Two Paths — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 7:13–14 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, January 5, 2014 · *A Tale of Two*

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As you're turning to Matthew chapter 7, I thought since it's the new year 2014, and since I am your pastor, that it would be good for me if I made a confession. And so I want to make a confession this morning, and it may be shocking to… Well, it's probably shocking to all of you maybe outside of a few. And I've already told Audra, you know, what I'm going to say. Even told her how I was going to say it. And let me just preface it by saying that there's maybe this tendency for people to think of pastors as though they're untouchable, or that they don't sin, or they have some kind of special spiritual powers that prevent them from doing things or being tempted or doing things that they regret, and that's just simply not true.

I'm just like everybody else, you know, when it comes to temptation, when it comes to sin. I do things, have done things, will do things that I regret. And so there's just… You know, maybe I have a gift of understanding the Bible. Maybe there's a gift of communicating, but those gifts don't somehow prevent me from falling into sin. And I did something last month that, you know, probably looking back, wasn't right, and so I want to confess it. It was about 5:30 in the morning, sometime in the month of December.

Room's really tense. Is everybody tense right now? About 5:00 in the morning, 5:30 in the morning, I get up. I'm on my iPad looking at my emails, and out of nowhere, there is this incredible urge to watch something. And, I thought, "Where did that come from?" And so, I couldn't resist. I pulled up my iPad, I got onto YouTube, and I watched wrestling. And, I haven't watched wrestling in forever. Some of you are saying, "Wrestling a sin?" I don't know if wrestling's a sin. I probably shouldn't have done what I did because I took it too far.

Out of nowhere I got this desire to watch wrestling. I started reminiscing about those days in high school when I was in a backyard wrestling club and we were you know, power bombing people through tables and banging each other over the head with bed pans and I didn't want

to just watch wrestling, I wanted to watch the epic battle between John Cena and the Rock at WrestleMania 28. This was in New York, in Times Square. They had a billboard, "Cena versus the Rock." And so I pulled it up on YouTube.

They had the full footage. I sat there for 45 minutes and watched two muscular grown men in underwear beat on each other for up to an hour. And, Audra was like, "Have you lost your mind?" She's wondering. I'm sitting there glued to my iPad. She's gone for work. "See you later. I love you." And I'm sitting there, I'm looking at John Cena and the Rock. And after I watched the video, I took it to another level and I watched the documentary on the wrestling match. After the documentary, I watched clips mastering the moves of wrestling back in the day.

I started watching the nWo. I was Kevin Nash; my buddy, he was Scott Hall. We just… You know, and I started doing my impersonations. I just took it to a whole another level. And when I was doing things that maybe Audra would get a little upset with, I would do this John Cena, "You can't see me." And instead of you know, in the shower, instead of reciting scripture verses like I know every other pastor does, I was doing my rock impersonation. I was sitting there in the shower and I'd be like, "Do you smell…"

Then I'd say, "…what The Rock is cooking?" And I'd do the theme music, da. And it just went too far and Audra was really getting fed up with it and like every sin, it had its season and it eventually was over, but there's more. I went and I got on The Rock, Dwayne Johnson. That's his name, Dwayne Johnson. I went to his Facebook page, and I liked his Facebook page. I got on Netflix and I started watching every video that Dwayne Johnson was in just to see if he could act, and I'm sure Dwayne Johnson was wondering, "What in the world is a preacher doing liking my Facebook page?"

But there I was. It was borderline idolatry, and the whole reason I even bring it up is because as a result of liking Dwayne Johnson's Facebook page, I see his posts from time to time. And the other day he put a post of himself wearing a T-shirt, that tight white T-shirt. Nothing about the T-shirt, he's just humongous, mammoth of a man. And he's flexing and the T-shirt says, "Team Jesus." And he had a status that said, "I'm pretty sure Jesus lifts, bro. Grateful for 20-- or 2014, New Year," something like that, "Grateful, faith, biceps," hashtag—of course, you have to have the hashtag for social media—"#Amen."

