

**ARE YOU ON THE RIGHT WAY?**  
**MATTHEW 7:13-14**

**INTRO.:**

1. Life is full of choices.
  - a. For example, think about how many different decisions you made just to get to church this morning.
    - 1) What time to get up?
    - 2) Shower or bath or nothing?
    - 3) What to wear?
    - 4) What do the kids need to wear?
    - 5) What to eat?
    - 6) Which car do we drive?
    - 7) Which road will I take to get here?
  - b. Every day we are faced with a number of choices:
    - 1) Some are minor – what to wear, what to eat, etc.
    - 2) Some are major – Major purchase, where to go on vacation, who to marry, what job to take, etc.
    - 3) And some deal with our daily conduct.
2. The simple fact is that life is made up of choices.
  - a. In fact, what you do with your life and where you end up is all a result of the choices you make.
  - b. And in the spiritual realm this same principle is true.
3. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus brings the matter of choices to the forefront.
  - a. Throughout the sermon He has been presenting choices that are absolute and mutually exclusive.
  - b. He has shown that you cannot choose both, and also that you cannot refuse to choose.
  - c. We have already looked that the two kinds of righteousness and the two kinds of treasures we have to choose between.
  - d. So now, as He draws His lesson to a close, He once again emphasizes the choices we must make and tells us of the results of each choice.
  - e. In the remainder of our lessons on the Sermon on the Mount, we will be looking at these choices.
4. Today we will look at the first choice Jesus gives us in His series of choices.
  - a. In Matt. 7:13-14 Jesus said that we must choose between one of two ways in life: (Read).
  - b. Many people think that it really does not make any difference which path we choose, as we will all end up at the same place anyway, but here Jesus taught otherwise.
    - 1) He shows us that each path has its own beginning, and each has its own end.
    - 2) He also stated that one is heavily traveled, while the other had very few travelers.
5. Each person here this AM is on either one or the other of these roads.
  - a. We are either headed toward heaven or hell.
  - b. There is no third alternative.
  - c. And the simple fact is that we will be rewarded accordingly for the road that we choose to travel.
6. This being the case we need to seriously consider the two ways that Jesus described here, and ask:
  - a. Am I on the right road?
  - b. Am I heading in the right direction?
7. To answer these questions, let us look closely at what Jesus said, as He told about these two different ways using 4 contrasts.

**LESSON:**

- I. 1<sup>st</sup>: There are two gates.  
 --The key word here is DECISION.  
 --As we stand at the crossroads, we are confronted by two gates, the narrow and the wide gate.  
 --Let us look at the wide gate first.
- A. The wide gate - *"for wide is the gate..."* – Matt. 7:13.
1. This *"gate"* represents the beginning to the *"way"* that leads to destruction.
  2. It is described as *"wide"*; which would indicate that:
    - a. It beacons all to come to enter it – It is well advertised.
    - b. It is so wide that many people can enter it at once.
    - c. It allows those who choose to enter to do so without any sacrifice on their part.
      - 1) It does not require you to give up anything.
      - 2) One is allowed to bring along whatever *"baggage"* they desire:
        - a) Materialism.
        - b) Prejudice, hatred, an unforgiving spirit.
        - c) Believe whatever one wants to believe.
        - d) Worship, or approach God however you want to.
      - 3) You will never have to take the hinges of this gate to try to squeeze something that is tight through.
  3. This gate has been awarded *"The People's Choice"* Award because it is the one chosen by the majority of people.
    - a. This gate has no restrictions concerning belief and behavior.
    - b. It opens to the pathway of *"least resistance."*
    - c. It beacons for one to come and *"eat, drink, and be merry."*
- B. The narrow gate - *"Enter by the narrow gate"* – Matt. 7:13.
1. This *"gate"* represents the beginning, or starting point, to the *"way"* that leads to life.
  2. The narrow gate does not have room for anything but you.
  3. To go through this gate you must leave all your baggage behind.
  4. It is described as *"narrow"* indicating that:
    - a. It requires self-denial and obedience to enter – Matt. 16:24.
    - b. It has no room for.
      - 1) A consuming desire for earthly goods – Matt. 6:19-20.
      - 2) An unforgiving spirit – Matt. 6:14-15.
      - 3) Self-righteousness – Matt. 6:1.
    - c. All things Jesus has already stressed in His Sermon on the Mount.
- C. Remember the key word here is decision.
1. God allows you to choose for yourself.
  2. Some make the choice by just doing nothing.
  3. When we choose not to decide, we choose to go through the wide door by default.
- II. 2<sup>nd</sup>: There are two ways.
- A. The broad way - *"...broad is the way"* - Matt 7:13.
1. This is the way of ease.
    - a. It is the path that requires little effort, or self-control to follow.
      - 1) It is so easy to travel that many will just drift into it.
      - 2) Absolutely no effort is required to enter this path, or to keep on it.
    - b. Once on the wide broad way, we can drift smoothly and easily right on down to our eternal destruction.
  2. The way that leads to destruction is broad because it allows:
    - a. Any behavior one desires.
    - b. No need to reform or change one's *"lifestyle."*
    - c. There are no restrictions on this way, and no roadblocks.

