

Highway to Hell

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Bible Text: Matthew 7:13-14

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Matthew chapter five, six and into seven is what is called the Sermon on the Mount. And in the Sermon on the Mount what the Lord has done up to this point is he has explained to us what it looks like to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. If you are in the kingdom you look and live and act and believe and think differently than the world.

We were studying on Sunday night in the college group that in 1 John it says the children of God and the children of the devil are obviously different. And yet in our world what you are hearing in the churches is that someone is living like a child of devil perpetually and yet the churches are telling them they are a child of God.

So if you will, look down in your Bible, Matthew chapter six first I want you to see what Jesus deals with is various truths that mark a genuine believer. In fact, let me jump back to chapter five so you can get a clearer picture of it.

In verse two, "He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit."¹ We read that this morning.

So he begins to list eight marks of a genuine convert. They are poor in spirit. Verse four, they mourn. They weep over their sins.

You know, it is an odd thing when you think of it from a worldly perspective for a person as Nicky came out and said, "I am so thankful that someone came and showed me what a sinner I was, showed me my depravity, showed me..."

You know, you started... why would you thank God for that?

Well, because when you poor in spirit and you weep over your sins, verse five, you are meek, you are humble. Then in verse six you begin to hunger and thirst for genuine righteousness. Instead of our righteousness being this external Pharisee righteousness, it has got to be all the way to the heart.

And so as you see there are other marks of a genuine Christian.

¹ Matthew 5:2-3.

So what the Lord is doing in chapter five and chapter six is explaining what life looks like in the kingdom of God. If you are in the kingdom of God, you are on your way to heaven. You are inheriting eternal life. You live differently.

Now what he does at the end of his sermon, the remaining passages from 13 all the way down to verse 27 which we will deal with just 13 and 14 today, at the end of his sermon he says, "This is what life looks like in the kingdom. Get into the kingdom."

Are you in the kingdom?

Notice what it says, the first word in verse 13. "Enter by the narrow gate."²

John the Baptist had come and he had said, "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The Lord Jesus comes right behind him, "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

And then he begins to explain what it looks like when you become a child of the king, when you are born again into the family of God and you become an inheritor in the kingdom of God you live differently. So what he is doing in chapter five and chapter six is causing you to count the cost. Do you want to be in the kingdom? This is how we live in the kingdom. In the kingdom you are not lustful. In the kingdom you don't make false oaths in order to somehow get your way on some slick legal contract. In the kingdom of God you are not hateful. Not only do you not murder people, you don't hate people. You are not angry with people. In the kingdom of God life is totally different.

Are you willing to be in the kingdom? Do you want that kind of life?

See, what a radical difference between the way the modern gospel churches are presenting Christianity. They will make it as easy and painless and simple... Where you are sitting bow your head, close your eyes. Nobody is going to look around. Nobody will know. Pray this little teeny tiny, itsy bitsy prayer and then nobody has to know and you are in.

That is satanic theology. To simply bow your head, "Lord, come into my heart," ok, good I am in.

All right, now I got that Jesus thing taken care of. Now, you really should live for the Lord, but if you don't, at least you are on your way to heaven.

Have we all heard that? Have we not heard that over and over?

That is not the way Jesus presented the gospel. What Jesus did is he came along and in all of chapter five and all of chapter six he said, "If you want to go to heaven, if you want

² Matthew 7:13.

to be in the kingdom of God, this is what it looks like. This is how you will live your life if you are in the kingdom.

Do you want that kind of a life? Do you want to live that kind of a life or do you want to be a hypocrite? Do you want to be a Pharisee? Do you want to have some girl on the side while you are pretending to your wife that you love her? Do you want to have some crooked business deal on the side while you are giving a 10 spot in church as the plate goes by?

Jesus says, "Listen. You can't have it both ways. You are either sold out for Jesus Christ or you are on your way to hell."

There is no middle road. There is no half Christian. There is no part way disciple.

People will say, "Yeah, but what about backsliders?"

Get a concordance. Look the word up. It is talking about lost people. Backsliders are lost people.

The New Testament says they have apostatized. They are not followers of Jesus Christ and, therefore, they are lost.

So what Jesus says, he lays it out real clear. If you want to go to heaven, if you want to be in the kingdom, do you want to be a child of the king? Get it real clear. This is the life style that we live. If you are not willing to live this lifestyle, forget about going to heaven. Forget about being in the kingdom. But if you have heard him preach in chapter five and chapter six and you understand, wow, you know, this is an incredible standard that God has set for his people, now he says, "All right, get in. Enter. Get into the kingdom. Don't let anything stop you from getting into the kingdom."

Because I will tell you what. Standing back and admiring the kingdom of God, coming to a church like this and admiring people whose lives have been changed is not going to get you to heaven. It has got to be real to you. It has got to mean that you are radically committed, sold out, following Jesus Christ.

Let me give you another example. You remember in the Old Testament Noah was building what? The ark. And there was a time when the ark was built and he was preaching 120 years the Bible says. Noah was a preacher of righteousness.

He didn't preach easy believism. He preached righteousness. It is not a matter of getting your theology straight. Yes, you have to have straight theology. You can't be a Christian and deny the trinity. So theology is very important. But that is not enough. If you were to force a demon, any demon in hell, you could make sure if there was some way you could be certain that that demon was telling the truth, every one of them knows their theology. They know God exists. They know Jesus is God in the flesh. They know the Bible is true.

