, purchased a GPS. This is when they were just becoming mainstream. And he purchased a GPS for his van, and he had managed to get himself completely lost after his GPS sent him up a remote, mountain footpath. This is what the article said:

Driver Robert Ziegler, 37, found himself stranded near the peak at Bergün, Switzerland, unable to go forward or to turn around and go back the same way he came. Rescue workers scrambled a heavy lifting helicopter to carry the van and its driver to safety after he dialed for help on his mobile phone. The driver told police, "I was lost, and I kept hoping that each little turn would get me back to the main road. In the end, it told me [that is, the GPS told me] to turn around, but of course, by then I couldn't." A fire brigade spokesman explained, "He claims he didn't see any footpath signs, but he must of been a pretty good driver to get that far up a glorified goat track."

End quote. It's quite an interesting picture actually, this van stuck on this steep, mountain path. While that's one of the more dramatic examples (and we've all read about them), in this digital age it has become increasingly common for people to get on the wrong road and end up at the wrong destination. Maybe you've had that experience with your GPS device. The same thing often happens in the spiritual world with far more tragic results. People start off at the wrong place, they follow the wrong road, and someday they arrive at a terribly wrong destination. That is the exact warning that Jesus gives us in Matthew 7.

Now last week, we began to study the conclusion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. It is His application of the sermon to His disciples. It's also an invitation to those who aren't His disciples to become so. But it is, in addition, a warning. It's a warning to those who think they are Jesus' disciples, but may in fact not be. In fact, Jesus warns us, in the concluding verses of this sermon in Matthew 7, that there are three dangers that can keep a person from entering His kingdom at all, even when they think they are. The first danger is the danger of finding the wrong entrance. This is described in verses 13 to 14 - the wrong entrance into His kingdom. The second danger comes in verses 15 to 20. It's the danger of false teachers, and the false teachers are the ones who point to the wrong entrance. The third danger comes in verses 21 to 27 of Matthew 7, and

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it's the danger of a false profession. This is a person who understands who Jesus really is, who really understands the true gospel and who professes to be a follower of Christ, but in fact is not. Their profession is not matched by a life of following Jesus Christ. Those are the dangers that Jesus warns us of, for all who have attached themselves in some way to Him.

Now today, I want us to conclude our study of the first of those dangers - the danger of finding the wrong entrance. Jesus describes this in just two amazing verses, Matthew 7: 13-14. Hear what our Lord says to us.

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

In those two, brief verses, Jesus describes the spiritual journey of every person who has ever lived or who ever will live, the spiritual journey of every person on this planet at this moment, of every person in this room. In fact, let's be clear. In those two verses, your spiritual journey is described, and mine as well. Now, in these two verses there are a series of contrasts. Notice first of all, there are two gates. Secondly, there are two paths. Thirdly, there are two destinations. And finally, there are two crowds.

Now last time we studied the first of those two contrasts - the contrast between two gates. These two gates represent the two entry points, or I should say, they represent entry points to two spiritual pathways that lead either to eternal life or to destruction. These are the two possible starting places from which to begin your spiritual journey. Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, you started at one of these two places. The first gate Jesus describes as the “wide” gate. Notice verse 13. “...for the gate is wide...that leads to destruction...” As we discovered last week, Jesus describes this as a massive, wide gate, like the gate you would find leading into the capital city of one of the great ancient empires, because there are many different ways you can walk through that gate. We talked about some of them last week. You can walk through this gate just by being indifferent and apathetic to spiritual things, just not caring. “Whatever. I'm here because I have to be here, I don't really care.” If that's your attitude, you've entered the wide gate. You can get there through human philosophies and ideologies. Just embrace the thinking of our times, and you've passed through the wide gate. False religion is part of that wide gate. Even a corruption of the true faith, the true gospel, and a distortion of the true Christ, is a way through the wide gate. The cults that are connected to Christianity, the false gospels that are taught in some branches of Christianity, that's part of the wide gate that leads to destruction. But you can even make a false profession of the true Christ and the true gospel, and you've walked through the wide gate, as we will see when we get later in this chapter. So the wide gate, then, is really every entry point except the right one.