3. Many people love this path and choose it because:
  - a. They think they are "free."
  - b. They believe they are "open-minded."
  - c. They view themselves as "tolerant" of others in this same way.
  - d. It is the "non-judgmental" pathway.

B. The narrow/constricted way.

1. "...*difficult is the way*" - Mt 7:14 (NKJV).
  - a. "...*narrow the road*" (NIV).
  - b. "*the way is narrow*" (NASB).
  - c. "*narrow is the way*" (KJV).
2. The picture is one of a narrow and difficult path between two cliffs, or the narrow channel a pilot must go through to enter the harbor.
3. The way that leads to life is "*difficult*" because it requires:
  - a. Discipline and desire.
  - b. A righteousness that exceeds that of many religious people – Matt. 5:20.
  - c. A change in our behavior, or lifestyle. – Matt. 5:21-7:12.
  - d. A life of self-control and self-denial which will take concerted effort.
  - e. Constantly checking and redirecting our life to make sure that we are on the right course (I.E. Luke Skywalker in destroying the Death Star.)
4. Because of its difficulty, many choose not to travel its pathway because:
  - a. They think it is too "confining, or restrictive."
  - b. They see it as a path that "will not allow me to do my own thing."
  - c. They feel that the demands or restrictions this pathway calls for makes one "narrow-minded," or "judgmental of others."
  - d. They see it as requiring effort on their part, and they are unwilling to put out the effort needed.
5. If we are going to walk on the narrow path we must have the discipline not to be drawn off the path by the majority who are not on it.
  - a. How many times have people tried to drag you off the path so that you could participate in things you know are not pleasing to God?
  - b. It take desire to walk the path.
    - 1) The desire to see further than the moment.
    - 2) The desire to please Jesus and not others.

III. 3<sup>rd</sup>: There are two groups of people.

A. The many - "*There are many who go in by it*" – Matt. 7:13.

1. The principle Jesus taught here is well known.
2. Many, or the majority, will always choose the easiest path.
  - a. In the world it is easier to remain the silent majority, than to speak up and become the minority.
  - b. In the home it is easier to live like the world, with its divorces, affairs, etc.; than it is to follow God's way for the home.
  - c. In speech it is easier to curse like a sailor, tell dirty jokes, etc., than it is to guard your speech so that it is always, "*pure, gracious, and seasoned with salt.*" (Col. 4:6).
  - d. In religion the rapid growth of the "faith only," "do-your-own-thing," "feel good" groups and community churches attests to the fact that far more people are willing to follow the wide, broad way that leads to destruction.
  - e. And even in Lord's church we are hearing those who say it really does not matter what one believes or practices as long as your heart is right.
  - f. The fact is that when Jesus said, "*Many,*" He meant just that.

3. We have already seen why this is so:
  - a. The entrance is wide: "Come as you are! No changes necessary!"
  - b. The way is broad: "Make your own rules! Believe what you want! Do what you want!"
  - c. One local preacher in Belle Plaine, KS expressed it so well when he said at a funeral, "It really does not make any difference what you do or how you live, as long as you make your personal peace with Jesus."
4. This is the way people travel by default; unless they are actively seeking the narrow path, this is the one they will be on.
5. And since so many people are on this pathway, they will be beckoning for you to come and join them.
  - a. After all, the majority cannot be wrong.
  - b. In fact, just look, everyone does it.