Are they going to heaven? No. And yet our churches are full of people who are apathetic. They are murdering their babies through abortion. They are addicted to pornography online. They have got girls on the side. They are going to the clubs, drinking and partying and yet the churches are telling them, "Yeah, you are in. Did you pray a prayer? Well, then you are in."

I was listening on the radio the other day and this guy calls up one of those psychology hot line things. You know, Christian psychology. The guy calls up and says, "You know, when I was 12, when I was a young boy, I asked Jesus into my heart."

And he sounded like he was in his 40s. He said, "For all of these years I have been a practicing homosexual and I just found out that I am HIV positive. And the thing that worries me is I am not sure that I am a Christian."

So I thought, well, have no worries, you are not.

The problem was the guy is... the psychobabble guy said, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Don't let anybody tell you that. Let's settle this right now. Do you believe in Jesus?"

"Oh, yes."

"Do you believe he died on the cross for you?"

"Oh, yes."

"Do you believe he rose from the dead?"

"Oh, yes."

"Are you trusting him as your Savior?"

"Oh, yes."

"All right, well, that is out of the way. Now let's deal with the homosexuality."

I am sorry. That is not how salvation works. When you come to Jesus Christ you must repent. Repentance is turning away from your sins to follow Jesus Christ. You don't come in with all the baggage. You repent of it when you come to him.

And so what the Word of God teaches in verse 13, it starts off with a command. Do you realize the word "Enter" is a command of God? Jesus Christ is commanding you, "Enter." I mean this is more than an invitation to salvation. This is a command to salvation.

And the command to salvation, if you do not respond to it, you are in sin and rebellion against the King of kings.

All right.

We are going to unpack the phrase here in a moment.

“Enter.” Now the first thing he says is, “Enter by the narrow gate.”³

Now we will dig more into the narrow gate in a minute, but it starts off with a command and this is what is called in the Greek tense an aorist command. And the aorist command calls for a decisive settling action.

It is sort of like: Will you date me is an ongoing thing. Will you marry me is a decisive thing. See the difference?

Jesus is saying, “Look, I am not interested in someone dating me. I want you to follow me. Get saved. Enter in at the narrow gate.”

We will talk more about this narrow gate in a moment.

The reason he says to enter in by the narrow gate on your notes, first of all, is because, number one, because of the highway to hell.

Notice what it says in verse 13. For narrow is the gate and broad is the way. There are two things being spoken of. There is the gate and the way, the gate and the road.

Some of you live on a way. You know, such and such way. In other words way means a road. And what the Lord is saying in verse 13 is this. You had better enter in. You make a decisive choice. You decide right now, you count the cost. Yes, I understand what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Then get in the gate.

When you do that on our notes you need to be careful because there is a highway to hell. You are on the highway to hell and the Bible says get off of the highway to hell and get on to the little narrow foot path.

But let’s take a minute and understand what this wide gate and broad road are. The order is a gate, then a road. I want you to go through the gate and stay on the road. That is what the Lord is saying.

The gate and the road. There is two gates. There is a wide gate and a narrow gate. There is a broad road and a difficult road. Jesus starts off, right off the bat, “Enter by the narrow gate because wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction.”⁴

³ Matthew 7:13.

⁴ See Matthew 7:13.

Let me tell you a little bit about this highway to hell.

On your notes, first of all, the gate is wide. It is a wide gate and the Greek word is listed right there on your paper for those of you that are a little bit more studious and dig a little it deeper.

And what the word πλατεια (plat- ay'-uh) means is broad, wide, but it has something... another aspect to it and that is spacious.

Have you ever gone to Miami and driven on the multiple... I don't know how many lanes those highways have down there. I remember the first time I went from Saint Pete to Miami, you know, Saint Pete is all like, you know, just one way each way. And then you go to Miami and there is maybe, I don't know how many... I just figured the highway to hell is a 13 lane highway one way.

Now on this highway what you look as you look out of your car window, you are driving down this 13 lane highway to hell. It is broad and spacious. Do you realize the lines in the road are about twice as big as any other highway? So you have got room to kind of weave around and as you look out your car window on this highway to hell you see a church bus. And they are singing in the church bus.

So you figure, I am going in the right direction. I'm on a highway to...

The church buss is going there. The church bus is going in that direction. And then you look out your other window and you see a Buddhist bus going down the road and you figure, hey, church bus, Buddhist bus, man, they are all going in the same direction. And just as you look out your window you look up and there is a big road sign and on that road sign it says, "We all worship the same God under many names."

Isn't that right?

So on your highway to hell which is the course of this world, as you are driving along in your car you see a church bus and it is full of people and, you know, someone has got a bottle behind their back. Someone else is flirting with someone else on the church bus and they are married, but not to each other. The church bus makes frequent stops at the night clubs, but they are all headed in there and it says, "Church bus" and it says, "Christian."

So you are told and you are go over and you ask the pastor of the church bus, "Hey, where are you guys headed?"

"Oh, we are going to heaven."

