

## Entering the narrow gate

Let's open our Bibles to Matthew chapter 7. I am going to ask Brother Larry to read from verse 13 through 23.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father I pray that your Holy Spirit would illumine our minds, that we might understand your word, that the Holy Spirit would renew hearts, that they might respond to that word Lord and that they might be saved. Lord the words of a man are pathetic, they have no strength. Lord, your spirit, taking your word, doing surgery upon the heart of a man. Lord what is impossible for man is possible for you. Lord will so many perish without the gospel? Lord you know you owe nothing to any man. But I pray Lord that you would spare some and present them to your son.

In Jesus's name,

Amen.

In this first verse in verse 13, "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." Here we see both a gate and a way. We enter into the way by passing through a gate. That gate or that door is Jesus Christ and we are called to enter through that gate. Now the scriptures are clear, there is only one saviour and it is Jesus Christ. And we say that as Christians and that is why the world hates us. Do you realize that many of the Christians in the Roman Empire were persecuted as atheists?

That was their crime. You say well that doesn't make any sense. How can a Christian be charged as an atheist? This is the reason; the Christian denied all other gods. The Christian came to the Roman Empire and said "No, all your gods are false, your religions are false, there's only one God and one saviour, the son of God, Jesus of Nazareth." And for this reason, Christians were hated.

Now I want you to think about something. If the Christians had come to Rome and said this, "Jesus is a saviour" they would not have had a problem, because they would be saying this, "there are many saviours, Jesus is one of them. Your saviour's good but so is Jesus." The same thing happens today in America. If I were to change just one word in my preaching, I would be a very popular preacher. All I would have to do is this; stop using the word "the" and use the word "a." Instead of saying Jesus is the saviour, all I have to do is say Jesus is a saviour and everyone would love me. If you go into other religions of the world, Buddhism, Hinduism, even the Muslim faith, if you would just say that "you're right, but Jesus is also a saviour, he's my saviour you may have another one, and that's okay, but Jesus is mine," you wouldn't have a problem. The world hates you because you tell the world it is wrong. This is why the nations hated the Jews in the Old Testament, at least when the nation was walking with God. Because the pagan nations had all kinds of gods, they had thousands of gods and they were willing to say Jehovah could be one of those gods but the Jews said no. Jehovah is the only God. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." That is what you need to see today. If you believe what the Bible says about Jesus, the world will hate you. But if you start preaching a Jesus that is not the Jesus of the Bible, the world will love you. But Jesus looked at Himself, He pointed to Himself and He said "I am the way, the truth, and no one comes to God except through me. All those who came before me, they were false, all those who come after me, they are false. It's me. I am the incarnation of God."

That is what Jesus taught. Now if you will just say, that's what Jesus taught and I reject it, that's better than denying that He taught it. That is why liberal Christianity is not Christianity at all. It's absolutely useless. It has lost its reason for existing. Again, let me say this, in Christian life, in Christianity, it's all about one person, it's about Jesus. Do you realize that Christianity is not necessarily a moralistic religion? For example, if you become a Buddhist, what does it mean? You follow things that he says. And

by doing certain things that he said, you find some sort of peace. Become a Muslim, you follow certain rules, and by doing those certain rules, you save yourself. Christianity's completely different. It's not about a set of rules that if you carry these out, you will be saved. No, Christianity is about this; it's about a person who saves us and we love Him, and we cling to Him, and we trust in Him alone, and we honour Him. It's about a person who died and rose again, to pay for our sins and the Bible says we are to enter through that gate.

How do we enter through that gate? We do so by repentance and faith. God calls every man to repent and to believe His gospel. This is where historical Christianity and modern day Christianity are completely different. How do you enter in Christianity according to preachers today? You repeat a prayer. Just pick up any tract. In the back of the tract what does it say? If you want to be Christian pray this prayer. Is that not true? And if you pray the prayer, at the end of the tract it says this; "Congratulations, you're a Christian, welcome into the family of God." Or there's an evangelistic crusade, and the preacher gets everyone to bow their head and close their eyes. They lower the lights, they play soft music. The preacher begins to talk very softly. "How many of you want to be saved? You don't have to be ashamed, no one will look at you, raise your hand." Then when you raise your hand, they say "I see that hand, you can't escape. I know who you are. Now come forward. Come forward. Remember, I saw you." Then they'll even do this, they'll put Christians in the audience and have them come forward to make it easier for the others to come forward. And then they come forward.