And the right one Jesus describes here - notice the second gate - as ‘the narrow gate.’ Verse 14. “For the gate is small...” literally, narrow, “...that leads to life.” This is a very small gate, a

very small entrance point. The narrow gate is the entry point to Jesus' spiritual kingdom. If you want into the spiritual kingdom over which Jesus rules, there is only a very small way to get in. This is the entry point to salvation, to spiritual rescue from the penalty of your sins. This is the entry point to forgiveness. This is the entry point to a relationship with God. This is the entry point to eternal life. It is very, very narrow.

Now, why does Christ describe the entry point to those wonderful spiritual realities as narrow? Well again, we saw this last time. It's narrow because the entrance is hard to find. Notice the end of verse 14. "...few...find it." Satan has done a masterful job of hiding the real entrance in the clutter of all the false gates, all the wrong ways to pursue a relationship with God. It's hard to find. Secondly, it's hard to fit through. Once you understand where it is, what it is, it's hard to fit through. And we talked about what we meant by that: because only one person can go through at a time. Listen, this gate is very narrow. You cannot go through it with your parents. Your parents' faith won't get you into Jesus' spiritual kingdom. Your spouse's faith won't get you into Jesus' spiritual kingdom. It's a narrow gate. Only one person goes through at a time. This is a decision you have to make. It also doesn't allow any baggage. In other words, you can't go through this gate carrying your own personal works, and your own personal merit, and the things that are going to make you acceptable to God. You have to come in like the first beatitude, as a beggar in spirit. You've got to drop the baggage to get through the gate.

You have to trust the right person. Jesus said, "I am the door." He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." There aren't many different ways to God. You have to come through the right person. And Jesus said, "I'm it. There is no other way." You also have to believe the right gospel. You see, there are plenty of false gospels out there. Paul talks about them in Galatians 1 and other places. There are false teachers selling wrong ways to be made right with God. You've got to believe the one, as Paul says, the one "I preached to you," the one that's contained in the pages of this book, the gospel that says that Jesus was God's Son, who came and took on flesh, who lived a perfect life, and then who died a sacrificial death on the cross in order to satisfy the wrath of God against the sins of everyone who would ever believe. And the only way that can be yours is by repenting of your rebellion against God, laying down your rebellion, and submitting yourself to Him, and putting your faith in Jesus Christ. That's it. You have to believe the right gospel. That's the one, Paul says, which was "preached to you."

But not only is the entrance hard to fit through, it's also hard to accept, because it runs contrary to our natures. Jesus said, if anyone would come after Me, let him "deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." That doesn't sit well with any of us, naturally; in fact, the only reason we would ever go through this gate is because God is at work in our hearts. If you chose to walk through this gate, it's because God in His grace was doing a gracious work in your life.

So, the two gates are two entry points to two entirely different spiritual journeys. And one of those journeys ends at destruction, and the other journey ends in life. The only entry point that leads to eternal life is Jesus Christ and the gospel He taught. Listen to me carefully. Every other gate, without exception, leads to destruction. That's what Jesus said.

Now today, we come to the second contrast in this passage. That was all review. Let's pick up where we left off. And this next contrast is a contrast between two ways. Two ways. Notice verse 13. The first way is referred to in this way: "...the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction..." The second way is identified in verse 14. "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life..." Two different ways - one broad, one narrow. Now, the word that's translated 'way' in both cases is a very common word in the Scripture. It's a word that's often used to refer to a literal path, or a literal road or highway. When it's used metaphorically, as it is here, it refers to a course of life, to a way of living. In other words, it refers to a person's lifestyle. When you walk down the same path again and again, as we do in our habits each day, we form a pathway; we form ruts. And in biblical terms, that 'way' describes your lifestyle, how you live day after day. So the two gates, then, picture two points of entry. The two ways picture two distinct lifestyles, the two entirely different ways of living to which each of these gates open.

