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Sermon Notes

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## **The Narrow Gate: Jesus Commands Us to Enter the Kingdom Matthew 7:13-14**

### I. “Multitudes, multitudes in the Valley of Decision...” Joel 3:14

- A. Constant decisions to be made... life gets more and more complex; no decision more vital than what you will do with Jesus
- B. Sermon on the Mount not meant to be marveled at but obeyed
- C. Calls for decisive action by His hearers
- D. Getting ready for Judgment Day
  - ◆ Two gates, two roads
  - ◆ Two trees
  - ◆ Two claims
  - ◆ Two builders, two houses, two foundations

### II. Forcing Us to Choose

- A. Old Testament Choices
  - 1. Garden of Eden
  - 2. Shechem... Deuteronomy: Moses forces them to choose

***Deuteronomy 30:15-20 “See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.... This day I call heaven and earth against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life...”***

- 3. Joshua at the end of his life... assembled all the leaders of Israel at Shechem

***Joshua 24:15 “But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”***

- 4. Elijah at Mount Carmel... assembled all the prophets of Baal and the people of Israel

***1 Kings 18:21 “Elijah went before the people and said, ‘How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.’”***

B. Jesus also forces a choice

1. Sea of Galilee: “Follow me...” Peter, John, James, Andrew; also Matthew @ tax collector’s booth
2. John 6: forcing difficult choices on the disciples: “Eat my flesh and drink my blood.”

***John 6:66-69 “From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. ‘You do not want to leave too, do you?’ Jesus asked the Twelve? Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’”***

3. Paul on the Damascus Road

C. Application of Sermon on the Mount

1. No sermon truly a message from God until it is applied forcefully
2. From this point on, Jesus forces a choice
3. Especially in these two verses which we consider today

***Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it.”***

Two gates, two roads, tow destinies, two groups... choose!! Here is you valley of decision!

### **III. Lessons from the Two Gates**

A. There is an inside and an outside

1. Garden of Eden

***Genesis 3:23-24 “So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden... After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth...”***

2. Noah’s Ark

***Genesis 7:23 “Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out.... Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.”***

3. Bloody Doors in Goshen

***Exodus 12:22 “Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood in the basin and put some blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.”***

4. Rahab’s House

***Joshua 2:19 “If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him.”***

5. Cities of Refuge

***Numbers 35:26-27 “But if the accused ever goes outside the limits of the city of refuge to which he has fled and an avenger of blood finds him outside the city, the avenger of blood may kill the accused without being guilty of murder.”***

6. Jesus’ teaching:

- a. **Sermon on the Mount:** “Knock and the door will be opened to you...”
- b. **Little children:** Matthew 18:3 “Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”
- c. **Rich Ruler:** Matthew 19:25 “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.”
- d. **Five foolish virgins:** Matthew 25:11 “Later the others also came... ‘Sir, sir,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’”

There is an outside and an inside

- B. There is a true gate... and praise God for it!!

1. There might have been no way to enter the Kingdom... Satan has no gate, no door, no point of entry, no second chance!!
2. God has made a gate... and made it available for us
3. God can choose to make it a wide gate or a narrow one, but either way, it’s His gate

4. That there is a gate at all is evidence of His grace

C. The true gate is a **narrow** gate

1. Greek word is *stenos*... comes from a root meaning to groan as under a burden, as under some kind of pressure, like being under a restriction... we get our word "**stenography**" from it, meaning a kind of restricted, abbreviated or compressed writing

**Illus.** Turnstile... admittance at a ballgame; one at a time, with no baggage.... Purpose of turnstile is to be sure each person has a ticket

2. We come to Christ alone, one at a time, and we are stripped of our baggage by this narrow gate

**Illus.** "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling

Rich young ruler, Matthew 19... "sell all your possessions, give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me."

Stripped of 1) materialism; 2) earthly position; 3) earthly ambitions; 4) independence; 5) pride and self-righteousness

3. Narrow gate strips all things from us but humility and faith in Christ

**Illus.** Spelunkers in a cave... tiny openings

D. There is also a **false gate**... and it is **spacious and broad**

1. Opposite of narrow gate... anything goes, no restrictions, easy to get through
2. Gate is self-defined... positive, friendly, makes you feel good
3. Best word... **TOLERANT**

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: "When carnal wisdom gets hold of evangelism, the first thing to go is the narrow gate."

Modern church growth movement... Willow Creek, "seeker sensitive"... get 'em saved first, THEN tell them about obedience to Christ

Southern Baptists... 2/3rds of all Southern Baptists are not in church today! Many came to "faith" through a wide gate that required no commitment, no sacrifice, no carrying of the cross

- 4. The false gate is wide... it is easy, it is comfortable
- E. We must search for the gate

**"few there are that find it..."**

**"Seek and you will find"**

- 1. The gate must be sought... it doesn't jump up and present itself to you
- 2. Salvation begins when you search for a way to enter heaven

Illus.: Martin Luther fasted, prayed, hungered, thirsted, entered a monastery, etc. None of that brought him salvation... but in his works he searched and as he searched, he found the true gate

- F. We must enter the narrow gate
  - 1. We are born outside the gate... outside the Kingdom of Heaven
  - 2. Through sin, we are part of Satan's kingdom and under the wrath of God
  - 3. Jesus here gives a command: aorist imperative