I thought, "Wow, the Rock loves Jesus." And that status got one million two hundred and seventy-four thousand two hundred and ninety-six likes. That's a lot of clout on social media, just for those of you who don't know. It got 500—or 55,692—shares. And you know, I don't know much about the Rock's theology. I could only imagine, but there he is and Jesus is getting some publicity. And so I thought, I'm going to hunt this down. Nerd factor applies all across the board. I figured out where that picture was taken, what the Rock was doing.

Turns out he was filming a new movie of his with Mark Wahlberg called Pain & Gain. I watched the movie this weekend just you know, to study for the sermon. Pretty good movie, but I wouldn't want my kids to watch it. And The Rock was wearing this shirt, Team Jesus. He had actually gotten out of jail and done some things he regretted. He had this conversion experience. In a lot of ways, it was pretty sacrilegious. But here he is wearing the Team Jesus T-shirt, and he's, he's engaging in activities, at least in the movie, which, Jesus would probably...

You know, "You can't be on my team and do those kinds of things, Dwayne." And I'm not questioning the Rock's faith. I don't know anything about that. But as I was thinking about that dynamic, looking at this text and studying this week, I thought to myself, I wonder if Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson posted the text that we're going to look at today, if he posted that on Facebook, how many likes he would actually get. And if Jesus actually had a Facebook and Jesus posted the things that we see in the Sermon on the Mount Would he get any likes?

Would his Facebook even have many people? And I don't know, because when you look at Jesus, there are the Jesus lifts bro passages. He does lift us. He carries our burdens people like that about Jesus. People like the part about Jesus where he gets in your face when if you're a rich person, it's harder for a rich person to it's harder for a camel to enter in through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich person to enter in the kingdom of God, and people pounce on that and they get Jesus to support their cause, and they want to be on Jesus' team and Jesus on their team.

But it seems as though, whether it's the Rock or some of you know, politics, politicians, people all across the board, it seems as though they pick and choose from Jesus what it is that they want to pick and choose from Jesus in order to support their cause, and you simply cannot do that with the Lord. Jesus is a package deal. He said more than just that he that is, "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He says more than that. He says some hard things.

He teaches some hard teachings, and we're going to look at some of those hard teachings over the next four weeks. But you've got to take Jesus as he is. You can't just pick and choose. And so as we've looked at the Sermon on the Mount, we have seen some very tough teachings, and it's only going to get tougher. So for those of you who are new this morning, and just to remind us, to catch us up on the Sermon on the Mount, let's just go back. If you have your Bible, just go back to Matthew chapter five.

Turn a page over. You remember Matthew chapter five, Jesus started the Sermon on the Mount with the divine reversals. We call them the Beatitudes. They were divine reversals because, number one, they were from God himself, so they were divine, but they were reversals because Jesus is saying, "There's a path to happiness, but the path to happiness

that I'm going to give you is contradictory to the path that your culture says and to the path that our culture says." He says, basically if you want to enter into the kingdom of heaven, it's not a matter of being self-sufficient or proud or strong, but that you need to be poor in spirit, that instead of pride, there needs to be humility.

He said happy or blessed are the sad, those who are mourning over their sin, those who see their spiritual bankruptcy and are brokenhearted over that and they mourn. That person is blessed. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. And on and on he went, basically saying there's a path to happiness, but it's upside down, and so it would have shocked everyone. And if that wasn't shocking, you go to Matthew chapter five, verses 17 to 20. You remember this? Jesus gives the thesis statement of the Sermon on the Mount, and he basically says to his disciples, who were probably religious people, probably believing Jews.

And he looked at them and he said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, then you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." So think of the the best religious person, the most religious person that you know, unless your righteousness exceeds theirs, you're not getting into the kingdom. And what he meant by that wasn't that you need to do more that you it was that you need to be more that your righteousness need, your righteousness needed to be qualitatively greater than the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.

He was getting to the heart of the matter. He was saying, "I want you to respond in obedience because your heart has been changed. I want you to keep with the spirit of the law, not just the letter of the law, because if you're following the path that these religious teachers are putting in front of you they're going to lead you to destruction." And so then he began giving these relentless examples in Matthew chapter 5 of what it means to actually get to the heart of things, what it means what the Old Testament really meant.