"Do you want to be saved?"

"Yes."

"Then pray this prayer and ask Jesus into your heart."

They all pray the prayer. Then the preacher says this, "Welcome into the family of God."

Now I'm not making this up am I? Many of you are smiling. You've seen this happen over and over and over. That's why practically everyone in North America is a Christian and almost no one is a Christian. Now you say "Brother Paul I got saved in something like that." You did not get saved because of it. You got saved in spite of it. Even through the heresy of men, God can still save a soul and for that we are appreciative. Look at what we're doing. That's what it means to enter in. Just hold your place for a moment and go to Revelations 3:20, this is a famous verse. The preacher will say this, verse 20 "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with me. And then the preacher says "God is knocking at the door of your heart but the handle of the heart is only on the inside. God can't come in unless you open the door." And how do you open the door? By prayer. You open the door and ask Jesus to come in. So what do you do? You pray the prayer. And if you pray the prayer and you think you're sincere, the preacher pronounces you saved.

First of all you need to understand something here. In Revelations 3, he's knocking on the door of the church. He's not knocking on the door of the sinner's heart. There's nowhere it says that. There's a very famous painting where it's portrayed that way but we don't follow a painting. We follow the scriptures. Now I want us to look at our text for a moment. There is a sense in which we can use this verse as an illustration but we have to do it in the context of the rest of the scriptures. Jesus is calling out for men to be saved and He is waiting patiently. His hands are extended all day long calling out to men to be saved. All of creation calls out for men to be saved. In the book of Proverbs wisdom calls out for men to come and learn. "She stands at the gates of the city." She's in the crossroads of the city. She stands on the high hill above the city constantly calling out for men to repent and to come to her and learn. That's what the gospel does. Even now, through a preacher, God is calling out to you repent and come to Christ. Put away your foolishness and come to Him in faith. So there is a sense in which He is knocking on the door. And He says "if anyone hears my voice and opens the door." What does it mean to open the door? It means to open up your life to him. It's not just praying a prayer. It's realizing you're wrong about everything, that you've been leading your own life and that you have shut God out. This applies to many of you who call yourself Christian. You call yourself Christian but God is not in your life. You are not seeking to do His will, you do not seek to submit to His commands. You call yourself a Christian, you may go to church on Sunday, you go to the youth group but as soon as you walk out, you have nothing to do with God. You direct your own life, He's not in there. But to open the door is to say "Lord come in." Let me put it this way. Let's say that your life has no peace. There's just nothing but emptiness and all of a sudden you hear a knock at the door of your life and then you hear a voice.

It says "Let me in. Open the door to me and I will give you peace and I will give you life, life in abundance."

And you think to yourself, well this is fantastic. I would love to have peace and life in abundance. You run to the door and grab the door handle but right before you turn it, the one outside the door, He clears his throat.

He says "Wait, before you open the door, know this. I will give you peace. I will give you life eternal but when I come in, the house is mine. Everything in it is mine. You're mine. The door is mine. The door handle is mine. Everything is mine. When I come in, I come in as Saviour. When I come in, I come in as Lord. Now do you still want to open that door? When I come through that door I will give you life. But it may cost you your life. Now do you still want to open that door?"

And there are two reasons why the true believer opens that door. One is desperation, before a man will truly open the door to the Lord of glory it's because he's desperate. He's exhausted himself. He can't go on anymore. There's no reason to be alive. It's all worthless. He does it out of desperation. But there's another reason and it will always be there. He does it because that voice is beautiful to him. And he says to himself, I have got to see who is on the other side of the door. I'm terrified to open that door but my desire to see the one on the other side is greater than my fear. He may take my life, but I've got to see Him. I so desire him, I cannot live without Him. That was Moses remember? Moses has the biggest ministry of anybody in the world. He's lead the entire nation out of Egypt but guess what, it's not enough. It's not enough. If ministry can fill you, it's because you're lost. If you're a Christian nothing can fill you not even ministry, nothing but Christ. Moses had the greatest ministry of his day but this is what he said "Show me your glory."

