

# The Golden Rule is the Narrow Way

by Duane Troyer

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**Scripture:** Matthew 7:13, Luke 13:22, Matthew 26:26, Psalms 25:2, Proverbs 4:26

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## Description

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## Transcript

Grace be with you all, and peace from God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. As I was sitting here this morning, I was thinking about this psalm. I had to look up which one it is, but this psalm that talks about worshipping at his footstool.

It's Psalm 99. The first five verses say, May the Lord reigns, let the people tremble. He sits enthroned upon the chair of him, let the earth quake.

The Lord is great in Zion, he is exalted over all the people. Let him praise your great and awesome name. Holy is he, the king in his might loves justice.

You have established equity, you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. Exalt the Lord our God, worship at his footstool. Holy is he.

I think that's what we're doing when we come together on earth to worship him. Because Jesus said that the Lord sits in heaven and the earth is his footstool. And when people come together here on earth to worship him, they're worshipping at his footstool.

Why don't we stand and pray before we get started. Our great heavenly father, who is holy and who has established justice and equity. Sits in the heavens and has the earth for your footstool.

Lord, we come before you and we thank you for this opportunity to just gather here at your feet. And we praise you and worship you and we pray Lord that you would teach us and instruct us now. Help us to be your servants who are ready and willing to do all the things that you have for us.

Be all the things you want us to be. We just thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ who came and has made all these things possible. And in his name we pray, amen.

Alright, I want to look at a few more verses here in Matthew. In the Sermon on the Mount. I wasn't sure earlier in the week if I'd be having this message this week.

But I guess time went on and I didn't appoint anybody else and so here I am. And I have these, we're just going to look at three verses today. I think it will be a slightly shorter message.

I thought to fit these next three verses into the last week's message would make it too long. To try to cram it into the next subject would make that too long. And so we're going to look at Matthew chapter 7 verses 12 to 14.

It says, In everything therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you. For this is the law and the prophets. 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.

This verse 12 is a very familiar verse. I hope all of you children have this verse memorized. If not, your parents ought to make that a point or it's least common.

To have children memorize this verse, I remember in the one room school house where I went, this was hanging on the wall. It's called the golden rule. And it's sometimes phrased in various ways.

Even translations phrase it in various ways. But in everything whatsoever you want men to do to you, do that to them. Here it says the way you want... It says treat people the way you want them to treat you.

And that this is the law and the prophets. Another thing, this is for the children mostly, but my... One of my uncles once taught me how to remember where this verse is. It's in Matthew 7.12 and he said he practiced this verse 7 days out of the week and 12 months out of the year.

And it stuck with me the rest of my life. It's a law that resonates in all of us. Our children get it.

I mean I can't tell you how many times I've settled some kind of thing with my children. And I just simply had to say, would you want your brother or sister to treat you this way? And the answer they give reveals what they should have done or should not have done. Especially, it especially resonates in its negative form.

We'll get to that just a little bit more, but like Jesus gave it in its positive form. Jesus did not say here that don't do to others as you would not be treated. He says do to others as you would have them do to you.

I think the negative form is implied, but I think there is a significance in the fact that Jesus used the positive forms. Many other religions and philosophers have taught this principle in its negative form. Socrates, Confucius, Buddha, and most religions have a saying something like don't do to somebody what would make you angry if they did it to you.

So, as I looked into this verse, I realized that what Jesus is doing here is not just giving an isolated commandment here. He's actually concluding the main body of this sermon. Notice how he says in everything therefore, and remember what I've been telling you about this word therefore.

It always means that the person is referring to something that has already been said. In everything therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you for this is the law and the prophets. And this is the last and final commandment that Jesus is giving here in this sermon.

And he says this is the law and the prophets. This term the law and the prophets has been used before here in this sermon. And if you don't remember it, I can't blame you.

It's been many, many months ago that we looked at it. But I think the main body of Jesus' sermon here is sandwiched between when he started talking about the law and the prophets and now he ends it by mentioning the law and the prophets again. And by the way, in case you're like, just as a way of information, like if you're reading through the New Testament, sometimes you'll come across the word law.

And it may be talking about God's eternal law or he may be talking about a law that's eternal that really is without beginning or end. But it could be a law that God established with Noah or it could be a law that God established in the garden or just the eternal law of God. But whenever I think, I think it based on what I can think of or have read, whenever it talks about the law and the prophets, when it says, when it specifically says the law and the prophets, it's always talking about the Mosaic law.