And he would say things like, "You've heard it said this but what the Bible really says is this." And so just go with me through them. Matthew chapter 5, verses 21 to 26, he said it's not anger, it's murder. Matthew 5:27 through 30, it's not lust, it's adultery. He's raising the bar. It's above the average. Verses 31 to 32, it's not divorce, it's adultery. Verses 33 to 37, it's not an oath, it's satanic. He's raising the bar when it comes to integrity. In verses 38 to 42 and verses 43 to 48, he says, "There is a law of retaliation.

There is a law of love, but if you're going to be in my kingdom, you need to take it above the average. You tend to retaliate against people. When they hurt you hurt them back. I'm telling you don't retaliate. I'm saying be like your heavenly Father. You've heard it said to love people. Yes, you should love people. I'm saying you should love even your enemies. What good is it if you just love the people who love you? Even pagans and Gentiles do those kinds of things. Be like your heavenly Father.

Love those who even hate you." And then he climaxes the whole chapter five with chapter 5 verse 48, and he says, "Be perfect. Be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect." Shocking stuff. Raising the bar. Then he goes to Matthew chapter 6, and you remember in Matthew chapter 6, he basically said, "Kingdom righteousness isn't just above the average, it's also below the surface. And so there are a group of people, there are religious people who pray, they give, they fast, but they do so in such a way that they'd be seen by men.

They think that they're pleasing God, but let me just tell you disciples, they're, they're not pleasing to God. They're not pleasing to God because they're doing their religious activities not to have a relationship with the Lord, but so that people would look at them and notice how pious that they are. And so when you give in such a way that people don't see it. Make it just a matter between you and the Lord. When you pray, don't be like these people who, with repetition and drawing attention to themselves, they're hoping that they're going to be heard.

When you pray, don't pray like that. Pray to your Father who is in heaven. You need to begin to view God as someone who is a trustworthy, good father. And when you fast, don't disfigure your faces," verses 16 to 18 of chapter 6. Look as though everything is fine because it doesn't matter what people think when it comes to your religious devotion. What matters is what God thinks. And then in chapter 6 verses 19 to 24, you remember, Jesus gave us a Christian worldview when it comes to money. He taught us how to think about money.

He said, "Don't store up treasures on earth, but store up treasures in heaven,[1] because the treasures here, they're just going to fade away. The money that you're chasing after, it's just a piece of paper." Of course, back then they didn't have paper. It would've been a coin, but that stuff's just it's just going away, and you need to begin to look at things from an eternal perspective, that there is a God who exists, that he's a God in heaven, that he is your heavenly Father, and that when you invest into the kingdom, that's the best kind of investments that you would make because it'll never go away.

This stuff, it's going to fade. And then he taught us about worry. And the reason that we worry is because we fail to look at God as a father, we fail to look at God as sovereign, we fail to look at God as someone who is loving. And Jesus is is saying to his disciples, "If you're going to be in the kingdom, you can't worry, and the reason you won't worry is because of how you think of the Lord." And it would've been shocking. He was turning things upside down over, and over again.

And then the last time we all met together before, the storm, before the winter storm, we looked at prayer. And Jesus says, "If you're going to be a disciple, it's a divine, it's a divine supernatural act, and you're going to have to pray the kingdom in. Ask and it will be given to you seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. If you see something

lacking in your spiritual life, if you see that you're not forgiving people or that you're not loving your enemies, then you need to pray that in."

And then He capped it with the golden rule. And now we get to the end of the sermon. This is our text today, Matthew 7:13-14. And if what Jesus had been saying in in in Matthew chapter five and six, if that was radical, then what He's going to say here in these verses is even more radical. If what He said previously was aggravating the religious establishment, then what He's going to say over the next four weeks is going to send them over the edge. If what He said in Matthew chapter five and six, and all the way up until this point, if this was troublesome for you and if this was hard teaching for you then what He's about to say is going to be even harder.