"Moses no one can see my glory and live"

Listen to the heart of Moses, it's almost as if he's saying "I know. I know I will die, I don't care. If I can just see one glimpse of your beauty it's worth it. Show me your glory."

And so you open that door and He comes in as Saviour and as Lord. That doesn't mean when He comes in that you become perfectly obedient, the Christian is full of failure but the Christian is broken over his failure, because he knows Jesus is Lord and he longs to please Him as Lord. Now notice something else about this text. He says "If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into him."

Look at this. This is the God who created the universe. This is the God who sustains the universe. The universe itself cannot contain His glory and He's going to come into you. You're going to tell me that doesn't change you at all? Are you going to tell me that the Lord of glory can come to indwell your heart and it's not going to have any impact on you at all? You're going to be just like everybody else? You're going to remain the same? That my friend is ludicrous. I am not saying that when He comes in you will be perfect. I am not saying that when He comes in you will no longer have any struggle with sin. But what I am saying is this, there will be a difference and not only will you know it inside, others will see it on the outside.

Then look what He says "I will dine with him and he with me." Now that's interesting and that's what most preachers never talk about. They say "Did you pray that prayer? Were you sincere? Then you're saved."

They'll even say things like this, "Even if you live the rest of your life in sin, you're saved. Even if you remain the same you're saved."

That's not true. Now when I say that, people will say "Now you're preaching works. You're saying that a man is saved because he believes and changes."

Absolutely not, a man is saved by faith alone but those who believe have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. They have become new creatures. And what does the book of James tell us? Does James disagree with Paul? Paul says we're saved by faith alone without works. James says that faith alone without works is dead. Are they disagreeing with one another? No they're saying the same thing. Paul is saying we're saved by faith alone and James agrees, but James adds one thing; the evidence that we have truly believed is the way we live afterward. We're not saved by works, the changes in our lives demonstrate that we have been saved.

And look what he says in the book of revelations "I will dine with him and he with me." How do you know that Jesus Christ has come into your heart? How do you know that He saved you? Most people believe it's because they think they were sincere in that moment. Isn't that true?

Preachers will say “When you prayed that prayer were you sincere?”

And the person says “Well I think so.”

“Well then you’re saved.”

You’re trusting in the sincerity of one of your prayers? You know most people who say they’re believing in Jesus are not believing in Jesus. Do you know what they’re trusting in? Their prayer. I prayed. I did that. Don’t worry about me. I already prayed that prayer. So the evidence that you’re converted is one time you prayed a prayer?

Jesus says this is the evidence that He came in. “I will dine with him, and he will dine with me.” Now in many cultures in the Middle East, and even many cultures still in Asia, what is one of the greatest demonstrations of friendship or fellowship? Eating together. You can go into the jungles of Peru, people living in huts. But if you come to their hut and you are their friend, they’ll put the best food they have out in front of you. They will eat with you.

And what He’s saying is this, “If I have truly come in, then the evidence will be our ongoing fellowship together. We will walk together. We will talk together. I will be your Lord and you will be my servant. I will speak into your ear and your heart will learn to obey me.”

Young person, many of you don’t even have any kind of relationship with Jesus Christ. Your parents are Christians, but they’re from China. They don’t even speak English well. They don’t even know how to use the internet. You don’t esteem them or respect them. Yeah, they have their Christian faith, but we’re more modern. And you also may be without Christ with a false sense of security. Oh, you go to youth group but mainly just to see your friends. You very rarely talk about Christ, you don’t really walk with Him. You just can’t wait until whatever preaching goes on is over so that you can play your games again because you’re all about fun.