And so here in this sermon, we're going to go back to Matthew 5, even sometimes when you just, I know we've been in this sermon for months and months and months, but even sometimes when you just sit down and you read it in one sitting, you kind of don't capture how one thought flows to the other and how Jesus is, how this is, this is a deep sermon with many things to think about. There's, if you read it, there's chapter breaks and all these things, but here in, in, when Jesus started this sermon, so first, you know, he, he, he starts with the Beatitudes about what, what the blessings of this new kingdom are and for whom they are. What, what kind of attitudes would bring down the blessings of God? And, and they're very, they're very different than what you would read when you read for the people familiar with Deuteronomy 28 about how, how they would be blessed with wealth and power.

And they would, you know, they would, they would send enemies to flight and people would come in one way and scatter 10 ways or they would be the head and not the tail and all those things. And now, and now Jesus is talking about, blessed are you when you're persecuted, blessed are you when you weep, blessed are the poor in spirit and, and all these things. And so, so, so Jesus is starting this sermon already, you know, kind of shaking up the Jewish people's preconceived ideas of how God's blessings work and then he talks about us being the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

And then here in verse 17 of Matthew 5, he starts in, in this main body where, of the sermon where he says, Do not think that I came to abolish the law and the prophets. I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the law until all is accomplished.

And one of the reasons I believe that Jesus said this before he even got started is because he knew that that's exactly what the people were going to think. They're going to, they're going to hear him say things that are, that are foundationally shaking to a person who, who's familiar with, with the Mosaic law and the prophets and they're going to think he's come here to destroy this thing. And so he tells them beforehand, don't think that that's what I came to do.

He is about ready to say things that no rabbi has the authority to say, no other rabbi. He's about to quote the law of Moses and then lay a new law right beside it. Laws that were not clearly expressed in the Torah at all.

He's setting himself up as an authority independent from the law. He's setting him up as a man that has more authority than Moses. And that's really a big deal.

It's, it's why, it's why the thing that he said expected would happen, happened all, not just in this sermon. It happened through his life. They, they found him breaking the Sabbath.

They tried to test him, you know, is it lawful to pay toll taxes? What do you do with this woman that, that, that, that, that Moses said this to? And, and all these things. And, and the apostles of Jesus got accused of the same thing. They got accused of going around teaching people contrary to Moses.

So, so Jesus goes on here in this sermon to teach these various things that those who were familiar with the Mosaic law recognized when he, when he said things like you have heard that it has been said and then he quotes the law and then he says, but I say unto you and he quotes something different. He addresses oaths, adultery, the laws of justice, and he gets to the root of these problems. He tells us how to and how not to give alms and pray and fast.

He tells us how we should handle money and possessions and our, what our perspective of these things should be. He tells us how to and how not to judge others. And these are all, all subjects that in, in, in some form are discussed in the law and the prophets.

But Jesus here, he, he, he's exposing the root of these subjects. He's getting to the heart of them and he's shedding light on them that makes the former light obsolete or fade away. He's not destroying it, but it's fading away because of the brightness that he's bringing on these subjects.

I, reading through the law and the prophets, and we have this, like we read through the law and the prophets, and, and we're familiar with Jesus' teachings and we pick things up that, that before Jesus came and gave his teachings were even harder for people to see. It was until, you know, until the Spirit came upon them and, and, and God opened up all the sayings from the law and prophet that point to Christ. Remember when those, those two disciples, Cleophas and, I don't know if we have the name of the other one, were, were, were, were after Jesus' death, they were walking somewhere and Jesus appeared and they didn't know it was him.

And, and, and Jesus kind of asked this question like, what are you so sad about? And they, they were like, are you the only person that doesn't know what's going on? And they told him about this, Jesus, we thought he was going to be the deliverer. We thought he was going to, you know, restore Israel to its, to its place of authority and its kingdom, bring it, bring that kingdom back. And now he's dead.

And we've heard that the disciples went to the grave and he's not there anymore. And then, and so Jesus, Jesus starts talking to them all the way until they get to the next city. He starts talking to them.

And then, you know, finally, finally, as they want to turn aside, Jesus disappears or something like that. I haven't read this in a long time, but, but they realized it was Jesus. And they said, oh, did not our hearts burn as he, as he revealed these things? I, if there's one place in scripture that I would have wanted to be, it would have been on that road to, with those men.

I would have, I would have loved to hear Jesus just open up the law and the prophets and just, just reveal all that stuff. Those things fascinate me. But anyway, as, as you, as you read through the law and the prophets, you get glimpses, you get glimpses of these things.

I thought about this this morning. I think it's kind of like a, reading through the law and the prophets is kind of like the light that is in them is somewhat like the light of a firefly that you see at night. And, and, and, and you, you get these glimpses, these little sporadic glimpses of light.