It's a hard teaching. And if you're unchurched this morning or you're not a Christian and you're kind of flirting with Christianity, then I just need to tell you upfront this is going to probably turn you off. And you need to know that you know, this really isn't my personality. I'm not a hellfire guy. It's not my temperament. That's not my personality type. But I'm someone who believes that the Bible is the inspired word of God. I believe that when the Bible speaks, God speaks, and you need to let the text say what the text says.

We have to if we're going to be people of the word. Which means that we don't make the soft text, we don't make them hard. Okay? We're not legalists in this church. But neither do we make the hard text soft. We don't want We're not liberals. We want to let the text say what the text says. And it's a tough text this morning, and it's a tough text next week, and it's a tough text the week after that. This is the most radical This, these texts contain some of the most radical things that Jesus has ever said and if you're a Christian, it'll unsettle you.

If you're not a Christian, it will probably turn you off. But the question is whether or not we're going to receive it. They're tough texts, they're hard texts, not because they're hard to understand. A five-year-old can understand it. They're hard because they're hard to receive, and we have to ask ourself the question whether or not we're going to be the kind of people who receive what Jesus says, if we're going to be like people who just pick and choose, or if we're going to receive all of Jesus, everything that He said everything that He taught.

So let's read the text, Matthew chapter seven, verse thirteen and fourteen. In fact, I don't know if it's on on the screen back here, but let's just read all the way down to verse twenty-seven. Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? The answer is no. Verse seventeen, so every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the

diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day, on the day of judgment, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do mighty works in your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock, and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock.

And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell, and great was the fall of it. And so Jesus, like any good preacher, at the end of His sermon, what He's doing is He's beginning to answer the question that everybody's asking, and the question is so what? What does it matter? What does the Sermon on the Mount matter?

And Jesus is basically saying, you can't just listen to the sermon. You have to take the sermon and apply it to your life. You have to let it change you. The Word of God was never just was never meant to just be preached and pondered and thought about. It was never meant to be praised only. It was also meant to be practiced. Jesus believed that if the Word of God was going to transform a person, then the Word of God had to be unleashed. It had to be unleashed in their life, and that's exactly what He's telling these disciples to do.

It's not just to be commended, it's it there should be commitment. There shouldn't just be adoration of the Lord. There should be action, that any kind of conviction that comes in your life, if you don't make a commitment with that conviction, it will ruin you spiritually. And for many of us, if you think about your spiritual life, for many of us, the reason that we're stalled out in the Christian life and the reason that we don't have fellowship with the Lord is because Sunday after Sunday, or Wednesday, or whenever you hear the Word of God preached, God convicts you but you don't do anything with that conviction.

You haven't changed your lifestyle whatsoever, and Jesus is saying that will ruin you spiritually, that when the Word of God is preached, whether it's in the first century or whether it is today, that there needs to be action. You need to do something about it. And so we're going to look at verses 13 and 14, and let those verses get in us, bring conviction, and produce a change. I just want you to notice three things. They're in your bulletin. The command, the contrast, and the choice. The command's in the first sentence, "Enter by the narrow gate."

Then Jesus produces a contrast. He says that there's two gates. There are two roads. There are two destinations and there are two groups of people. And he produces that contrast, and then implicit within the contrast is a choice that every single one of us are going to have to make this morning, and the choice is what road am I on? Which gate have I entered through? What fate will I experience? And so that's the approach. One of the reasons that this text is so shocking and the reason I'm so nervous about preaching.

Can you tell? Can you tell I'm nervous? I'm sweating like crazy. It's terrible. One of the reasons that it's so shocking is because the people of whom Jesus is comparing and contrasting, it isn't the godless versus the godly. Do you notice that? When you look at the Sermon on the Mount, he's not comparing pagans with Christians. He's not saying there's the non-religious and there's the religious. When Jesus compares and contrasts, what he is doing is he is comparing true kingdom citizens with just merely religious people. He's saying you have the Pharisees, you have the scribes.