Do you honestly walk with Christ? Is He a friend who sticks closer to you than a brother? Do you study His word? Do you seek Him in prayer? Do you want to conform your life to His will? Some of you have never heard questions like that but this is what the Bible teaches. Please, I beg you. Make your callings and elections sure. Are you truly Christian?

Now let’s go back to Matthew chapter 7. “Enter through the narrow gate.” Now this word “enter” is a command. There’s the idea that you need to enter through the gate. Now people will tell you today, I’ve heard preachers say this, I’ve heard Christians say this. It goes something like this “Well the easiest thing in the world to do is get saved. It’s so easy, all you have to do is believe. All you have to do is pray that prayer. It is by faith alone but it’s not easy. There are terrible decisions you have to make. The reason why they tell you it’s easy is because they don’t tell you about the terrible decisions you have to make. Hold your place and look in Luke 16.

In Luke 16: 16 “The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached and everyone is forcing his way into it.”

What does he mean? “They’re forcing their way into it.”

Look real quick at the book of Matthew chapter 11. Look at verse 12. “From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force.” Now in Matthew this is very difficult to interpret grammatically. Does it mean that there are violent men who are trying to suppress the kingdom? It could mean that. But when we get over to Luke, there seems to be a little more clarity. It is that people are forcing their way into it and what does that mean? You’ve got these people and they’re hearing the preaching of Jesus. But to the religious leaders, Jesus is a scandal. They hate Him. The whole world hates Him but He’s preaching these words and they are words of life. And some people are hearing those words and they’re wanting to believe them. They’re wanting to follow Jesus. But in order to get to Him, they have to force their way past certain obstacles; the religious leaders who want to stop them; maybe their own family members who want to stop them; maybe the fact that the world’s opinions are stopping them; and their own heart may be stopping them. Their own heart may be saying this “If you follow Him, you’re going to get killed.” And a person forces himself beyond that. “I don’t care if I die, I’m going to follow Him.”

Yes, but the heart of the rich young ruler, “if you follow Him, He told you that you have to give up everything.” And that stood against the rich young ruler and he could not fight his way past it and he died and went to hell.

When Jesus is calling you to come, your friends may stand in front of you, even your supposed Christian friends. You get serious about following Jesus Christ in your youth group and all those fine little Christians will begin to mock you, talk about you and hate you. Do you see that? But see today in the Americas there is no cost, there’s nothing. I mean believe in Him. Stay in the world. Believe in Him. Not only that but if you believe in Him, He’s going to make it better for you. There’s nothing to fight against, there’s no reason to press in because you can have Jesus and your best life now. How different is it in other parts of the world? I know of people who work in the Middle East. I can’t even mention their names. They’re friends of mine. If I mention their names they could be hunted down and killed. For them to believe in Jesus they have to press in. If you believe in Christ, not only will your family reject you, they’ll put a sentence of death on your head. Your own father will kill you. You come to Christ, you lose your job. You come to Christ, your wife and your children will leave you. And they have to enter in by faith. Some of you know exactly what I’m talking about. Some of you knew how hard it was to come to Christ but you said to yourself, He alone has the words of life. He alone died for my sins. I must have him. I must.

You see how dangerous it is to live here. You see how dangerous the Christianity is that you’ve been fed. Be very careful. If someone in another country listens to this be very careful because the superficial gospel that’s found in the Americas is either already in your country or it is coming there. Reject it and stay with the scriptures and stay with church history. Salvation is by faith alone but those who have believed, they have become new creatures, regenerated by the Holy Spirit and they will begin to live a different life. So we go back to Matthew. “Enter through the narrow gate.” Now this is a narrow gate. It is a restrictive gate. It’s hard to press through. Kind of like a camel through the eye of a needle. It’s hard to get through there. All the stuff that you’re carrying on your back, all the world that you’re carrying with you, it’s not going to go through there with you. And you’ve got to make a decision. Stay in this world and keep your stuff and die and go to hell. Or reject the world and pass through the gate. I’m not saying here that Christians have to be poor to be saved. I’m not saying that you shouldn’t get a good education. I’m not saying that God can’t bless your life in every way. But all the hopes you have in this world, you have to leave behind to follow Him. To follow Him.