Now, you don't know your Bible or anything and you figure he does. And so you feel confident because you figure, well, these guys on the bus, I mean, they are all claiming to

be followers of Jesus and they all are doing worse things than I am doing and yet they are on their highway to heaven. That is what they told you.

But I am telling you the Bible says the wide gate, the spacious, open road, is a highway to hell.

You look a little bit more out of your car window as you are driving down and you see a stretch limo. And you figure, well, where is that guy going?

Well, we are all going in the same direction.

You see, this is why it is absolutely crucial that someone open the Word of God and show you what the Bible says about where you are going, where you are headed.

Jesus says, "You had better enter by the narrow gate." You are already on the broad road. You are already on the highway to hell. You have got to get off of the highway. You have got to take an off ramp. I mean, if you want to get off of that highway to hell, you are going to have to take a hard right and there is going to be people honking their horns at you, yelling at you.

"Oh, you are going the wrong way."

You know, and as you are driving, I mean there is... there is great big billboards that will tell you all along this highway...

In fact they have little screens on the inside of your car that show movies of people who have been on the highway to hell and as they are dying in the movie they say, "Well, at least he has gone to a better place."

So you comfort yourself watching these in flight movies, you know, and, man, I tell you what. They are making me feel pretty good. And every so often I get a twinge of conscience.

Where does that twinge of conscience come from? You are driving down the highway to hell and you look out your window. Now there is massive, multi sparkling lights blinking, you know, Las Vegas like billboards and there is this one little guy over on the side of the road with a sandwich sign that says, "You are on your way to hell. Enter by the narrow road. You are on the highway to hell, man."

And for some reason he kind of keeps showing up, you know? Right by an off ramp. But it is such a small off ramp and nobody is taking it. I am not sure I want to go that way. You know, I know this little guy said, but, you know, as you are driving along and in your car and you look over at the guy in the stretch limo and he is beating his wife and you look over at the Moslem bus and they are beating their wife and they are bombing things. And you think, man, there has got to be more to it than driving down this highway to hell.

And you look out the window and you see a little guy with a sandwich sign that says, “There is more to it. Turn right here. Get off the highway to hell and get on to the straight and narrow.”

What I want you to see is that this broad road, this πλατεια (plat- ay’ -uh), this spacious gate, it goes on to call it, then, a broad way. It is a spacious gate. There is a lot of room for you. You can get on to the highway to hell with all of your baggage. There is no problem there. If you have got a dump truck full of liquor, plenty of room, very spacious. You got a bus full of immorality. Oh, man, we have got plenty of room. . The highway to hell is very spacious.

But then it is called a road. The road is broad. And on your notes this broad road, ευρυχωρος (yoo-roo’ -kho-ros) means large, but it also means something else. It means comfortable. Do you realize that?

When you look these words up and you find how they are used in other contexts, yes it means large, but it means large in a comfortable sense.

Ah, boy, I am sure glad I got those extra large pants after that Thanksgiving meal. It is large, but comfortable, see?

The road to hell is large and comfortable. In fact, another place this word is translated roomy. Another place the word is translated as “You are able to live unmolested.”

On the highway to hell nobody is going to persecute you. On the highway to hell you can live any way you want. No one is going to bug you because they are all doing the same thing. In fact, we are going to get a whole bunch of us together and we are going to legalize drunkenness. We are going to legalize nudity. We are going to legalize drunken parties. We are going to legalize the murder of our babies because we are all going in the same direction on the highway to hell. You are just surrounded by people like you.

Jesus said on the narrow road you are surrounded by people on the narrow road, you are going to be persecuted. They will hate you. They don’t want you to go on the narrow road. We are hated by world.

Jesus said in John 15, “If you were of the world the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, the world does not love you. The world hates you.”

So on your notes, then, the first thing about this highway to hell is you have got to strive to get on to it. You have got to put some effort to getting on to the narrow gate and get off of the wide road, off of the roomy, comfortable large living unmolested road.

The broad road to hell is like you don’t even have to do anything.

Do you realize if your car breaks down it will roll in that direction? If you just say, “You know, I am going to shut this off and sit here and think about it. I am not sure I am on the right road.”

You are all moving anyway because not only is your engine running, but the whole road is moving like one of those people transporter things. You have seen those at the airport. You just stand there and it moves.

Now some people are running as fast as they can... what are they called, those people transporter things? Conveyer belts, escalators?

You are not going up, you are going down.

And so you have got... you know, you are on this thing. It is moving. Now, some people are running with full bore. They can't wait to get to hell.

So the problem is they don't believe they are going to hell because they are surrounded by churches, parents, relatives, co workers that are telling them, “Oh, you saw that little guy on the side of the road. That is why you are all worked up. I get it. Yeah, you know what to do? Throw stuff at that guy. You know, the best thing to do is swerve over and almost hit him and then final turn to the side and then at least three or four cars will pass before he gets his senses back and can put the sign up in front of them.”

That is what this world does to Christians.

This is a broad road to hell. You are in a boat that is going down current toward Niagara Falls.

I read when I was going up over in Saint Petersburg, there was a bridge called the Skyway Bridge and this is just a... this is just a little thin thread. I mean, that is the most nerve wracking bridge to drive across. I would go all the way around Tampa Bay instead of going across that bridge. I was always worried and you always felt like you were on this roller coaster because it was real steep. And I was... back then I was driving an old Rambler. And, you know, I had holes in the floor where you put your feet out and run parts, you know.