They're religious. They know the Bible. They do the Bible, yet the Bible has never changed their heart. And so basically when Jesus says there are the many and there are the few, and that the few are going to heaven, and that the many are going to hell, he's talking about religious people who are headed to destruction, people who know the Bible, people who go to church, people who do the thing. They give the money. They do all the things that religious people do, and yet they're lost. And so Jesus is saying most religious people are going to hell, and that is shocking that's unsettling.

There's three ways to live. You can be a pagan, a godless person. You can be a God-fearing person, someone who's religious, or you can be a true kingdom person. But only one path leads to heaven. And so he gives the command. He says, "Enter through the narrow gate." Look there in verse 13. "Enter through the narrow gate." Pretty simple. That's one of the beautiful things about Christianity, isn't it? The simplicity of the gospel. If anyone ever comes to you and says, "I've done all five things I need to do to be saved," you can know that person probably isn't a Christian because there's only one thing you need to do to be saved.

And if you add anything to this one thing, if it's Jesus plus anything else, then you have corrupted the gospel. You're preaching another gospel because there's only one thing you need to do to be saved. And Jesus says that one thing is that you need to enter through the narrow gate. That's the sole requirement for sinners. And so let's just take it one by one, word by word. He says, "Enter." And so if you're going to become a Christian, it's not it takes a step of faith. It takes, you can't be passive.

You've got to be active. You notice that Jesus didn't say, "Think about the narrow gate." Jesus doesn't say that it's good enough to just be born near the the narrow gate. Jesus doesn't say it's sufficient just to grow up next to the narrow gate. Jesus doesn't say, "Go to church and hear about the narrow gate and discuss it afterwards." That's not enough. That

you have to not just ponder and think about the narrow gate, but that you have to step in that you have to enter the narrow gate, that there's has to be this step of faith in which you cross over, in which you make a total commitment.

You leave what you're doing right here, and you stop doing that. You repent, and you step over the line, and you go into the narrow gate. Enter through. The word through or the word by in the ESV. I think the word through is probably a better translation. And so you don't have one foot in the gate and one foot in the world. It's not a matter of worshiping God and worshiping yourself. It's not a matter of having your cake and eating it too, but you have to go all the way through.

It has to be You abandon your former life. You enter through the... So there's not many gates. There's not two gates. There's not a Buddhist gate and a Hindu gate and an atheist gate. There's one gate. You enter through the narrow gate, and so it's small. In order to enter through this gate, you have to be poor in spirit. Jesus, I think, is pulling in the Beatitudes here. He's saying, "You got to quit. You can't be proud. You can't carry in your self-righteousness. You can't carry in all your baggage of your sin, that you want to keep sleeping with this person or keep drinking that or or stop taking this," and you have to step all of that aside.

You can't fit through the narrow gate unless you take off the baggage, unless you repent. It's narrow. It's narrow. You can't enter through with a crowd. It's not a matter of you know, "My sister got saved, and so that means I'm saved." You have to go individually. It's narrow. Enter through the narrow gate, and if you don't enter through, then you're not in the kingdom. And even in a room this size, at a church that is known for preaching the Bible and full of Christian people, we need this morning to ask ourself the question: Have I entered through the narrow gate?

Am I saved? I don't like creating doubt. I don't know that Jesus wants to necessarily create doubt, but Jesus is being very black and white here. Jesus is producing a very stark contrast. Jesus is aiming directly at our heart. He's peeling back all the other layers, and the reason I think he's doing that the reason that he's unsettling us, is because he's forcing us to ask ourself the question: Have I entered through the narrow gate? Has there been a point in time in my life where I saw my sin, I was broken over my sin, I was humble, I acknowledged my spiritual bankruptcy, that there was nothing that I could do to get into Heaven, that the road that I was on was leading me to destruction, and in humility and repentance, I said to the Lord, "Lord, save me.