The narrow gate. I would recommend to every one of you to read one of the most important books ever written. It is one of the best illustrations of this passage and it’s translated into Chinese. It is the *Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan. What’s amazing is this; almost all the preachers today say it’s a wonderful book. But almost every one of them preach a different message than what’s found in that book. The gospel they preach totally contradicts Bunyan’s gospel. I can go almost everywhere and say “What do you think about Charles Spurgeon?” And people say “He’s the greatest preacher who ever lives except for the apostles.” I say “Why do you preach the complete opposite of him?” You see, true conversion is faith in Christ. That faith is costly. It is costly.

Let’s pray.

Father I thank you for your word and I pray dear God that you would use it to bring people to Christ. That they would enter in. God help them.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen.

## Walking the narrow way

Let's open our bibles to Matthew chapter 7. Read verses 13 and 14. "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."

He begins by saying "enter through the narrow gate" and we discussed that in the last sermon; that the narrow gate is the person of Jesus Christ and that He is the one that made sacrifice for our sins. There is no salvation apart from Him. Absolutely none. It is only through Christ and that in itself is the scandal of Christianity. Because of this we are called an exclusive religion because we say that all those outside of Christ are excluded from God's salvation. Now before someone attacks us on this matter, you must realize that most religions say the same thing. To the Muslim and the Jew, we are wrong and we are outside of salvation according to them. The Buddhist and the Hindu, if they would be true to their teaching say the same thing. The atheist himself would say that we have a completely wrong view of everything. So everyone has to make their stand. The Christian chooses to make his stand on the person of Christ.

Now He says "Enter through the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction." The idea here is this; there are almost an infinite number of saviours out there and they say that they are the gate. They make a broad gate. All of them put together. And most people are going through those gates. But Jesus says that it leads to death. But not only is there a wide gate. There is also a broad way. And most are walking on it. There's something very important about this broad way. It is undefined. It is basically walking any way you want to, being subject only to your own heart. This is a very frightening statement because it describes most people who call themselves Christians. They say that they have passed through the narrow gate. They say that they are believing in Jesus. But they walk in the broad way. They do not walk in the specific commands of Christ. They do not walk as someone following Christ. They do what's right in their own eyes. Now I want you to look at your own life. Especially young people, listen to me. Do you consciously seek to walk according to the commandments of Christ? Are you thinking about His will? What He desires for you in specific situations? Most would have to admit "No, they're not."

They say they believe in Jesus but walk just like everybody else, imitating everyone else with almost no thought of the will of Christ. This is very dangerous because He says this about the wide way "It leads to destruction." You see, this passage is found in the Sermon on the Mount. And the Sermon on the Mount is extremely important for Christianity. As a matter of fact if you look at chapter 5, in verse 1 "When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them." Now why the word mountain? Honestly Matthew could have used the word hill but he uses the word mountain, why? He's trying to demonstrate something extremely important to us. There are two mountains in scripture. We have Mount Sinai where the law was given to Moses. This was the centre of the Jewish religion. God gave the law to Moses and that law was to govern the people. But now Matthew is telling us something else. God has come down on the mountain in the person of Jesus Christ and He opens up His mouth and He begins to teach us. It demonstrates the importance of what's being said. So we work our way through the Sermon on the Mount. And we see the great authority of Christ. And the great things He's teaching us about Christianity; what it means to follow Him. But then He comes to the last part of the Sermon on the Mount. He's in chapter seven. And it seems like everything begins to change because He begins to teach the people with great warnings. And what he's basically doing is this. He's saying, "I'm not just some teacher who's giving you a few principles through which you can make your life better. What I am teaching you has to do with life and death, heaven and hell,

salvation, destruction. This is not something to take lightly, your entire life depends on how you respond to His word. Sometimes people say to me “Why are you always so serious about this?” It is a serious thing. I am not called to be a Christian comedian. I am called to warn you. The Christian message is full of promise. It’s full of blessing, it’s full of warning. It is full of warning. Here it is. What will you do with it?