And it's, it's beautiful. I love watching fireflies. But once, once you catch one and you have it here in your hand, you kind of get the idea.

But once you shine a light on it, it's like, oh, that's what a firefly looks like. But what happens to that little light that the firefly made? You can hardly see it anymore because of the brightness of the light that you've shined, shown upon it. And that's, that's somewhat how it is with, with, with the law and the prophets.

That's when, when you read what Jesus revealed about it and said about it, that, you know, the true light that Jesus brought and is, you know, shines, shines in such a way that, that the, the, the light from, from, from the Torah and the prophets kind of fade away. That doesn't mean they're destroyed though. So here, here, okay, so Jesus is starting this sermon.

He, he, he begins this main body by saying, don't think that I came to destroy the law and the prophets. And then he expounds on the law and the prophets. And then here in Matthew 7, 12, he ends it.

He summarizes it all. If, if I, I don't know this, but, but my expectation of how Jesus said this verse is, is like, he's got this Jewish audience, right? And they're, they're, they're, they're marveling at how he's interpreting the law and the prophets. And he ends it by saying, therefore in everything due to others, as you would have others do to you, that's the law and the prophets.

Of ourselves, we all know our duties. Sometimes, you know, sometimes we're troubled and we're trying to figure out, well, what would Jesus do in this situation? What would Jesus want me to do in this situation? And very often the answer can be found if we, if we just ask ourselves, well, what would I desire to be done to me if I were in this other person's shoes? If I can put myself in his situation, what would I done to me? What would I have done to me? A repeating theme in Jesus' teachings is that how we relate to others is how we are relating to God. Of ourselves, we know the law of God.

How, how do we know that it's wrong to slander? Because we don't like it when someone slanders us. How do we know that we should comfort the sorrowful? Or encourage the disheartened? Or lift up the downtrodden? Or help the needy? Or, or not take advantage of another at his expense? Or how do we know that we should offer assistance to someone who's broke down beside the road? Or not interrupt another person while he's speaking? Is it not because we don't like when those things happen to us? Or we like them, the positive ones? We like when people treat us that way? How do we know we should not retaliate? How do we know that we should forgive? How do we know that we should feed the hungry and clothe the naked and visit the sick and imprisoned and take in the stranger? Is it not because we know, we

already know that that's how we would like to be treated if we were in those shoes? From something as big in the law or in life, from something as big as why should I not marry another man's wife? To something in life as small as why should I plant this tree under which the shade I will never get to sit? In all that spectrum, we can reason, well, it's because that's how I would like to be treated. I would not want somebody to marry my wife.

And I wish people would have planted trees that I could sit under. I like trees. I'm not a tree-hugging environmentalist by any means.

I'll cut them and use them and so forth and so on. But I really like trees. I both like to look at them, sit under them.

And when we moved to the place we're at now, there were some trees but not very many and not big trees. And most of them were kind of scrubby trees or not the preferred kind of trees. And so I planted, the first few years I was there, I planted a lot of trees.

Oak trees and walnut trees and hickory trees and things I saw as being useful someday. And Heidi back then was, well, what's that, getting 10 years ago, she was not very old yet. She was helping me plant trees one day and she said, it seems kind of odd to be planting these trees that we'll probably never see get real big, but we sure wish somebody would have planted some 50 years ago.

That's it. Like the children know, children know that there's like this thing that we can do and we can tell by how we wish others would treat us. Children understand this law.

Wicked people understand this law. Even Haman in the book of Esther, wicked Haman, he understood this law. Like when the king asked him, Haman, what do you think should be done for a man that the king would like to honor? And Haman thinks, oh, I bet that's me.

That must be me. Here's what I would do. I'd, you know, bring in the clothes and the king's horse and all those things he said.

I'd take him through town and say, this is who the king wants to honor. And the king said, there you go. Poor Haman, he had to do it to his first enemy.

If only, but the point is that everybody knows, everybody can relate to this, that this is a good law. And if we do it willingly and without partiality, it is a very blessed thing to live by. Jesus said something very similar in Matthew 22 when he said, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

And then he says, and the second commandment, he said that's the greatest commandment, and the second is like unto it. You shall love the neighbor, your neighbor, as yourself. When he says the second is like unto it, I think he's saying it's basically the same thing.

It's like the two sides of one coin. Love God and love your neighbor. And then he says, for on these two commands hang all the law and the prophets.