Now first of all, notice there's the 'broad' way. The broad way. Jesus says the wide gate opens into a broad road. The word 'broad' means 'that which has ample room.' It refers to that which is spacious and roomy. Jesus was almost certainly referring to some of those international highways that passed through Israel in the first century. If you're familiar with the geography of the Middle East, you know that in the ancient world you wanted to avoid travel by sea, so you wanted to travel by land. But if you wanted to travel between the three continents of the ancient world, you had to travel through that little narrow bridge of land that we call Israel. Because the Mediterranean was on one side, the Sahara Desert on the other, you had to travel through that little bridge of land. That's why it was so strategically located for God's people. Passing through Israel in the time of Christ, there were a couple of international highways. Don't think like major freeways, like you and I have; but for their time, they were broad, massive roads. That's what Jesus is talking about there.

For us, to sort of put it in the 21<sup>st</sup> century context, I want you to think for a moment about the widest freeway you've ever been on. Maybe it was 10 lanes, maybe it was 12 lanes, maybe it was 18 lanes, but imagine that freeway for a moment with no markings, no lines, and no median. I've been on roads like that in certain parts of the world, And no rules, I might add. And when you're on a wide road like that, without lane markings, there is a lot of room for you to make choices. There's a lot of latitude about which specific course you choose. You see, the broad way pictures a way of living, a lifestyle that is completely, personally comfortable and not confining. Charles Quarles, one commentator, puts it this way:

A wide road allows plenty of room for weaving back and forth, and it provides a vivid picture of a lifestyle with few moral constraints. The wide road offers enough moral latitude (here's the key) that each person can do what is right in his own eyes.

In other words, what makes the broad way appealing is that you get to choose your own route; you get to choose your own path.

Now, the moment I hear that, my mind goes to the words of Isaiah in Isaiah 53. You remember that indictment of all of humanity, of all of us? Here's how he describes human sinfulness. He says, "All of us..." that's everybody here, "All of us like sheep have gone astray...." The image is, here's a path that's been laid out by the Word of God, and we are to follow our Shepherd on that path that's delineated by the Scripture. But we don't follow our Creator, who has written His law on our hearts, who's given us His law; instead, like sheep who refuse to follow their shepherd, we have gone astray; we've left the path. And then he says, "...each of us...." That's now not talking about us as a group, but individually - you, me. "...each of us has turned to his own way...." That's the essence of human sinfulness. We've chosen to do it our way - what we want.

In other words, the broad road is where you get to choose, where you say, "Here's what is going to define my moral choices. Here's what I'm going to do. I'm not going to let anybody else tell me what to do. Here's what I believe I ought to do and what I ought to be, and that's what I'm going to do. And nobody else is going to tell me anything." That's the broad way. It feels like freedom, but the freedom of the broad way is deceptive. You know, when we're pursuing our sin, we think we're free. We're not free. Listen to how Jesus described it John 8:34. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who [is committing] sin..." as a pattern, "...is the slave of sin." You're not free. Jesus says you're a slave - you're a slave to those patterns of sin. In other words, if you're on the broad road, you may feel free, but it is actually slavery masquerading as freedom.

Now, Jesus contrasts the broad way - where I get to choose what I want to do - with, notice, the 'narrow' way. Verse 14. "...the way is narrow that leads to life...." Jesus says the narrow gate opens onto a narrow path. It's interesting; the Greek words for 'narrow gate' and for 'narrow way' are not the same word for 'narrow.' The word used here to describe the narrow way literally means 'to press against.' It means 'to be constricted, to be pressed together.' It's used when the crowd pressed in on Jesus, where it was really almost a threat to His physical safety. It's the opposite of spacious. It is cramped; it is tight; it is congested. In other words, in contrast to that broad highway, that interstate highway, Jesus is here describing a tiny, mountain path, hardly wide enough for one person to walk at a time. It's claustrophobic; it's confining; it's uncomfortable. Now think about what Jesus is saying. He is saying that is exactly like the path, the lifestyle, that eventually leads to life. It is cramped. It is narrow.

Now what is this? What does Jesus mean by that? Some have taught that the narrowness of the path here refers to the persecution of believers. They quote Acts 14:22, where Paul says, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." And it's possible. I mean, earlier in this sermon, Jesus has talked about believers being persecuted, back in chapter 5, verses 10 to 12. Certainly we will face persecution. But I don't think that's what Jesus primarily means here, nor do most commentators. It's far more likely in this context that Jesus is referring to the straight path that He's just laid out for us in this sermon. It's interesting, even in the Old Testament the Law of God is described as a narrow path. And the godly are supposed to walk on that path without doing what? Turning either to the left or to the right. That's what Jesus is talking about here. The narrow path of Matthew 7 is the path of obedience to Jesus Christ. The way to life is fenced in on each side by obedience to what Christ taught.