And I was like, man, what if my car conks out? I am never going on this bridge again.

Well, when I was in like high school or something a barge comes along, hits the center support, knocks the very center in the top out right when the school buses are going to school. School bus flies off the edge. Cars put... and there were people who were like, “Why did those lights just disappear?” Because it was all foggy in the morning, you know, just the... and when you are up there you are in the clouds. I mean, the Skyway Bridge. I mean, that was like the most horrifying thought of driving up this little thin strip of tar and then you get to the top and then off you go down to the other end.

That is what the highway to hell is doing. And what we are trying to do is throw [?] in front of your car. We have got our siren on right beside you honking, yelling screaming, "The bridge is out, man."

And you got your windows up. You got your walkman on. You got your stereo boom, boom, boom.

You see, what we are trying to do is save your soul. We are trying to keep you from dropping into an eternity in hell.

If you are apathetic, if you are not sold out for Jesus Christ, you are on a highway to hell. You are not saved. You are on your way to the lake of fire forever.

The Word of God says there is a highway to hell. Jesus calls it broad way.

It is interesting to me that Hollywood calls its thing Broadway, don't they? There are even churches built on Broadway. I don't think I would want a church built on Broadway.

But they are going down Niagara. They are going down to the end. They are going down to where the river goes over the cliffs and they are going to a 1000 foot drop.

The next thing I want you to see in this enter by the narrow gate. There is a command. Do it now. It is a narrow gate because wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads where? To destruction.

When you look out your windows and you see through the smoky window of some party bus or some stretch limousine and you think, "Man, they sure look like they are having a good time, on their way, just keep it in mind, they are on their way over the broken bridge. So it doesn't matter how good things look now. The reality is it is all surface anyway. It is temporary and it is surface.

There is no peace says my God to the wicked. The wicked don't have any inner peace. They don't have the fruit of the Holy Spirit. They don't have love. They don't have joy.

Do you know what the wicked do? I have fallen out of love with you, dear.

Well, we have been married 10 years.

Well, I am not in love with you anymore.

See, Jesus says, "Start loving the person."

Amen?

But she says, "I don't love you anymore."

Well, you see, that is the way a wicked person thinks. That is the way they think in this world. They don't understand the fruit of the Spirit. Where they are headed is to destruction.

So in your notes, A) the gate is wide. B) the road is broad. C) it is a... it is a road that leads to utter destruction. These are the words of Jesus Christ, aren't they?

It is a way, it is a road that leads to destruction. The Bible means by destruction here, it is used many times. The Greek word is *απωλεια* (ap-o'-li-a) and interestingly, you know, one of the names for Satan is Apollyon. These are just a noun and a verb and so what he is saying is that if you follow in this path you are going to go where Satan goes. You are headed to eternal damnation. You are headed for the lake of fire.

I was talking with a guy the other day and he goes, "Well, I don't believe in hell."

I said, "Well, you will."

You see, what you believe means nothing. It doesn't change anything. You know, you can sit there and say, "I do not believe in a literal burning hell."

And do you know what? It didn't change the temperature one degree. This is not an issue of majority vote. Ok, we are all going to vote on whether hell exists or not. Jesus says it exists and if you don't repent you are headed there.

If you are in a church that is teaching easy believism, that church is just like a traffic cop waiving the people on, just keep going down the highway to hell. Yeah, man, you are doing good. You are doing good.

[?] to stop and you say, "But, pastor traffic cop, I kind of feel guilty. I feel like I am not really going in the right direction."

"Well, hold on a second. Don't ever doubt. See, doubting your salvation is the worst sin in the world, they will tell you."

"But I still doubt it. I mean, I am not living for Christ."

"Oh, ok. You only... be careful that works salvation."

Then they throw out the boogie man and scare you, scare all the conviction out of you. We are not talking about working your way to heaven. We are talking about coming by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. And when you come in saving faith to Jesus Christ, it is a repentant faith. It is a faith that turns away from sin. You can't come with your sin. You have got to repent. And when you repent you lay it all at his feet and he saves you. Then he gives you the Spirit of God to live inside of you. He gives you a new nature and you want to obey.

It is just amazing.

And we see that time again.

So this road is a broad road and it may look like these people are having fun, but there is no peace to the wicked. The Bible says in John chapter eight that the unsaved are slaves of their sins.

I was talking with a man and he said, “Well, yeah, but, you know, I am just addicted to these sins.”

I said, “That’s because you are lost.”

“No, no, no. You don’t understand. I got saved 10 years ago. I am just addicted to sin.”

That is the power of sin that has not been broken. When you come to Jesus Christ he breaks the power of sin. That is why we can stand up before you guys who were addicts, whoremongers, drunks, you name it. And Jesus Christ changes that. He changes you. Amen?

So don’t believe the lie of the easy believism churches that try to make you feel like you are not headed to eternal destruction.

In fact, turn in your Bible to the book of Revelation chapter 1 chapter 14. This is God’s Word.

You know I have often witnessed to unsaved people and they will say, “Oh, I don’t want to look at the book of Revelation. That book scares me.”