Paul said something very similar in Romans 13, where he said, owe nothing to anyone except to love one another, for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet. And if there is any other commandment, it is

summed up in this saying, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Peter and James and John in their epistles all say similar things like that. When Clement of Alexandria was commenting on this, Matthew 7.12, he said, Here then is a comprehensive precept and all-embracing exhortation on life.

Can you imagine what life would be like if everyone practiced this? The kingdom of God would be here. Heaven would be here on earth. Can you imagine what family life would be if a husband and a wife would only and always be doing to the other as they would want done to them.

And all the children would always do that. Family life would be heavenly. Well that's actually what Jesus came to do.

He came to bring heaven to earth. To restore what was lost when Adam and Eve lost their position as rulers of the earth under heavenly circumstances. They had a chance and they lost it.

And they had to exit this paradise. This place that was full of life and life abundantly. It was the place where the tree of life stood.

They had to exit that place. And there was an angel or a cherubim set there at that gateway with a fiery sword that swung every way guarding the entrance to that tree of life. And Jesus came to restore that.

And he came to give us access again to that tree of life. And then we might ask ourselves this question. Well if that's so, why? Why does this world continue to get darker and more chaotic and worse? And why is the state around us, that the world around us not a paradise restored? And I think Jesus has the answer to that in the next verses here in the Sermon on the Mount.

He says, 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.

Jesus is now starting here. He's starting to end this sermon with a series of warnings. Some things to consider as we evaluate and count the cost of becoming a disciple of such a revolutionary movement.

I think what Jesus is ending this sermon with would be similar to how Moses kind of ends a bunch of commandments that he gives by saying, I have set before you this day life and death. Choose life. Or Joshua after addressing the people with many things he ends up saying, Choose you this day whom you will serve.

And Jesus is ending this collection of commands and teachings and this is the first one. There's some more coming in the next message or two that we'll look at. But he's presenting this case and he's saying there's a narrow way, there's a broad way.

Choose you. Which one you'll take. And just know this.

The one leads to life and it's traveled by very few. The one leads to destruction and it's traveled by most. These teachings that Jesus has given here are not just a sermon to be read.

They're not just a plan to discuss. They're not just unrealistic ideals. They're not unattainable moral precepts.

They are not, as the false gospel might say, commands to show us that we can't live up to God's standard. It's a way to live by. It's a road to walk on.

Jesus never said, I am the plan of salvation. He said, I am the way. I am the way of salvation.

A way is like a roadway or a highway. It has a purpose. It's to be traveled on.

Most people can visualize or can get this analogy between going through life and traveling on a path or a road. Poets and artists from all walks of life have captured that idea. One of the poets that I appreciate, not because of him being a super spiritual man, but just his poetic... His poetry is Robert Frost.

And he has this one poem about two roads diverged in a woods. Two roads diverged in a yellow woods. And how he came to that place where these roads diverged.

And he looked down one for a long way. And he looked down the other. And he finally took the one less traveled by.

And he ends that poem by saying, I shall be telling this with a sigh somewhere ages and ages hence. Two roads diverged in a woods. And I took the one less traveled by.

And it has made all the difference. I'm going to pass this picture around. You can just look at it and pass it on.

It's Jan Luyken, which is the artist of the Martyr's Mirror. Those of you who are familiar with the artwork in the Martyr's Mirror. He has lots of engravings that aren't in there.

Anyway, I came across that picture one time. There's this man. He comes up to the narrow gate.

And he's carrying a whole bunch of baggage. And the gate is really narrow. So you can tell this man with his baggage is not getting through that narrow gate.

Though people from nearly all walks of life can understand life as being a pathway. Often it's depicted as there's many roads. And we just need to choose from these many roads.

We choose the one that fits us. Or the one with our name on it, I've heard. But Jesus, here in the light of eternity, he says there's only two.

There's only two. The one is broad and most people travel on it. The gate is broad.

It's easy to find. There's no amount of baggage that doesn't fit through it. It's constructed by the devil.

It appears welcoming, inviting, easy. It's easy to find. It's smooth to travel.

What's not apparent, and this by design of the gatekeeper, is that the end thereof is destruction. The end thereof is destruction. Cyprian wrote, avoid the broad and spacious ways.

They contain deadly snares and death-bringing pleasures. There the devil flatters you so he may deceive. He smiles at you so that he may do harm.

He entices so that he may slay you. And as Jesus said here in verse 14, for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life. And there are few that find it.

It's a small gate. It's a narrow entrance. And it says, it says, few find it.

That means few people even find it or notice it. It actually fits in with what we talked about in the last message about seeking. The good things, the pearls, the good things have to be sought after.