He comes to us and He says, “Look there’s two different types of gates here. There’s the narrow gate, that’s me and there’s the broad gate. That’s everyone else. Choose you this day. Where will you pass?” And then He goes on from the gate. He says you go through that broad gate, you’ll be on the broad way, and everyone else is going that way. Your culture is going that way, your friends are going that way, media’s going that way, government is going that way, education, academics are all going that way. If you go that way, you will be with them, you will receive their approval, they will like you and with them you will be destroyed. And then He goes on “The gate is broad, it leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.” Look at this, “many.” Most will enter through it. And we see that don’t we? Look at the world. If you look at Canada or the United States of America, would you say that the majority of the people are worshipping Christ? Would you say that our academic circles exist for the glory of Christ? Absolutely the opposite. Would you say our government seeks to submit to Christ? The music that fills the airways, is it about Christ? Walk down the street, do you see people serving Christ? No. That’s why in one sense, the kingdom is a secret or hidden kingdom.

Now let’s go on. And then He says “For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” The gate is small,” I’ve said this and I’ll say it again. Christ is the way, the truth and the life and apart from Him there’s nothing. Nothing. You see, this is why it’s so important that we preach Christ. We ought to be a joyful people. The news we have is good news. But it is so important that it requires not only our attention but that we share it with seriousness. If Jesus Christ is telling the truth, the great majority of this world will be condemned. That’s serious. There are so many things going on in this world that are very serious. But none of them are more serious than the eternal damnation of a man. Nothing is more important to you than to discern what will happen to your soul. You see that’s one of the things this world does to you. It makes your mind so filled, so bombarded with things that don’t matter. Most people are consumed with self, with money, with success, entertainment, sensual desires, video games all the while the world is marching towards destruction. This is what Jesus says, “For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life.” Now let’s make a relationship between the small gate and the narrow way. Many of you may say “I’ve passed through the narrow gate, I believe in Jesus, I’ve passed through the narrow gate.” Let me ask you this question. Are you walking in the narrow way? See they don’t say that anymore in contemporary Christianity do they? If I were to rewrite the gospel based on what I hear preached in most churches, it would sound like this.

“Pass through the narrow gate and then walk anyway you choose. Take the broad path walk with everyone else. Do what is right in your own eyes and that is not what Jesus says.” The evidence that you have truly passed through the narrow gate is that you are seeking to walk in the narrow way; the way that is marked out by the commandments of Christ. Do you see that? Now again, I’m not saying that those who believe will do all of this perfectly. The strongest Christian will stumble and fall. But the direction of his life will be determined by the commandments of Christ. I so wish that God would take the blinders off of people. I wish that He would take the blinders off the preachers. We have these churches where everybody is supposedly believing in Jesus and everybody is worshipping Jesus because the music is so good then walk out of the building and forget all about Jesus. And then walk anyway they choose. This is a direct contradiction of scripture. The evidence that you believe is that you’re walking in a new direction. You’re no longer going with the crowd. You’re going against it. That’s why Jesus says “be very afraid when everyone speaks well of thee.”

When a religious figure dies and everybody in the world talks about how great they were, there’s a problem.

Now listen to what it says, “The narrow way leads to life.” Life, real life, abundant life, eternal life. Now there’s something about eternal life you need to understand. Although it is dealing with a quantity of life, unending life, that is not the main idea of eternal life. Eternal life is a quality of life. And in John 17, Jesus tells us what that is, that we would know God and His Son. That is eternal life. That we would enter in to an intimate fellowship with God through His Son. And that is one of the reasons eternal life begins at conversion. It doesn’t begin when it dies because at the moment of conversion, you begin an intimate relationship with God. And as you walk with Him over the years, that relationship deepens. You grow in your relationship with Him. It leads to life. Life that is independent of circumstances. When I disciple my children, when we talk about things such as life, I tell them over and

over. Life is knowing God. Life is following His commands. Life has nothing to do with circumstance. Life has nothing to do with material things. Life has to do with relationship; the relationship I have with God; the relationship I have with my wife; the relationship I have with my children; the relationship I have with my brothers and sisters in Christ; the relationship I have with other human beings. It has nothing to do with most of the things you're chasing after.