Well, if you are unsaved, it should scare you. Right?

Well, look at chapter 14 and down at verse 10.

“He himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength.”⁵

If you are unregenerate, if you are unrepentant, if you are not saved, if you are not on the straight and narrow you have deceived yourself into thinking on this broad road because you go and you are sitting in a church bus that tells you, “Ah, man, don’t look at that little guy on the side. You know, you don’t want to be a fanatic.” Right? “And he is probably one of those raving fundamentalist types, you know, those fire and brimstoners, you know, you want to kind of avoid that.”

⁵ Revelation 14:10.

So hold on a second. If the bridge is out I want a bridge out preacher. I want him to be raising his voice saying, "The bridge is out." I want him standing in front of me and if I weave around him I want him driving up along side of me honking his horn if he has to, to knock the front of my car off the thing. I want him to get me off. I don't want to go to hell.

So why do they mock us? Because they are on the highway to hell. They love their sin. They don't want someone coming along and rattling their cage and upsetting their little false theological system which allows them to live in persistent rebellion against God and still think they are going to heaven.

And the Bible says very clearly, "He himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength."⁶

Do you realize God's wrath on you is held back right now?

When I am out evangelizing people will say, "Well, I don't believe in the wrath of God."

And I say, "Well, that is because you are not experiencing it yet. You have got a beautiful home. You have got a belly full of food. You have got a car to drive. You have got a job. You have got your eye sight and your arms and your legs. When you die and the Bible says the angels of God will grab you and hurl you into the lake burning with fire and brimstone. Then you will drink of the wine of the wrath of God poured out full strength. It won't be diluted."

He is not going to mix any kool aid in there. He is not going to mix any water in there. It is not going to be one part wrath and 500 million parts joy and peace and happiness. This will be straight wrath of God upon you because right now if you are not repentant, you are in the sin of impenitence. It is a sin not to repent, do you see? Not to obey the command to enter by the narrow gate is to break the law of God right at the very beginning.

He says in verse 10, "Which will be poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation."⁷ And he, just insert your name there, "He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone."⁸

Where did all that fire and brimstone come from? Well, this is one verse.

Do you realize that if you heard Jesus preach he would preach fire and brimstone? How do I know that absolutely for sure? Because all you have to do is read the gospel. Jesus is always warning people about the blazing furnace.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Keep your finger in Matthew and turn back to Mark and look at chapter nine. Look at verse 43. These are the words of Jesus. If you have a red letter Bible you can see it right off the bat. This is Mark 9:43. "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell."⁹

I didn't write that in your Bible. Jesus is warning you. "Enter by the narrow gate. Do not go the broad way. Do not get on the highway to hell."

He says in verse 43, "Into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched."¹⁰

Do you realize that when you go to hell there is never a day off, it never gets cooler, you never get used to it, it is forever?

I heard a professor years ago give an example and he said, that imagine that there was a mountain of granite the size of the sun and it was as far away as the sun and there was a little bird on earth that had a silk handkerchief in its beak. And this little bird flew all the way to this granite mountain and just draped that silk handkerchief over that granite mountain the size of the sun.

I don't know how long it would take for a bird to fly from here to the sun. It did that. And it did it once a year. And then it did it again and again

By the time that bird had worn that granite mountain totally away would be less than the first second of eternity.

So when you are separated from God in the lake burning with fire and brimstone, the place where he says in verse 44, "Where the worm does not die, the fire never goes out." It never goes out. That is why Jesus is so insistent. That is why Bible believing preachers have always been raving lunatics. We are like hopping up and down. Don't go there. Turn from your sin. Follow Jesus Christ. The bridge is out. You are on your highway to hell. Turn to Jesus now, repent of your sin, follow Jesus Christ.

I mean, I don't want to stand before God and then be accountable for people that have sat under my preaching and God says, "Why didn't you warn them about hell?"

And I said, "Well, you know what? I wanted to look respectable. I wanted to look refined. I wanted to give wonderful illustrations from Greek philosophy and wow them with my big words."

He said, "You wowed them into hell."

We have got to tell people clearly the way Jesus told them: Unless you repent you will perish. That is why Jesus warns of the lake of fire, warns of the lake burning with fire an

⁹ Mark 9:43.

¹⁰ Ibid.

brimstone, warns that there is place of outer darkness, warns you to genuinely, wholeheartedly sell out for Jesus Christ. If you don't, you are lost.

On your notes, then, this highway to hell is wide. The road is broad, comfortable, roomy, spacious. No one is going to give you a hard time. You are not going to have... you are not going to be harassed. You are not going to be persecuted. Your boss will never fire you for your faith. Your wife won't leave you for your faith. You can just go right on this way.

I was talking to a man the other day and he said, "Well, I don't want to come Christ, because I don't want to put any stress in my marriage."

I said, "Well, do you think you are going to be married forever? When you die... the second you die that is the end of the marriage."

Talk about stress. I mean, then you enter into eternity of stress and there is no marriage counselors to counsel that stress out of you in hell. You are not going to be able to sit down in some comfortable air conditioned room with a big tall glass of iced tea and lay back and tell the guy all your problems. You have got to get serious about following Jesus Christ.

That is why Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Everything else will follow. You follow Christ now wholeheartedly.