They're not evident to the casual observer. And I think many a person walk by this narrow entrance to the real, true way to life and they don't even notice it as something to be considered. It's so, it has so little appeal and it's traveled by so few people that most people walk by it and miss it.

It is found by few and it is walked by a far smaller number. As I've, over the years as I've studied church history and I've noticed that like the true disciples of Jesus, those who really, really like get the message of Jesus and they want to conform their way, their life to the way of Jesus, they become the persecuted. They become the minority, they become the persecuted and often by others who are professing Christianity.

And these people often and frequently in their writings, they make reference, they can really relate to this thing that Jesus said about the way to life is narrow. It's, the gateway is narrow, the path is narrow, there's not many people on it, it's a despised and rejected way. The early church made lots of mention of it, the Waldensians did, the Anabaptists did really a lot.

They often made reference to this teaching of Jesus. And I, this morning I looked for this one quote from an Anabaptist writer and I couldn't find it but he was describing the narrow entrance and he was saying that this gateway is so narrow that we must press our way through it, we must squeeze through it and leave our flesh hanging on the gateposts. Just a poetic way of saying that you must deny your flesh to get into this gate.

Wolfgang Brandhuber was an early Anabaptist and he said, if you want to return to God, you need to return through the door from which Adam was driven out. To get in, you will have to leave your flesh, your own will, your lust and your love behind and you will need to submit to the law in your heart. That we must enter through the way, to get to life, we must go in the way Adam was driven out.

And that means we must pass through this fiery sword that swings every way. We must let that sword or that Word of God that cuts deep into the heart and the soul, we must let that happen. We must let it penetrate.

Do what the Word of God needs to do. And that is the way. And just let it convict us of all wrong.

Let it have its power. Let it hammer out the iniquities in life. And through that, through letting that happen and just stooping down to that narrow gate and entering through is the only way that we'll ever attain that tree of life again.

John Bunyan, when he wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*, I'm sure he thought of these verses about the narrow gate and about the path being narrow and difficult and few finding it. It's all through his allegory. In fact, I think that it's possible that Jesus here is even referencing something that was written possibly 500 years earlier.

It's not in the Masoretic text. It's not even in some of the Septuagint translations, but it's in 2 Ezra. I'll just read some little snippets of it to give you an idea of something that I think Jesus would have been familiar with this writing.

So Ezra is having this conversation with an angel. And in that 7th chapter, I'll just start here in verse 6, it says, another example, there is a city built, this is the angel speaking, another example, there is a city built and set on a plain and it is full of good things, but the entrance to it is narrow and set in a precipitous place so that there is fire on the right hand and deep water on the left. There is only one path lying between them that is between the fire and the water so that only one person can walk on the path.

If now the city is given to someone as an inheritance, how will the heir receive the inheritance unless by passing through the appointed danger? He goes on to just talk about more of those things and then Ezra and this angel continue about the subject of like, how is it that this is just for so few people? Ezra is saying like, why this creation with so many people but only few, only so very few find it. Ezra says, I answered and said, O sovereign Lord, I said then and I say now, blessed are those who are alive and keep your commandments, but what of those of whom I prayed for whom among the living is there that has not sinned? Or who is there among mortals that has not transgressed your covenant? And now I see that the world to come will bring delight to few but torment to many. For an evil heart has grown up in us which has alienated us from God and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death and has shown us the paths of perdition and removed us far from life.

And what now, merely for a few but for almost all who have been created? And he answered me and said, Listen to me, Ezra, and I will instruct you and will admonish you once more. For this reason the Most High has made not one world but two inasmuch as you have said that the righteous are not many but few while the ungodly abound. Hear the explanation for this.

If you have just a few precious stones, will you add to them lead and clay? I said, Lord, how can that be? And he said to me, Not only that, but ask the earth and she will tell you. Defer to her and she will declare it to you. Say to her, You produce gold and silver and bronze and iron and lead and clay, but silver is more abundant than gold and bronze than silver and iron than bronze and lead than iron and clay than lead.

Judge therefore which things are precious and desirable, those that are abundant or those that are rare. And I said, O Sovereign Lord, what is plentiful is the less worth, for what is more rare is more precious. And he answered me and said, Consider within yourself what you have thought for the person who has what is hard to get rejoices more than the person who has what is plentiful.

So also will be the judgment that I have promised for I will rejoice over the few who shall be saved because it is they who have made my glory prevail now. And through them my name has now been honored and I will not grieve over the great number of those who perish. He goes on, he talks a lot about this.