Lord, I repent of my sin. I'm putting my faith in you." If there's never been a time in which that has taken place and you've, you've entered in then you're on the road to destruction. It's not a matter of trying hard. It's not a matter of wanting to be saved. It's not a matter of living in a Christian family or going to church. It doesn't matter whether you tithe or don't tithe. It

doesn't matter whether you're a member or you're not a member. It doesn't matter whether you're baptized or not baptized.

If you haven't entered through the narrow gate, then you're not saved. That's what Jesus is saying. And so you have to ask yourself the question: Have I entered through the narrow gate? And why? Why should we enter through? That's in verse 14. You see that little word, for? And then he produces the contrast. "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." Then above that, "For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many."

And so let's just think about the contrast. You have the broad gate, right? And the broad gate is just that it's broad. And so you don't have to set aside your baggage to go through the broad gate, do you? You don't have to repent. You can you can live your life however you want to live your life you don't have to be humble. You can be proud. You can go to any church in America and probably find this gate. Maybe hopefully not from the pulpit, but there will be many people who believe that this is the gate, that it's just a matter of cheap grace, easy believism there's no cost of discipleship.

This is the gate that Jesus is talking about and that gate is is everywhere. You can go to Christian bookstores and find this gate. You can go to church camps and find this gate. It's a gate of cheap grace. It's a gate of religion without repentance. It's a gate where you do religion on your own terms. It's a gate of self-indulgence. It's a gate in which you pursue all of your selfish desires, and that is the gate in which most all of us were born into. All of us are born into this gate, and that gate leads to an easy way, Jesus says, and that word way is talking about your lifestyle.

And so the easy way is a spiritual walk. It's a spirituality that doesn't create any conflict. It's a spiritual walk in which you don't have to be meek. It's a spiritual walk in which you don't have to forgive people who sin against you. It's a spiritual walk in which Jesus does not have to be Lord. It's a spiritual walk in which you can believe whatever you want to believe about the Bible because you're the authority and God isn't. It's a pretty easy life. You can do whatever you want to do, think whatever you want to think, talk however you want to talk.

It's an easy way. But the thing about the easy way and the broad gate is that it doesn't tell you where it's leading. The broad gate and the easy way, it has flashing lights, it has signposts, and it says things like life. It says things like peace. It says things like worship me and you'll find happiness. But in reality, the broad gate and the easy way, it's leading to destruction. It's a word that means loss, total loss, and it's loss not as in loss of being like annihilation. It's loss as in...

Loss of well-being such as damnation. This is the path, this is the destination of the unconverted church member, the church member who just came in every single Sunday and

pretended. This is the path of someone who has religion without repentance, someone who knows the spiritual language, someone who can talk the talk, but has never walked the walk. This is the destination of someone who has religion without repentance. This is this is the destination of the accidental Pharisee who was legalistic and held other people to a standard that he didn't hold himself to.

This is the path of a religious Pharisee who, who the Word of God never actually got into his heart. It was always a matter of behaving. It was always a matter of looking righteous. It just mattered what people thought of me, and Jesus is saying, "If that's you even if you're religious, you're going You're headed to destruction." Enter through the narrow gate for the gate is broad, the way is easy that leads to destruction. And I think the most haunting few words in the text. And those who enter it are many that's hard to swallow, isn't it?

That there are all kinds of religious people, and most religious people are lost. Those who find it are many.[2] You say, "How are you going to say that most religious people are lost?" The reason I say that is because Jesus compares two groups of people, the many or the few. Who has more the many or the few? Probably the many. And who's Jesus contrasting? He's contrasting religious people with kingdom citizens, and he is saying most religious people are lost, and that is hard to receive. It's not hard to understand. A five-year-old can understand it.

It's hard to swallow, and yet Jesus said it. And so what do we do with it? He's producing a stark warning. Look at what he says about the many in verse 22, or verse 21. Look there, chapter 7 verse 21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." What does verse 22 say? "On that day," who? "On that day many," it's the many of verse 13 and 14. "Many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?'" That's pretty good.