**"Enter through the narrow gate..."**

- a. as Lord, he commands... He does not beg, he commands
- b. we must obey to be saved
- c. our obedience to this command is essential to our salvation

**1 Peter 4:17-18 "It is time for judgment to begin with the family of God. And if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the unrighteous and the sinner?"**

Many people make a distinction between knowing Jesus as Savior, and knowing Him as Lord... on the other side of the narrow gate you meet a sovereign Lord who will

rule over your life... the narrow gate leads into the Kingdom of Heaven; and what is the center of every Kingdom? The KING!!! The King commands that we enter

4. Unless we enter, we stay on the outside
5. NOT CALLED TO ADMIRE THE GATE, TO PRAISE THE GATE, TO TALK ABOUT THE GATE, TO ANALYZE THE GATE... WE ARE CALLED TO ENTER THE GATE

G. Who is the gate? It is Jesus Christ

***John 10:7 “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep... whoever enters through me will be saved.”***

***Hebrews 10:19-20 “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the most holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body...”***

H. How do we enter?

1. Conviction of sin... becoming a spiritual beggar
2. Search for salvation... “What must I do to be saved?”
3. Repentance from sin... total desire to renounce sin, to be saved from sin’s penalty; total rejection of all self-righteousness... self-confidence, self-achievement, self-satisfaction

Done talking about the fact that you’re basically a good person

Charles Spurgeon: “You and your sins must separate, or you and your God will never come together. No one sin may you keep; they must all be given up. They must be brought out like Canaanite kings from the cave and hanged in the sun.”

4. Faith... trust that Christ alone can give you eternal life... Christ’s death on the cross is sufficient and necessary for salvation... AT THIS POINT YOU ENTER
5. Commitment... actually enter in... give you whole life to Christ

## **IV. Lessons from the Two Roads**

A. The gate is just the beginning of a long journey

1. Salvation touches all aspects of sin

2. Salvation from sin's penalty is instantaneous

***Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

3. BUT salvation from sin's practice takes an entire lifetime to work out by God's grace

***John 14:6 “I am the way, and the truth and the life... no one comes to the Father except through me.”***

Illus. Pilgrim's Progress... Puritan doctrine of sanctification; we enter through the wicket gate, but then begins a long journey to the Celestial City, and it is a hard road

Many Southern Baptists have forgotten that there is a journey to be travelled... we believe in 'once saved, always saved...' and that is true... but everyone who is saved will be making a long journey... growing more and more like Jesus Christ, serving God more and more faithfully

- B. Each Gate leads to a road like itself

1. The wide gate leads to a broad road
  - a. easy to follow... no restrictions, anything goes
  - b. no self-denial... feeds human pride
  - c. "Profess Jesus, walk the aisle, and that's all"
  - d. sin is tolerated, truth is moderated, humility ignored
  - e. God's word is praised but not studied; God's standards admired but not practiced
  - f. No spiritual maturity is sought, and none comes
  - g. No sacrifice either... this is the easy way

West Indian Muslim... chose Islam over Christianity: "Islam is a noble broad path; There is room for a man and his sins on it. The way of Christ is too narrow."

I wish all American pastors saw this as clearly as this man did!!

2. The narrow gate leads to a narrow road
  - a. Christian life does not get more and more tolerant of sin

- b. what is restricted at the beginning is restricted all the way through
- c. YET as we grow we see more and more that sin is the true enemy... we become glad for the restrictiveness of God's road

***1 John 5:3 “His commands are not burdensome...”***

***Matthew 11:30 “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”***

- d. sin is the crushing burden... the way of Christ is hard but yet light

***Galatians 5:1 “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.”***

## **V. Lessons from the Two Destinies**

- A. Both roads have a destination

***“Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction...”***

***“Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life...”***

- 1. God is a purposeful being... 293 times “so that”
- 2. Life has a destination as well... where are you heading??

- B. Destination #1: Destruction

- 1. Not merely annihilation
- 2. Judgment Day... point by point judgment for every sin ever committed
- 3. God hold us accountable

***Romans 2:5 “You are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath when he righteous judgment will be revealed.”***

- 4. Again, Jesus teaches us about hell

Much present-day evangelism omits references to hell... this was definitely NOT Jesus' way

- C. Destination #2: Life

1. Eternal life... knowing God

***John 10:10 “I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”***

***John 17:3 “Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only eternal God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”***

2. Abundant life = God's richest gifts
3. Life now, more life later!!!

***Philippians 1:21 “For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain!”***

- D. Destinations the same as every “valley of decision”... LIFE OR DEATH

Eden= “The day you eat of it you will surely die”

Shechem (Deuteronomy) = I am setting before you life or death; now choose life”

So many times, we say “This is not a life or death issue...” He is truly the ultimate life or death issue... will you live eternally in heaven or die eternally in hell

## **VI. Lessons from the Two Groups**

### A. Many

1. Is there safety in numbers?
2. Heard in the streets of Gomorrah: “Everyone’s doing it!”
3. Living a counter-cultural life

### B. Few

1. Turnstile lets in only one at a time
2. Few are entering
3. Disciples’ question: “Will only a few be saved?” Luke 13:22
4. Our burning desire... that we be among those entering

## **VII. Lessons from the Two Groups**

- A. Obey Christ’s command... enter the narrow gate
- B. Travel the narrow road

C. Don't groan under the narrowness... the road leads to life; the things which are cut out are deadly