I'll just read one more verse. This is the first verse in chapter 8. He said, He answered me and said, The Most High made this world for the sake of the many, but the world to come for the sake of only a few. But I tell you a parable, Ezra.

Just as when you ask the earth it will tell you that it provides a large amount of clay from which earthenware is made but only a little dust from which gold comes. So is the course of this present world. Many have been created but only a few shall be saved.

I don't know for sure but I think it's very possible that both Jesus and this Jewish audience would have been familiar with that. So where Jesus says this way is narrow here in Matthew 7. He says, For the gate is small and the way is narrow. That word narrow the Greek word is *lebo* I think and the word means

afflicted or troubled or I think if I'm not mistaken it's where we get the word tribulation from.

This way is difficult but don't lose heart because you consider the end of the way. It's a the different you know what the difference children you know what the difference is between a pilgrim and a tramp? They're both traveling men a pilgrim is a traveler and a tramp is a traveler. What's the difference? The one the one chooses his destination and he accepts the path.

The pilgrim the pilgrim knows where he wants to go and he chooses a destination and whatever the path is that leads there he accepts it. But what does the tramp do? He chooses his path and he ends up accepting his destination. There's a really really big difference.

In Acts 14 we read this account of how the Jews from Antioch and Iconium they stirred up the crowds of people against Paul and they they stoned Paul and they drug him out of the city and thought he was dead and while the disciples were standing around Paul there all of a sudden Paul gets up and what does he do? He walks back into the city and then this may be just a little bit later but Paul encouraged the disciples of Iconium and Antioch it says he strengthened them with these words through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation we must enter he strengthened them, right? he encouraged them you might think that message is not very encouraging but it really is when we've when we know where we're going and we've chosen our destination and we hit some real hardships and tribulations and it's encouraging to hear someone like Paul say through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God this is this is normal Christianity okay few there be that find it that is really sobering really sobering especially I remember this preacher that I would often listen to growing up and I just kind of remember multiple times he would say like one thing we know for sure is less than half the people would, based on what Jesus said less than half of the people would inherit eternal life and I think that's right like that we could you know you could if it's 45% are saved and 55% are lost this statement would still be true I guess but I think I think we underestimate the few you know we can pretty easily relate to less than half because we look around and we see the majority of the people living for themselves but just how few and of course we don't know but Jesus commonly one thing is Jesus would have been familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures but he said he said the end will be like it was in the days of Noah and he sometimes refers to Sodom as well and just take those two examples for instance in the days of Noah out of the whole world there's 8 souls 8 souls that were saved in Sodom, in that great, great big city of Sodom there were 3 people who were saved 3 people it's not quite so hard for us to realize that when God judges the believers from the unbelievers that less than half the people are found as believers but I just think it's really sobering and I think we should let it sink deep into our hearts that once he drags that dragnet through the sea of believers and he exposes all those hidden things of deep how few people will be found as keepers just want to close with a few verses in Proverbs this reads just a little bit different than your Masoretic text but it's a very similar idea Proverbs chapter 4 verses 20 verse 22 keep your heart with all watchfulness for from these words are the issues of life put away from yourself a crooked mouth and remove unrighteous lips far from you let your eyes look straight forward let your eyelids ascent to righteous things make straight path for your feet and direct your way to the right do not turn aside to the right or to the left but turn your foot from an evil way for God knows the way of the right hand but those on the left are perverse and he shall make your path straight and guide your steps in peace actually I'm going to do something I've never done before I hope you all bear with me I think this white board is going to help me do what I'm just going to point out here so I really appreciate this picture because it really goes well with these words there's the two parts that Jesus is talking about he's talking about the path the road and he's talking about as this picture depicts this narrow gate so it's really narrow right? so let's understand what these words