Most people will be hindered in their relationship with God because of their work. And they're working for things. They won't have time for their wife because they're working for things. They won't have time for their children because they want things. They won't have time for brothers and sisters in Christ because of things. In the end you've spent your entire life for things. I tell my sons, I want you to be rich in relationships. I want you not to take that higher paying job if it means taking you away from your God and from your family. It's all about relationship. Yes we must eat, yes we must have clothes, yes we must have a house to live in. But the simplest of these things should make us content if we have relationships. That begins with Christ. Dear friends, this is so important and as you grow older, you begin to see this. It's like the old preacher says, "There's only a few things that are eternal; God, His word and souls of men. Invest your life in that which is eternal." Real life, it is only through Christ and it is only on the narrow way. Commandments of Christ are not something that is separated from His person. The Christian life is not just following a group of principles. The Christian life is not just following rules or wisdom. The commandments of Christ are markers on the side of the road to keep us following Him, following a person. Although doctrine is important, my doctrine is the person of Christ. Although commands are important, they are not the end of things. They direct us to Christ. The Christian religion is about life and that life is found in a person. And to follow that person is to walk in a narrow way, a way marked out by His commands.

Now look what it says here in verse 13, "And there are few who find it." Now what does this mean? Jesus Christ is saying something terrifying. He says that most people are on the path to destruction and only a few are on the path to life. Now let me share with you what He's not saying. When a lot of people read this passage, this is what they think. Well when you look at the whole world, you see that only a small percentage of that world is people who profess Jesus Christ. So because of that, we see this passage is true. No, that's not what He's saying. He's not saying that there's a small group of people who profess Jesus Christ and they are a small group compared to all the other people who don't. What He's saying is this. Within the small group that calls themselves Christians, only few will find Him. That changes everything. Now you may ask "What's my basis for saying that?" The following warnings. Let's just look at them quickly. I am submitting to you this. That Jesus is saying "Among those who call themselves my disciples, only a few of them will find life. The rest are deceived. They're on the broad way and they are headed to destruction." The reason why I say that is this, He then begins to teach about fruit. He says "You will know them by their fruit." So what He's saying is this, there are many people who will say they are Christians, but the fruit of their life will prove that they are not. So He's saying "if you say you're a Christian, but the fruit of a Christian is not in your life, you're on the broad way."

Then He goes on in verse 21, "Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom." He's saying there's a whole bunch of people who will call Him Lord but will not enter the kingdom. Then He says there are two groups, both of them hear the word of the Lord, but only one of them does the word of the Lord. And by doing the word of the Lord, they prove that they have truly believed, that they have passed through the small gate, that they are on the narrow way and that they're in His life. The rest claim to hear but they do not do, and by not doing they demonstrate they have not truly believed and they are destroyed. This is a very, very serious thing. And you must listen to it. Ask yourself the question. Have I passed through the small gate? Well ask yourself this question. Do you walk on the narrow way? Is your life governed by the commandments of Christ? When you disobey the commandments of Christ, does it bring you to repentance? Do you seek to know the commandments of Christ so that you may walk more carefully? Or do you commit the heresy found in the book of Judges, where everyone did what was right in their own eyes? It is a true statement that there are more practical atheists than there are professing atheists. Possibly very few of you would stand up and say you are an atheist but you live as if you were an atheist. You get up in the morning, you go through the day and you go to bed at night with almost no thought of Christ, with almost no thought of the word of Christ. It's practical atheism. We must listen.