It's appropriate, isn't it? I mean, the Christian life, if you're in Christ, your Christian life began with your responding to that simple command of Christ that you heard in the gospel: follow Me. That's where it started. That's where your spiritual journey began. Well, that's what the narrow path is all about. It's about continuing to follow Jesus, in the sense of obeying what He has said we are to do. John Stott remarks of this narrow way:

Its boundaries are clearly marked. Its narrowness is due to something called divine revelation, which restricts pilgrims to the confines of what God has revealed in Scripture to be true and good. That revealed truth imposes a limitation on what Christians may believe and on how we may behave.

Now, don't misunderstand. Nobody ever earns heaven by their obedience. Salvation is a free gift of the grace of God given to sinners. But, if you have experienced that free gift, if you have received that free gift, if you are on the path that leads to life, then you will be described by, recognized by, a desire deep in your soul to obey and follow Jesus Christ. Let me ask you this morning, and I want you to genuinely ask yourself this question: Is there anything more important to me than following and obeying Jesus Christ? Because that's what defines a follower of Jesus. That's what defines a Christian. The narrow road really represents the path of sanctification. And on this way, on this path, unlike the broad road where you get to decide a lot about what you do and how you live and what you want to do, in this case, Jesus sets the limits. It's narrow; it's confined; it's restricted by His commands. D.A. Carson writes:

God's way is not spacious, but confining. Poverty of spirit? It's not easy. Prayer? Not easy. Righteousness? Not easy. Transformed, God-centered attitudes are not easily achieved. In fact these things are impossible for us apart from God's grace. They are alien to much of what is in us.

You see, the footpath to heaven is extremely narrow. It is defined on both sides by our Lord's commands to us. And if you're in Christ, that's the path you're on.

Now some people look at that and they say, "Wow! That is a tight, cramped pathway. Why

would anybody choose to live like that?” But you see, just as the broad way is slavery masquerading as freedom, if you look at the narrow way from the outside, you might mistakenly think it's like a form of slavery. And it is. But it's a gracious slavery to a gracious master. You see, you're somebody's slave; you're either a slave to Satan and sin, or you'll be slave to Christ. But freedom is only found there. You see, the narrow way appears from the outside to be slavery, but it is in reality true freedom. That's why John the Apostle says in 1 John 5:3, “...His commandments are not burdensome.” They don't weigh us down. They're not restrictive really. This is where true freedom is found. I love what our Lord says in Matthew 11 in that invitation, you remember, when He says,

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Listen, the only rest you will ever find for your soul is in joyous submission to Jesus Christ. Everywhere else you will find nothing relating to peace.

So there are these two paths. One of them is broad and wide and spacious and inviting; you can make your own choices. The other is very narrow and restrictive and confined. But let me urge you, don't make your decision about which path to choose based on the comfort of the path, but on the destination. Matthew Henry, the great Puritan commentator, puts it this way, he said, “No man in his wits would choose to go to the gallows because the way to it is smooth and pleasant, nor refuse the offer of a palace and a throne because the way to it is rough and dirty.” That's illogical. You're willing to tolerate difficulty now if the path is leading where it ought to lead, where you want to be. He says, “Yet such absurdities as these are men guilty of when it comes to their souls.” They look at the path, and they say, “Not for me.” And they don't look where the paths are leading. So, the two gates open into two roads that represent two opposite lifestyles - one, my way; the other, Christ's way.

The third contrast that Jesus describes here in this passage is between two destinations. He simply calls the first destination “destruction.” Notice verse 13. “...the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction...” The Greek word translated ‘destruction’ here occurs 18 times in the New Testament. It is used most often, almost entirely, of the eternal destiny of the wicked. In other words, it's used to point to the place of eternal, conscious, physical, and mental torment. Jesus had more to say about that destination than anyone else in all of Scripture; in fact He describes it with great clarity. Let me show you just a couple of examples.