really mean the translation that you used depicted two sizes small and narrow that's not what it means so one of them has to do with size and one of them has to do with squeezing and that's where this comes in so the road is squeeze so comes from as you said which means to squeeze metaphorically it means difficulties, persecutions all this kind of stuff but literally means squeeze and I think it's interesting how this depicts it here's a guy trying to get through this narrow gate with all this stuff and it goes together with what Jesus teaches it's like you can't take the world with you into the kingdom of God and when we die we can't take it with us there's a clue it points to this idea and so I think and then even this passage I looked it up I wasn't sure the noun version of this verb is telepsis and the word that says it's through much persecution or difficulties is telepsis so it's through much squeezing that we enter the kingdom of God Acts 14 verse 22 it's the same idea and I just think this is a really good depiction because that's what we're talking about we're not talking about a road that even when it says the road is you know that it's narrow I mean literally it means straight so in one sense it's okay it's not a crooked road but figuratively it means the idea of it being narrow it literally means straight but it's the figurative idea of it being narrow and so this road that is persecution figuratively that's what it means but that it's squeezed and so it squeezes you and then I even thought of this like in 1 John chapter 2 where it says the pride of life so the word that means life a lot of times has the idea of lifestyle like many people you know like I did 20, 30, 25, 30 years ago had my red Corvette or whatever my big house all this kind of stuff the pride of life of all this stuff here's a guy trying to get through with the pride of life trying to get through this narrow gate and he can't and so it's squeezing if we choose to get on this path so that we can squeeze through that narrow gate so I'll leave that with you thank you brother Duane you're building on the rock the eternal rock that has everlasting consequences for our lives until the last breath keep on preaching the sermon of the mound brother and all of us try to obey it you mentioned Sodom 3 out of so many 8 out of a million for Noah brothers can correct me on this but only 2 out of 600,000 made the promised land but I'm not sure if the women and children made it I think the women and children could have made it I always try to figure that out did the women and children make it or just the men were cast out I don't know the ones under 20 definitely but it's a very narrow gate and the Lord knows those who are his and he's a jealous God just a couple of comments yeah it's so simple great to hear the sermon of the mound but how difficult it is to live oh yeah you've got to crucify the flesh crucify the world, the flesh, the devil oh yeah but everyone loves hearing it us too but how hard it is to put it into practice crucifying the flesh I listened to a testimony yesterday of a Christian over in Africa and he's been there for several years but in one day he was just defrauded and de-cheated by this false convert and he'd come over to the states he was from the states and he told his wife his wife had to come over because her mother was sick and he said let's throw in a towel let's call it all off this is just too much spent years with these people over in Africa and they're not and they robbed me and they did all this stuff and I said throw it away it ain't worth it but he changed his mind and he has a very strong mission over there right now but the other point would be that we should not seven times seventy I guess a small point that brother Twain brought up was well you know Paul did quote the pagan philosopher right seventeen the pagan philosopher so I remember Roger Berry quoted Robert Frost years ago and boy I came down on him good I'm from Boston you know Robert Frost the wingling atheist why are you quoting this guy but brother Twain I'm saying yep Mark Twain and Gandhi and Emerson and Thoreau all these people aren't Christians but I like quoting them too so I'm not going to as I really came down on Roger Berry and I love Roger Berry but I really crucified him for quoting Robert Frost over Dwayne I look up to Dwayne a lot different and I love Roger Berry too but I'm not going to crucify for mentioning Robert Frost the atheist and godless poet and God will judge him but the Lord be magnified well thank you all and most of all thank the Lord I want to confess something when that picture of the narrow gate came to my hands I took a pencil and shortened it it's too tall the gate is not only narrow but we cannot get in straight up we have to bend

down and to tell you the truth for me I thought I was not a proud person but that was the most difficult part just to be humble and I cannot say that the Lord has revealed that to me straight from the scripture but way back when I was only I was still a teenager I attended a group of believers that lived in a very difficult part of that country where the people the population is acting should I say just like around us but it's not that visible like chicken I watched our chicken if one chicken has a wound all the others are running and packing exactly there and sometimes maybe we can do that it didn't happen to me here I even think that most of you are so kind and so careful that even if I got stuck in that gate you wouldn't push me through or trying to somehow make me fit into that you're just I don't know respectful of my age I don't know but thank you for your kindness but I beg you be open be sincere it's going to hurt me because I'm not a very humble person but it's much better to hurt me now and here than to face the Lord and say I did so many things in thy name and he would reply you? I don't know you so I was afraid when I marked that gate much lower or at least one third maybe it should be the other way one third above the ground then somebody said I'm not the last one to look at that picture and I passed it on to the others here and I said I didn't want that message for the others it's applicable to my life thank you for your kindness and understanding I really appreciate that message brother Duane while you were going through it another thing I looked at that I think helps is to make the connection between the word that they translate as strive, strive through the narrow gate that root of that word is the same root that there's a noun where it says fight the good fight so agon for fight which is like a wrestling match so whenever it's talking about our fight or our wrestling see there was even another passage that used that kind of thing but they translate it different ways and we don't make the connection you can't see it in English but yeah strive it's like fight to get through the narrow gate and that was Luke 13 I think rather than Matthew 7 but it's talking about the same thing obviously Jesus talking about the same thing but it's connected with the idea that in many of the epistles where it talks about fighting the good fight and things like that it's the same root so maybe that would help you as well yeah thank you for all sharing all those things the rest of you did we feel like burning our hearts to to get squeezed through this narrow path we need to take a narrow path will squeeze us so it's not all together yeah it makes sense to me I thought of reading Luke 13 22 and D. John mentioned on it just a little bit so I'll go through it anyways Jesus went through one town and village after another teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem someone asked him Lord will only if you be saved and he said to them did he say 2% 5% 50% no he said strive to enter through that narrow door for many I tell you will try to enter and will not be able which we have been told and once the owner of the house got up and shut the door okay it's all closed now we come interrupting we beat on that door and he says and we say Lord open to us then in reply he will say to you I do not know where you come from then you will begin to say arguing with God we already closed the door this can't be too late we ate and drank with you and we talked in your streets but he said but he will say I do not know where you come from go away from me all you evil doers there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth and you will see when you see Abraham Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets of the kingdom of God and you yourself thrown out I'm not sure how the next two verses fit on here but but the very last not the very last but 2030 indeed some are last who will be first and some will be first who will be last that's this kingdom of God where we where we things don't match up with our flesh it doesn't match up with it matches up with truth it doesn't match up what we think and as we're thinking of having communion these were some of the thoughts I had separate from what was happening here today but I found it kind of interesting that when we professed to be a Christian we were baptized and we were buried we're dead and we stand up new and we embrace this kingdom of God we say that's just my thoughts we're going are we ready to embrace Jesus is that who we is that I'm not challenging anybody I'm just trying to stir our minds are we ready to embrace Jesus he was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief are we just ready to do we want grief do we want sorrow do we want to be squeezed have we