B. The few - "*there are few who find it*" – Matt. 7:14.

1. Few in the world are willing to step out and be different.
  - a. Few are willing to give up all and follow Jesus.
  - b. Few are ever willing to pursue a way that demands sacrifice.
2. The real question that comes up here is, "How few are the few Jesus was talking about?"
  - a. The term "*few*" is a relative term, thus we need to look at the Bible for a definition.
  - b. When we look how the word is used in other places in the Bible to describe the saved, we can get a good idea of what Jesus was referring to here.
    - 1) In the days of Noah only a few were saved.
      - a) In 1 Pet. 3:20 we read that "*a few, that is, eight souls, were saved.*"
      - b) In this case it meant 8 out of an entire world of several million people.
    - 2) In Sodom & Gomorrah not even 10 righteous souls could be found in those two vast cities (Gen. 19:24).  
--Here "*a few*" meant 3.
    - 3) Of those who left Egypt for the Promised Land, only a "*few*" entered in – Joshua & Caleb.  
--In this case "*a few*" meant 2 out of 2.5 million people.
3. To emphasize this point, on another occasion Jesus warned: Lk. 13:23-24: (Read).
  - a. As Jesus said, "*Strive to enter through the narrow gate...*"
  - b. Even then not all will be saved: "*...for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*"
  - c. Not just effort, but the right kind of effort is necessary – Matt. 5:6; 6:33.

IV. 4<sup>th</sup>: There are two destinations.

A. Destruction - "*...broad is the way that leads to destruction*" – Matt. 7:13.

1. Many people do not think that this will happen.
  - a. In fact a Barna report showed that only 31% of adults believe that hell is an actual place.
  - b. Some see it as merely a symbolic place as representing separation from God.
2. But the Bible tells us that hell is real.
  - a. Paul wrote of the "*everlasting destruction*" that is to come in 2 Thess. 1:7-9: (Read).
    - 1) Upon those who know not God.
    - 2) Upon those who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ.
  - b. John described it as "*a lake of fire*" – Rev. 20:15; 21:8.
  - c. And Jesus gave the most sobering words of all when He said: "*...there are many who go in by it.*" – Matt. 7:13.
3. We do not like to talk about hell, but it is as real as heaven.
  - a. Eternal destruction is a reality.
  - b. Do you want to trust the Bible, or do you want to trust what other people who are on the wrong path say?

- B. Life - "...difficult is the way which leads to life" – Matt. 7:14.
1. This "life" is the "everlasting life" received at the judgment – Matt. 25:46.
  2. It is the "gift of God", given at the end – Rom. 6:22-23.
    - a. To those who have been set free from sin - Rom. 6:3-7.
    - b. To those who became slaves of God and of righteousness – Rom. 6:17-18.
    - c. To those who bore the fruit of holiness - Rom. 6:20-22.
  3. Another sobering thought are these words about the way that leads to this life: "...there are few who find it." – Matt. 7:14.

CONC.:

1. ASK: Are there many roads that lead to heaven?
  - a. Many people like to think so.
  - b. Many are saying that all religions lead to heaven.
  - c. Many are saying that it really doesn't matter what you believe or do, as long as you are sincere.
2. But according to Jesus.
  - a. There are only two roads (ways).
    - 1) One leads to life, i.e., heaven.
    - 2) The other leads to destruction, i.e. hell.
  - b. On these two roads:
    - 1) One has only a few travelers.
    - 2) The other is filled with many people with many different beliefs.
3. Are you on the right way, and the only way that leads to life?
  - a. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" – Jn. 14:6.
  - b. The way that He provides is a narrow because He requires those who follow it to keep His commandments – Matt. 28:19-20.
4. Life is all about choices, so what choice will you make?
  - a. God loves us so much that HE did not take that ability to choose away from us.
    - 1) God loves you enough to give you a choice.
    - 2) If that choice is the wrong one, God loves you enough to let you make that choice, but it is with a heavy heart.
  - b. Will you be among the few, or the many?
  - c. Why not choose to let Jesus direct you along the narrow way that leads to eternal life today?