Turn back to Matthew 5. Matthew 5:22. Jesus is here describing that, as His followers, we must not only avoid murder, we must also avoid the anger in the heart that leads to murder. Verse 22. ““But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court...”” In other words, if the commandment against murder were rightfully enforced, as God intended it, in a court of law, someone who's angry with his brother would be condemned as

guilty of murder. “...and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’...” In other words, ‘with anger in his heart starts throwing out blasphemy’ is the idea in the Greek text. But the idea is to slander - starts slandering someone out of anger. That person “...shall be guilty before the supreme court...” In other words, if all you did was have an outburst of anger in which you called other people names, Jesus said if God's law were enforced the way it could be enforced (and really with the heart of God), you could be convicted before the supreme court of the land as guilty of murder. Your conviction of murder would stand all the way to the supreme court. “...and whoever says, ‘You fool,’...” again, in an outburst of anger, “...shall be guilty enough to go into...” and here's His description “...into the fiery hell...” Literally, ‘the Gehenna of fire.’ ‘Gehenna’ is a Greek word which describes a valley just outside the city walls of Jerusalem where the trash was collected and burned. There was constantly a fire burning there. Jesus used this word again and again to describe the eternal destiny of those who refused God's forgiveness in Him. He says where they will spend eternity is like that place outside the wall of Jerusalem where the fire is constantly burning in the trash dump.

In verse 29, He says it's so bad - here He's talking about adultery and lust - He says that place is so bad that:

“If your right eye makes you stumble...” that is, makes you sin, “...tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown...” into Gehenna, “...into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble...” makes you sin, “...cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go...” into Gehenna, “...into hell.”

In other words, it's so bad, that if you could keep yourself from sinning by plucking out your eye or cutting off your hand - which of course you can't, he's simply saying - you ought to be willing to take radical steps to deal with sin, because where sin will ultimately put you is that bad.

There're other places where Jesus, in Matthew, talks about this place, but I want you to turn to Matthew 25. Because here He fast forwards to the end of the Tribulation Period. He's going to describe a judgment. This is not the Great White Throne Judgment that's described in Revelation 20. That's when all the wicked dead are resurrected and judged. This, instead, is a judgment of the living. At the end of the Tribulation Period, those who have survived the Tribulation, the seven years of tribulation, will be judged. Matthew 25:31.

“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him;...” everybody, “...and He will separate them...” individually, “...from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;...”

He's going to distinguish those who really belong to Him and those who don't. He'll put the sheep on His right, the goats on the left. “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of



the world.”” In other words, He's saying, “You really belong to My kingdom.” And then He describes their behavior. It's not that their behavior got them into His kingdom - you have to come in as a beggar in spirit - it's that because they're in His kingdom, they love the others who are in His kingdom as well. And He describes that here.

Verse 41. “Then He will also say to those on His left...” this is the other crowd, “...”Depart from Me”...” There's the first part of divine judgment: eternal separation from God. “...”Depart from Me, [those who are under God's curse], into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels”...” Those who refuse God's forgiveness in Christ and who manifest their lack of belonging to Christ by their lack of love for others who are in His kingdom - they're told to depart into eternal fire. Verse 46. This is crucial. “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Here you have the two destinations. And I want you to notice, the same word in English and in Greek is used for both of those destinations. In other words, the punishment of the wicked lasts just as long as the joys of heaven. They will never cease to exist; that is, the people who are sent to eternal fire will never cease to exist. The Bible nowhere teaches annihilation. They will never be given a second chance. Notice, Jesus specifically says the punishment is ‘eternal.’ Those who have refused God's offer of forgiveness in His Son will suffer His full fury and wrath forever. This is what Jesus taught. They will endure not only the assaults of an accusing conscience, but the fiery wrath of an offended God for all eternity - the God to whom they said, “No thanks. I don't want any of Your Son; I don't want any forgiveness; I want my way.”