I've never prophesied. "Did we not cast out demons in your name? Did we not do many mighty works in your name?" Hey, you know me, Lord. You know me. I did this, I did that. I was religious. I was able to prophesy. I was able to do mighty works. I people, all kinds of people thought that I was a believer. Many people are in your kingdom because of the work that I did. The many, the many are saying this to the Lord, and he says to them, "I never knew you.

I never knew you." Can you imagine life on earth everything in you thinks, "I'm going to heaven. I've lived a life dedicated to the Lord. I've been to church. I've tithed. I was baptized. I've done all the things that I was supposed to do." People thought of me as a very religious person. Thinking that you're going to heaven, dying, breathing your last breath, and waking up in hell. Because he never knew you were part of the many it's unsettling. Creates, it creates doubt. Creates doubt in my life. I'm a pastor.

I'm you know, I preach the Word, I'm doing the things that people in verse 22 were doing, and yet Jesus says, "I never knew you." That's the broad gate. Look at the narrow gate. It's a contrast between easy and hard, between narrow and wide. The King James Version says that it's a strait gate. Just that word strait doesn't mean straight like a line. It means a hard squeeze of a situation, that there is this constricted-ness about the Christian life. When you become a Christian, you've got to be small. Self has to be small.

In fact, in Luke's gospel when he talks about this text, he he uses the word strive. Strive to enter the narrow gate. It's it's the word agonizomai. It's where we get our word agony. It's an agonizing thing that when God calls you and He's calling you into the kingdom, that there is this agonizing sense of loss where you say, "I can't live life the way that I want to live life. Jesus is going to be my Lord." And for many of us to enter into the Christian life, we're going to have to be like C.S.

Lewis who said that the Lord dragged me into the kingdom kicking and screaming. For some of us, it's going to be that the God's plow of divine sovereignty is going to have to bring suffering into our life to break us and to mold us and to bring agony into our life so that we'll finally enter into the kingdom. Strive to enter in to the narrow gate. It requires confession. It requires coming to the end of yourself, the end of your rope. It requires setting aside your pride, setting aside your self-sufficiency.

It will require tears. It will require spiritual mourning. I'm not saying that you have to cry to become a Christian, but there has to be a brokenness over your sin. There has to be a meekness, a true sense in which you say, "I'm yours, Lord. You're the boss." There has to be a true desire for the righteousness which only God can give. It's a narrow gate. And not only is it a narrow gate, the narrow gate leads to the hard way, and the hard way is restrictive in many a sense.

When you think about Christian lifestyle, Christian ethics, in many ways it's hard. It's restrictive. You can't do whatever you want to do. You can't say of the Bible whatever you want to say of the Bible. You can't make the soft text hard. You can't make the hard text soft. You can't live however you want to live. You can't sleep with whoever you want to sleep with. You can't, you can't, take whatever that you want to take. You can't live however you want to live. It requires obedience. It requires discipleship. It requires self-denial.

It requires being a hearer of the Word and a doer of the Word, not just a hearer only. It requires spiritual warfare. It requires cross-bearing. It requires loving your enemies. It requires forgiving those who sin against you. There's a cost to discipleship. And the road isn't easy. It's a hard road. But doesn't Jesus say, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Doesn't John say that his commandments are not burdensome? That's true. And there is a sense in which there is this joy in the Christian life,

and there is a grace in the Christian life which create in you a heart that desires righteousness and a heart that desires obedience.

But if you're going to obey the Lord, if you're going to walk through the narrow gate, and you're going to walk along the hard way, there is a cost. It creates pain in your life. And for those of you who are Christians, you know this. You know this when you coulda got the promotion, but you stuck to do what was right. You know this when this boy over here was wanting you to sleep with him, and you said, "No, I don't I don't live that way," and you know, you lost your boyfriend.

You lost your prom date. It's hard when a beautiful woman who isn't your wife is staring you down. She wants you more than anything and you say, "No, I made a vow to my wife. I'm not going to cheat." It's hard when you want to spend your money however you want to spend your money and Jesus is saying, "The kingdom has a different set of standards when it comes to your finances." It is a hard way. But this way, what does it say it leads to? It leads to life Zoe, eternal life.