Notice what else it says in Matthew chapter seven verse 13. The command, "Enter by the narrow gate. Wide is the gate, broad is the way," but it is a way that leads to damnation, to perdition, to hell, to separation of God, conscious suffering forever and hardly anybody goes there anyway so what are we making a fuss about?

Is that what that says?

What does it say?

Many go in by it.

The highway to hell is the popular road. That is why I tell young guys if they are thinking about going into the ministry you have got to settle it right off the beginning. Are you going to be a man pleaser or a God pleaser? If you are going to be a man pleaser you will have a nice comfortable church. Everyone will like you. You won't ruffle any feathers. It will grow and grow and then once you have grown to a certain amount you will get hired to some other church because you are a hireling, you are a corporate ladder climber. Just plan your career and then at the end of your life plan to burn in hell forever because you have been a deceiver. You have not been faithful in proclaiming the Word of God. You have been a traitor to the kingdom of God.

So what we are talking about is that this popular opinion. You remember in the Old Testament in Chronicles, 2 Chronicles that there were two kinds. There was a king in the north and a king in the south, Ahab and Jehoshaphat in the South. Ahab was wicked. Jehoshaphat was stupid.

And so Ahab calls Jehoshaphat on his cell phone, “Hey, I got, you know, this... armies are amassing out on my borders here. I need your help.”

So Jehoshaphat, you know, tools on over there and says, “Well, let’s find out if this is God’s will. Are there any prophets around here?”

Well, Ahab’s prophets... now I got prophets by the bushel. Come on in, guys. They troop in by the dozen. All right. Tell Jehoshaphat. Is it ok for us to go to battle together?

Oh, yes. Man, you guys are going to have a great time. Off you go. Hallelujah. You guys are going to win. You guys are going to conquer the enemy. It is going to be victorious.

But Jehoshaphat was a little bit nervous about that. He noticed that in none of these prophets were prophets of Jehovah. I wonder how he figured out that. Maybe it was because they all had cocktails in their hands. And, you know, a pack of cigarettes in their pocket and girl friends phone numbers that they are fornicating.

And so Jehoshaphat says, “Well, wait a second. Isn’t there a prophet of the Lord here? I want to find out if Jehovah has anything to say about this.”

And Ahab says, “Well, there is one guy. We thought we had killed them all off.”

See Ahab and Jezebel, that was sort of like their pass time. Some people go golfing and Ahab and Jezebel would go prophet hunting and find as many of them as they could and kill them off.

Well, we got one. His name is Micaiah. But I don’t like him. I wonder why.

Well, he answered. Because he never says anything good about me.

See, if you are preaching the Word of God, people who are living in their sin who are offending God are not going to like that. I have seen in times past a whole row will get up and walk out. Martha, get your stuff. I am not going to listen to this anymore.

Why? Because... and it is so interesting. At the end of the service someone will come up in tears, “Thank you so much. I needed that so badly.”

One person is loving the Word of God. The other row just gets up and storms out because they are lost. You see, that is what God’s Word does. It separates which way you are going to go.

And so what we find then in the Word of God, Micaiah says in the Old Testament, “Yeah, Ok...”

See the popular prophets get the unpopular prophet aside and they say, “Unpopular prophet, Micaiah, why don’t you join our voice with ours? Just don’t make waves. I mean, you know, we are nice guys and we don’t want more of you guys to die and, you know think about all your prophet buddies. They all got slaughtered by Ahab. Just say what we are going to say and everyone is happy.”

And so he goes in and Ahab says, “What is the word from the Lord?”

And Micaiah says, “Oh, live long and prosper, you know. You guys are going to have a... however that works, you know. You are going to have a great time. Off you go to battle. All hail Jehoshaphat and Ahab.”

And Ahab knew that what he had said to him was not true. And he says, “How many times do I have to ask you to tell me the truth.”

He says, “Ok, I will tell you the truth. You don’t want to hear it, number one. But you are going to hear it. God called the spirits together in heaven and has a counsel. He sits them all down, a big circular table. And he says, ‘I want to kill Ahab. Anybody have any ideas?’”

Oh, one guy said this. Another guy said that. But one of the spirits said, “I have got the solution. I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets.”

Of course, you think Ahab was happy about that? Micaiah told him the truth. He said, “God hates you and he wants to kill you and that is why you have got all these prophets telling you what you want to hear.”

See, when you reject the counsel of God, you don’t go to nothing. You go to false theology. When you don’t go to a Bible preaching church that holds you accountable and calls you and says, “Enter by the narrow gate because wide is the gate and broad and comfortable and without molestation is the road that leads to hell.”

Well, if you don’t want that, you will go somewhere else. You won’t just stop going to church. You can’t do that. All right, we are not made that way. You will then go to a church that tells you like the prophets of Baal, what you want to hear. But in your heart you know that what is being proclaimed this morning is the truth.

And so you persist in your sin because when you persist in your sin you harden your heart and you dull the voice of the Spirit of God piercing at your conscience. And so you say, “Man, if I preach like that or if I go to a church like that, I am going to lose friends. I am not going to have a big ministry. I am going to do this and that. I am not sure I want to pay the price.”

