

Open with prayer and then read **Matthew 7:13-28**

Message:

“Enter” in Matthew 7:13 is not a request. Jesus is not asking us to “*admire*” or “*ponder*” the gate. This is a command, directing an action, for a specific gate - Enter! The fact is everyone must decide both the gate and the way. This command specifies *which gate*, and *which way*. But the truth of this is difficult. You can know which gate and which way, yet choose to disobey this command. There was a man who, having chosen another religion over Christianity, said this: “I have chosen a noble, broad path. There is room for a man and his sin on it. The way of Christ is too narrow.” Matthew 7:14 is clear - how narrow is the gate, and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it. The word “difficult” is from the Greek *Tethlimmene* which means constricted. That man was right. He understood and made his choice. The way of Christ does not have room for a man AND his sin. It IS too narrow. There is only room for you, and for Christ. Nothing else, and nothing less!

John 10:10b says, “**I have come that (you) may have life and that (you) may have it more abundantly.**”
The way of Christ leads to life.

Matthew 7:15 says, “**Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are raging wolves.**” They will lie to you, and tell you to take the easy, broad path - *the path that wants you to believe that there are multiple ways to life*. John 10:10b, which I just quoted tells of Christ’s desire for you to have life. But the first half of that verse says *this* of those who will lie to you about which path to take - “**a thief comes ONLY to steal and to kill and to destroy**” - all three, STEAL your desire to know God, KILL you while you sleep - *believing you have time and choices*, and to DESTROY your opportunity to access what Jesus desires for you - “**I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.**”

There are two choices. You will choose one. Christ says ENTER. He warns you will be Lied To. He speaks only TRUTH. Christ says there will be good trees producing good fruit, and bad trees producing bad fruit. The bad tree will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Not everyone who says “Lord, Lord!” will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who choose the wrong path and the wrong gate have their verdict already written down, waiting to be spoken to them before God's throne- “**I never knew you! Depart from me, you lawbreakers!**”

In Matthew 7:24 Christ says everyone who hears His words and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. He then says everyone who hears those words and doesn't act on them will be like a fool who built his house on the sand. “**When the rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house - it collapsed. And its collapse was great!**” Everyone who hears and heeds, and everyone who hears and does not heed. There is no one left out.

There are only two ways. There is no third or fourth or fifth option. There is either the narrow or the wide gate, the narrow or the broad path. There are only two destinations, life, or destruction. There are two groups - the few, and the many. There will be those who find the path, and those who do not. Two kinds of trees, good and bad. Two kinds of fruit, good and bad. Two kinds of people professing faith in Jesus, the Sincere, and the False. Two builders, the Sensible and the Foolish. Two foundations, the Rock, and the Sand. Two houses, the Secure, and the Insecure. There is a path, *the broad path*, that has room for you, and your sin. There is a path, *the narrow path*, that has room for you, and Jesus. You will enter one gate. You will choose Jesus, - *or you will not*.

The baptisms you are about to witness, represent the testimony of those who have made their choice, and declared – “I will follow Jesus.” Their testimony begs a response - *“Will you also follow Jesus?”* Will you observe this testimony and heed the words of Christ?

To the person being baptized - Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Do you believe that He died on the cross as payment for your sins and was buried in the tomb? Do you believe that He rose, alive, from that grave, and is living today as your Lord and Savior?

Then by your testimony of faith and belief in Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of His Holy Spirit who dwells with us today.

Invitation:

This is your opportunity to make this same choice. In Acts 8:26-40 we read of the correct response to God's Word. Phillip ran up to the chariot of an Ethiopian official, who was reading and trying to understand God's word. Phillip asked him “Do you understand what you're reading?” The Ethiopian replied, “How can I unless someone explains it to me?” Phillip proceeded to tell him the Good News about Jesus. These baptized here today have just proceeded by their testimony of faith to tell you the Good News. The Ethiopian responded to Phillip as they traveled along the road it came to some water, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” He gave the order to stop the chariot. Then both he and Phillip went down into the water - and Phillip baptized him.

Jesus commands you to enter the narrow gate, and to choose the narrow way, *the way that He will walk with you*. Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of your being baptized?