Life that is qualitatively greater than any life you could ever experience. And so Jesus is saying, "Whatever you had to give up, whether it was a pretty lady or a fancy new job or a new car or a boyfriend or a girlfriend who made you popular, whatever you had to give up, what you need to know is that if you continue on this road, it will be given back to you manyfold." When Jesus was speaking to the rich, young ruler, he knew about the hard way. Jesus said to him, "Go, sell everything that you have give it to the poor, then come and follow me."

And the disciples said to Jesus, "If this is what it takes to be saved, who then can be saved?" And Jesus says, "With man it's impossible, but with God all things are possible." And so it's a supernatural work. There is a sense in which you're equipped to do it. And then Jesus says after that, "Anyone who has given up houses or lands or or a a mother or father for my sake will receive it manyfold, both in this life and in the life to come." And so yes, it's hard, but it produces life.

And so for many of us this morning, we're disciples, and you're traveling on the hard path, and you need encouragement. You need to be reminded that there is a sense in which whatever repentance costs you there is a thousand joys of blessing if you continue in your obedience. It's a narrow gate. It's it's a hard way, but it leads to life. And then again, shockingly, there are few that find it. Wow! That's hard. Isn't that? There are few that find it. When I look at a text like that it creates in me a real sense of gratitude that I've been saved.

Why me, Lord? It creates this real joy in my salvation. There are few that find it. It creates this sense of urgency and passion to spread the name, to spread the fame of Christ, whether it's in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost parts of the earth, because most religious

people are going to perish, but there are a few who will find it and so we got to go narrow is the gate, hard is the way that leads to life, and there are few that find it. And so we need to make a choice which gate are you on?

You were born on the broad road. You were born having already entered through the broad gate. Has there ever been a point in time in your life where you've entered in where you came to the end of yourself and you said, "Lord, I don't want to control my own life. I'm giving it to you. I repent of my sin. I'm entering into the kingdom"? If there's never been a point in time in your life when you've done that you're on the road to destruction. But Jesus this morning is calling you.

He's calling you to life. He's calling you to discipleship. Yes, He's calling you to a hard path, I know, but He's calling you to life. Will you accept it? I'm going to ask Brian to come and lead us through an invitation and ask you to bow your heads, close your eyes. We got a little bit of time to respond to the Lord. Every head bowed, every eye closed. If you'd say this morning, "You know, Wes, as I think about it, I know without a shadow of a doubt that I'm not saved and that I need to become a Christian."

If that's you this morning, would you just raise up your hand, slip up your hand real quick so I can see it so I can pray for you and know that's what you're experiencing, that's what you're going through? All right, amen. If you're here this morning and you say, "Wes, I'm a believer and Jesus has shaken me up, and I don't know what to think, and I got some I've got some real thinking to do," maybe this morning you could come to this altar and allow the Lord to really search your heart.

You can be like David in Psalm 139, "Search me, O God, know my heart. See if there be any unclean way in me." And you can come and pray. I'll be here to pray with you. I think Tiffany, if you're, if you're a lady and you want to pray with another lady, it doesn't mean that you can't pray with me. If you're a lady and you want to pray, that's fine. I'll pray with you. But Tiffany will be here to pray with you. If you want to pray with her she'll be right there on the front row sitting there.

You can pray with her. But let's take a few moments responding to the Lord. Lest we arrogantly think something that isn't true about our spiritual condition. Our Father, we pray now as you do what you do by your Holy Spirit, that we would respond in a way that glorifies you bringing spiritual life to those who are dead, and we ask that in Jesus' name. Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Don't store up treasures in heaven, don't store up treasures on earth, but store up treasures in heaven"; Jesus says not to lay up treasures on earth but to lay up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19–20). Source: ESV, Matthew 6:19–21. ↩

2. Transcript note: spoken as "Those who find it are many"; Matthew 7:14 says those who find the narrow gate are few ("those who find it are few"), as the sermon says elsewhere; the many are those who enter the wide gate (7:13). Source: ESV, Matthew 7:13–14. ↩