Scripture describes the punishment of the wicked in remarkable ways. This is hard for me, for me to teach; I know it's hard for you to hear. But I want you to listen to how the Scripture describes this destination. These are phrases from the Scripture itself. Everlasting fire. Unquenchable fire. It's a place of shame and everlasting contempt. It's a place where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. A place of torments and flame. Everlasting destruction. Fire and brimstone. Where the smoke of their torment ascends for ever and ever. A lake of fire and brimstone where the wicked are tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Now, you may be sitting here this morning and struggling with this whole idea of eternal punishment for the wicked. I mean, for temporal sins? Eternal punishment? But remember, it's not the length of time one sins; it's the greatness of the Person against whom one sins that determines the extent of the punishment. And if you struggle believing in an eternal place of suffering - understand - your argument's not with me. You don't decide whether you're going to believe it based on what I'm saying. What you do have to answer though, is, “Are you going to continue to believe yourself about this, or are you going to believe Jesus Christ?” Because this is what Jesus Christ taught.

Jesus says unless you have entered the narrow gate, you have already entered the wide gate. In

other words, there's no neutral territory. If you haven't entered the narrow gate, you've entered the wide gate. And that wide gate opened before you into a broad, spacious lifestyle that allows you to live, basically, however you want. You choose. You may prefer a decent, moral lifestyle. A lot of people do, because frankly, it's good for them. It keeps them out of trouble, makes them feel good about themselves. That may be what you've chosen. Or you may have chosen to run your sin out to the full, and to just do whatever you want. Either way, it is still your own way. It is not the lifestyle of love for God and obedience to Jesus Christ. And here's the great tragedy. According to Jesus Christ, the road you have chosen - your own way, whatever that may be - will lead you to only one destination, and that is the everlasting destruction of your soul and body in a place He calls the Gehenna of fire. It's a place like that eternally burning trash dump outside the city of Jerusalem. The wide gate - that is, every entry point except Jesus - leads to the broad road of one's own way. And the broad road leads to destruction.

Now, Jesus refers to the other destination simply as 'life.' Don't you love that? Life. Look at verse 14. "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life..." Obviously, He's speaking here of eternal life. It's like that described in John 3, the most famous verse in all of the Bible. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish [shall not face destruction], but have eternal life." Or as John 3:36 says, later in that same chapter, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God [is abiding] on him." If you haven't believed in the Son this morning, God's anger hangs over your head like a thunder storm ready to unleash when He chooses. But if you have believed in His Son, you have, today, eternal life. You see, we normally think of eternal life as life that lasts forever, and it does. But listen, everybody's going to live forever, in one place or another. Eternal life is not only life that lasts forever, it's life of a different quality. It's a quality of life that enables you, who once were dead to God, now to know God. Here's how Jesus defined it in John 17:3. He said, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." You see, eternal life means your soul wakes up to know God.

Jesus said you're on one of these two roads, and that road will eventually end in one of two destinations. The road of obedience to Jesus Christ will eventually end in life; the road of your own way, whatever that is, will eventually end in your eternal destruction.

Now, the final contrast in this passage is a contrast between two crowds. Notice, Jesus refers to the first crowd as the 'many.' Verse 13. "...the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it." Now that is a very sobering thought. This is Jesus Christ, the One who will be the judge, and He says that most people in our world have entered the wide gate, are on the broad road, and are headed to eternal destruction. This is what the Scriptures teach. In Psalm 14:2-3, it says:

The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men

To see if there are any who understand,  
Who seek after God.  
(Here was the divine verdict.)  
They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt;  
There is no one who does good, not even one.

Most of the people who have ever lived and who live now on this planet have walked through the wide gate, are on the broad road, and they're headed to eternal destruction.

The other crowd Jesus simply refers to as the 'few.' Notice verse 14. "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." Think about Jesus' own ministry. After Jesus' earthly ministry of 3½ years, and after His resurrection - remembering now, He ministered to thousands of people, He fed thousands of people, tens of thousands gathered to hear Him - how many true disciples were there of Jesus after His resurrection? According to the Apostle Paul there were 500 who met in Galilee, as He commanded, after His resurrection. Only 500. That's why, throughout Scripture, those whom God saves are called the 'remnant.' The remnant. When compared with the world's population today, there are relatively few who have entered the narrow gate and who are on the narrow way. Remember, there're 7 billion people on earth. Only 2½ billion of those even profess Jesus Christ. By the time you subtract those in Christianity who claim and embrace a false christ or a false gospel, you're left with less than a billion. And then you subtract those who - Jesus said there will be many - who know the true Gospel and who make a false profession of that Gospel, and you're left with only a few. That's why in Matthew 22:14, Jesus said, "For many are called..." that is, called through the gospel, "...but few are chosen."