Well, then you will go hell when you die. You see, I just want to put it right in front of you that if I am not making it clear, let me tell you again. You will then go to hell when you die. Because you are going to be called to account for how you have lived your life and whether you have served the King of kings or rebelled against him.

So many go through that popular door, but salvation is not by majority vote. It is not a matter of how many people agree with me. It is not a matter of how many people are wearing that outfit or driving that car or drinking that brand of beer. That means nothing to God.

How many people were on the ark? Eight.

I don't know how many millions of people were on the earth. You could probably figure it out. Just, you know, how many thousands of years from Adam to Noah and they are having children and they are living hundreds of years. Just chart it out some time. We are talking about a lot of people and eight of them went to heaven.

Don't believe Satan's lie that because most people...

I was reading one commentary and he said it was Bishop Ryle and what he said is that we should have no sense of discouragement that our church is not as big as the church of Baal. We should have no sense of discouragement that we have fewer people than an easy believism church. Jesus said that is what you should expect.

And so we find that many go through that way.

Notice in Matthew chapter seven in verse 21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."¹¹

So it is not a say so faith that matters. It is whether you are obeying God, whether you are sold out for him. But then what is the next verse in verse 22? "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord...'"¹²

You see these are people who thought they were Christians. These are people who called Jesus Lord. These are people who expected to get in. These are deacons. These are Sunday school teachers. These are nursery workers. These are evangelists. These are Bible teachers. And they have denied the Lord because it says in verse 23, "I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me you who live a lifestyle of lawlessness.'"¹³

¹¹ Matthew 7:21.

¹² Matthew 7:22.

¹³ Matthew 7:23.

You see, that is the issue. The issue is not what you say with your mouth or how many prayers you prayed asking Jesus into your heart. The issue is are you trusting Jesus alone as your Savior and obeying him as your Lord? If you are not following him, you are lost.

And notice it says many in verse 22. Many will say that. Boy, that is an understatement. I wouldn't doubt if it is probably 90, 95% of the evangelical church that is lost. There is no difference. How do I know that? Just read the surveys.

They are having abortions like the heathens. They are getting drunk like the heathen. They are foul mouthed. There is no loyalty to one Bible teaching church. On and on and on.

What I am saying is that there is no difference between the wicked and the saved and the Bible says there is only two ways.

Let me give you an example. There is this new theory that has been introduced to evangelicalism that you can be a Christian and live in sin. As long as you prayed a prayer and asked Jesus into your heart, you can live a perpetual lifestyle of sin and go to heaven when you die. And yet if you notice throughout the Bible it says the saved and the lost, the righteous and the unrighteous. It doesn't say the partially righteous.

There are those who are sheep and those who are goats. There is the wheat and the tares. There is the good fish and the fish, the good soil and the bad soil, the child of God and the child of the devil. The Bible says there is the wise virgins and the foolish and we could go on and on.

Jesus said there is only two paths. There is not a third path. It is not like you can say I want to follow Jesus and not follow him. When you come to Christ if you are not following Jesus you are lost. It doesn't matter whether you carry the right version of the Bible. None of that matters. What matters is whether your heart is righteous before God, whether you are passionately living for Jesus Christ.

So we find then, the second point, there is the highway to hell. The second point is the little, tiny mountain trail to heaven.

Did you ever see those movies where there is a sheer cliff, 5000 feet straight up and then there is a little path winding along the edge of it? Have you seen those? And, man, there is another sheer cliff on this side. And this guy is edging along the back, right? He doesn't want to get anywhere near that. He is afraid of a gust of wind.

That is what it means to follow Jesus Christ. We are on a little foot path. And it is going up. And it is a lot of work. And there is boulders falling down at you. And I can't make this clear enough. Jesus said, "Though the little tiny road..."

Look what it says in verse 14. Narrow is the gate. And the word “because” is not the best translation. The best way is this. Oh, how narrow. In other words he is not saying a reason. He is making an exclamation. He is saying, “Oh, how narrow is the gate.”

And what is the next word? Difficult.

On your notes. The first word narrow is the Greek word στενός (sten-os’). Now you have heard of a stenographer. Steno means compressed, graph is writing. So a stenographer is writing little short words.

That is what it literally means. By a figure of speech it means to groan. And it means to groan from being pressed. It is like you are going along the side of a house and then a horse comes along and presses you up against the house and you...

It is a groan from being compressed.

So what does that mean? The gate into heaven, to the narrow footpath, just getting through the gate you have got to go through John MacArthur said naked. I mean, it is so narrow it is like a turnstyle, but it is like a compressed turnstyle. Have you seen those? And you go up with your sin and with your hookers and your pot and your booze and your girlfriend when you are married and all of this garbage and you think, “Oh, I am just going to be like everyone. I am going to be a Christian.”

And there is a guard at the gate and he says, “Drop it all.”

“Are you sure about that?”

And pretty soon you have got your backpack unloaded, your little red wagon is empty. I mean everything is left behind. You stand at the gate. This is a narrow gate. I mean, you aren’t going to get through if you try to bring anything with you.

It is you and you alone coming to Jesus Christ.

Now he may allow you, when you get through the other side to have your wife, to have your children, to have your job, to have your health. But you give it all up at the very beginning. And many guys know when you sell out to Jesus Christ your wife is like, “You what?”