Now let's go on, in verse 15, He says "Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits, grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles are they? In the specific and immediate context, Christ is talking about false prophets. But there is a wider application that encompasses all of



us. it is the undeniable relationship which exists between the internal and external. What a man is on the inside is proven by what he does on the outside. This is extremely important in our culture, at least in the North American culture where we have made a complete divorce between what we say we are and what we do. You'll often hear a person in the church say this, "Don't judge me, because you don't know what's in my heart." I don't have to know what's in your heart, I just need to listen to what comes out of your mouth and watch the way you live. For out of the mouth comes the content of the heart and the will of a man, the decisions he makes demonstrates the nature of a man, what he actually is on the inside. Now this is extremely important.

He says "Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing." It is something external. They have dressed themselves in a type of religion. Paul says they have a form of godliness but they deny the very power that causes true godliness. They dress themselves. They put on their mask. And he says this will be very common. They will look like sheep but inside they are ravenous wolves. Then how can we know them. If they're disguised as that clever then how can we ever determine? From this passage and Galatians chapter 1, I can give you two ways to expose them. In Galatians 1, it is this, if they preach a gospel other than the biblical, apostolic gospel, that's the first clue. And many people are doing that even within evangelicalism. They've taken the glorious gospel of our blessed God, reduced it down to a few principles. If you agree to those few principles and you pray the prayer and the end of the tract, they pronounce you saved. That's not the gospel.

Another way, "You will know them by their fruits." I was a young pastor in Peru. I was probably only 27 years when this happened. I was getting ready for church. It was about five minutes before church was to start and these three men walked in. They were much older than me, they had very strong personalities and they walked in to take control. I was a young man. And they said, "Who's the pastor?"

I said, "I am." And they looked at me, despising.

They said, "We're prophets."

And I said "That's wonderful."

They said "We want to speak to the people."

I said "What a blessing, that'll be great."

They said, "When do you want us to come forward to speak?"

I said, "In about six months."

They said, "What do you mean six months?"

I said, "Well, if you're prophets, you've obviously read Matthew 7. And I can only know if you're a true prophet by your fruit. So when you live among me for about six months to a year, and I can determine that you're true prophets, then you can speak in this church."

They got very angry, they rebuked me and they walked out the same door they came in. You will know them by the way they live. Do you realize how many so called prophets feed off of God's people? They walk among God's people as if they were kings. They are the men of God. They've got to have a better house, they've got to have a bigger car. No, a man who preaches the gospel faithfully has a right to be supported. He has a right to live with dignity, to provide a home for his wife and children, to be able to educate his children. He does have needs. But to live in luxury, he is not representing Christ. He is not representing Christ.

If we are men of God, what do we care about money? I had a man who was very, very wealthy one time. He came to me and said "Brother Paul, sometimes, you know, I'm so ashamed. I'm very sad. I have so much money and I look at men like you, and I feel sad."

I said, "Yeah, I feel sad for you too."

He said "What do you mean?"

"All you got was money. I open up God's word and I hear Him speak to me. I bow my knee and I sense His presence. I have a home in glory that will swallow this world."

You can tell that God really doesn't think a whole lot about money. Just look at who He gives it too. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. A man once walked into a poor pastor's house and saw all his children. And he looked at the children and said "This is what makes a rich man poor."

He said "No sir, these are what make a poor man rich."

Relationship, the presence of God. So if a prophet demands profit, he's not a profitable prophet and you need to get away from him. I know I've said this over and over. It's all about relationships. It's all about God wakes you up at one in the morning and walks to talk to you a bit through His word. It's all about the peace of God that passes all understanding. It's all about waking up at two in the morning just to watch your wife sleep. It's all about a little baby. It's all about a person whose life is ruined being transformed and changed. It's all about going somewhere and working so that starving children don't starve anymore. All these other things are just rot. They're just rot. A true prophet, he has a bible and he has a towel by which he washes the feet of the saint and he has a hoe by which he works his garden. He has a shepherd's staff. He cares for the flock. You'll know them by their fruit. You will know them by their fruit. But in the same way, we will know whether or not we are Christians by our fruit. And that's what we'll be talking about in the next session. Are you a Christian? Well you will know by your fruit.

Let's pray.

Father I pray that you would take this word and use it in the life of your people. I pray that men might be born again.

For your glory and the glory of your son,

Amen.