Now, don't misunderstand. Elsewhere, Jesus says there will be many who are saved. And in fact, in Revelation, the crowd around the throne is described as a multitude which no man can number. But compared to the overall population of the world, it's just a few. Don't miss Jesus' major point here. And that is that you are in one of these two crowds; you're either with the few, or you're with the many. If you have chosen to enter the narrow gate, the way of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and His gospel, then you are on a path that is marked by obedience to Jesus Christ. And as a result, you love the other people who are on the path with you.

But this invites an important question, a crucial question really, that I think all of us have. And that is, "Does occasional failure to obey Christ mean that I'm still on the broad way?" Let Martin Lloyd-Jones answer that. I love this. Listen to him. He says:

The answer is no. The questions that have to be asked in light of this text are these: Have you decided for this way of life? Have you committed yourself to it? Have you chosen it? Is this what you want to be? Is this what you're endeavoring to be? Is this the life you're hungering and thirsting after? What our Lord is saying in effect is this: "My people are the people who want to follow Me, those

who are striving to do so. They often fail and fall into temptation, but they are still on the way. Failure does not mean that they've gone back onto the broad way." You can fall on the narrow way, but if you realize that you've done so and immediately confess and acknowledge your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive you your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Listen, if you have embraced the true Gospel, and if in your heart of hearts you are striving to obey and follow Jesus Christ, then you're among the few. If, on the other hand, you entered the wide gate - that's every possible way but Jesus Christ and His Gospel - then you are on a path that can best be described as 'your own way.' And most people on this planet are on the same wide road with you. And that makes you feel really comfortable—for now. Frankly, you feel a lot more comfortable with the people on the broad road than those narrow-minded Christians, who are actually trying to do what the Bible teaches. You can choose to stay with the crowd and to feel comfortable and to be at home here, but understand this: when this life ends, there's only one place, Jesus says, that choice will take you, and that is to eternal destruction of your body and soul. That's what Jesus taught. On the other hand, you can choose to travel the difficult road of obedience to Christ through this life, and you'll be on that path with just a few. But that's the road that leads to life and God's eternal presence. Only two gates with two paths and two destinations, and only one choice. You can either stay on the broad road which you're already on, or you can go through the narrow gate. That's why Jesus begins verse 13, "Enter...the narrow gate..." Listen, Jesus is pleading with you today through this text, just like He pled with those who were gathered on that hillside that day to hear Him. He's saying to you, "Enter the narrow gate. Look where it's going - look where you're going - to destruction. He's warning, admonishing, pleading.

I want you to turn to one last text as we conclude our time together. Turn with me to Luke 13. On another occasion, Jesus was asked about this very issue. Luke 13:22.

And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem (for His crucifixion). And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"

The crowds at this point in His ministry had largely left Him, and He said to this person who asked this question, you "Strive to enter through the narrow door..." And the word for 'strive' there is the Greek word from which we get our word 'agonize' - agonizomai. Strive with all of your might to enter through the narrow door. And then He says, because when judgment comes there will be many who

"...will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you're from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where

you are from; depart from Me, all you evil doers.’ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth....”

Listen, Jesus says you better, today, strive to enter the narrow gate, the narrow door, because there's a time coming when God Himself will shut the door; He'll bar the gate. Today is the day. Let's pray together.

Father, I pray for those of us here who are in Christ. Encourage us. Lord, keep us on that narrow path pursuing obedience to Christ. I pray, that for those who are in Christ, that You would encourage them with this text. But Father, I pray for those who aren't, that You would unsettle them, that they would find, even the rest of this day and tonight, no rest for their souls. Father, may You bring them to a place where they would humble themselves before You and strive to enter the narrow door, when they would seek the forgiveness that You give in Your Son and in His death. May they be willing to turn from their sins and embrace Jesus Christ. May this be the day when they leave the broad way to enter the narrow gate. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.