“I am going to follow Christ?”

“I didn’t marry some religious fanatic. If you follow that path I am out of here.”

Remember *Pilgrim’s Progress*? Pilgrim’s wife didn’t want anything to do with it.

So the Bible says, first of all, this is a narrow gate. It is one that you cannot get through with all of your stuff. You have got to leave it all behind. You have got to repent.

Secondly, the gate is difficult. And this is a very interesting. It is based on the root Thlibo. Now what means is that is the normal word for tribulation, trials, affliction.

In the Bible when they are saying θλιψις (thlip'-sis) which means tribulation, trials, discomfort, vexation. Do you understand now what this gate is like? It says it is a tiny narrow gate that once you squeak through the gate you are now on a road that is difficult. It is a road that is fraught with affliction, vexation and harassment. Another word is oppression or to be treated with hostility.

So Jesus is saying, "Understand what you are getting into here." You are going to have to leave everything at the gate. Once you get through it is like there is arrows shooting at me. There are wild dogs chasing me down the road. There are people that hate me over here.

Yeah, where does this road lead? To eternal life.

Oh, man, it was so much easier.

Yeah, but it was going over the bridge.

You see, what the lying traitors will do in the world in which we live, they will present Christianity as easy, comfortable and they will sell you on the broad road. They will sell you on the eternal life at the end. That is why you don't hear sermons about heaven or hell. Do you notice that?

Heaven, well, that is the sweet by and by. I am worried bout the nasty now and now. How do I get along now?

And so you don't want sermons about heaven and you don't want sermons about hell. So what they have done is they have taken away the motivation for getting off of the broad road and getting on and staying on the narrow road.

Make sense?

The modern easy gospel is nothing like the gospel that Jesus Christ preached. The gospel Jesus Christ preached is this. If you are going to follow Christ wholehearted, sold out total commitment narrow road, narrow gate, difficult road.

One of the guys was telling me that some people he knew were sent to an evangelism training seminar and they said, "When you build a building make sure your auditorium has a slope to the floor toward the altar at the front."

Why? So that when a person gets out of their seat they will feel drawn to the altar. That is just deception. That is wickedness. That is manipulative deception. In fact, they say, you know what you should do? Plant people in the congregation so when the pastor says,

“All right everybody who is here who wants to get saved and wants to add Jesus into their heart. Come forward.”

Well, those people then stand up because you planted them there. That way they will make everyone who is hesitant feel comfortable about standing up.

More deception, more manipulation, more lies.

You know, we were kidding about this and we said we are in the process of a building program. We need to build the floor so it goes up toward the altar. And then plant people in the pews that throw stuff at their seats. You know, just roll a log out in front of them. See if they are going to give out to get over that.

And then when they get to the altar we will put one of those rock climbing walls. That is a much more realistic picture of coming to Jesus Christ.

So the little mountain footpath on the sheer cliff on one side and the massive drop on the other side is what it means to come to Christ. It is narrow. It is difficult, But it leads to eternal life.

He says, “Difficult is the way which leads to life.”

What we are talking about is your soul and that eternal life starts now. Is that incredible? You get joy. You get peace. You get patience. You get genuine love. You get a family of people who love God and will love you.

Well, watch what it says at the end. There is only few who find it.

You see, you are already on the broad way to hell. You have got to find the narrow road. You have got to look for it. The narrow foot path is behind trees. It is seldom marked. You have got to pull grass out of the way and vines because hardly anybody travels that way anymore. And when you think you have found it you have got to make sure you get on to it and then you stay on that path until you die because it leads to eternal life.

We don't have time to go into it, but the parallel passage—and I will just have you turn there and we will just read it—in Luke chapter 13 verse 22. Jesus went through the cities and villages teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then one said to him, “Lord, are there few who are saved?”¹⁴

Jesus' answer is you don't know how few. You just don't get it. You do not realize how few make it into glory.

You know, it is interesting. This is not few in relation to the world population. This is few in relationship to professing Christians. There is only few professing Christians who even get in.

¹⁴ Luke 22:23.

He said to them. “Strive.” And that Greek word is αγωνιζομαι (ag-o-nid’-zom-ah-ee). That sounds like agonize.

Let me give you a couple of definitions from that word. It doesn’t literally mean agonize, but it includes that concept. It means conflict, competition, exertion, struggle, force, strive, put an exertion to get through the narrow gate. Do everything in your power to get through that narrow gate.

And, you know, I find people all the time. Well, you know, my life isn’t going the way I would like it to go.

So what are you doing to get through the narrow gate?

Well, I went to church once.

Well, that is not striving.

Paul says, “I strive like a boxer,” in 1 Corinthians nine. That word strive is all through Scripture and like I said we don’t have time to unpack it, but I wanted you to see what Jesus is saying. Put forth every force, every effort that you can put.

In fact, turn back to Matthew chapter 11 and look at verse 12. “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”¹⁵

You are not going to get into the kingdom of heaven if you don’t get violent about it, if you don’t get forceful about it, if you don’t get serious about it, if you don’t get single minded about it. If you don’t say, “I am going to heaven, I am not going to let the world the flesh or the devil stop me.”

You get serious about that with every head bowed, every eye closed.

¹⁵ Matthew 11:12.