embraced Jesus do we want to we've been taught it is very difficult and hard and it's when when we get when we this is a personal belief I have I'm not sure how many scriptures for this but I believe when we surrender our life to Jesus that he will take us through life and he will hand craft our life to get us into eternal life we get squeezed through this this narrow opening that we have to go through do we want to embrace that are we willing to go through that this is all that we have we have to go through this if we want eternal life or do we have a time we we do what we want we go where we want do what we want or do we discipline ourselves as we go through life do we a little question what are we fighting for it's not the biggest fight in our own heart to to have ourselves holy ourselves righteous before God so that we can enter through that narrow gate is anybody else going to get us in there or is that our personal battle and this is I think where the real fight lies for each one of us some of us have varying responsibilities and involvement in helping one another but we can all encourage one another for that fight we don't have to be very old till we can say we shouldn't we should be doing to that other person like we wouldn't done to ourselves and the apostles too just because they believed Jesus because they did his will because they took his way they were in danger of their life all the time they were alive seems to me like a lot of times immediately I'm not sure if anybody would know the years till Stephen was stoned doesn't seem very long I don't know if I have any years on it but it doesn't seem very long and from then on maybe that wasn't even the first one but there's just constantly these apostles being killed until John was on this island himself isolated and he's the only one that died a natural death that we understand and he died too but he was not martyred do we still want to embrace Jesus do we want his way it's narrow and difficult this is Christianity I thought also reading part of Matthew 26 starting at 26 you know that Robert Matthew 26 while they were eating Jesus took a loaf of bread and after blessing it he broke it and gave it to his disciples and he said take it this is my body then he took a cup and after giving thanks he gave it to them saying drink from it all of you for this is my blood and the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins I tell you I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom then they sang a hymn and they went out to the mount of Olives then Jesus said to them I will you will all become deserters because of me this night for it is written I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered but after I'm raised up I will go ahead of you to Galilee and Peter said to him though all become deserters because of you I will never desert you I think this is one of these battles we have to fight inside we have to bend down we have to humble ourselves or we will be like Peter no I'm going to stand for Jesus I'm going to this is I'm going to make it if God doesn't show his grace and mercy to us we won't make it we need his help we need his but we don't get it unless we're humble there's conditions to these things but he he was still he was still strong and I think he was still strong with his hand that's what his problem was at that time he had a sword and he was going to give his life fighting that's what I believe he was thinking and but Jesus knew was going to do some things for him to make him things just didn't turn out the way he wanted to Peter said to him though oh truly Jesus said to him truly I tell you this very night before the cock crows you will deny me three times he cursed he just denied Jesus three times Peter said to him though even though I must die with you I will not deny you and so said all the disciples everybody's agreed to that then Jesus went with them to the place called Gethsemane and he said to his disciples sit here while I go over there and pray he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to grieve and agitate it and began to be grieved and agitated and he said to them I am deeply grieved even though even to death remain here and stay awake with me and going a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed my father if it is possible let this cup pass from me yet not what I want but what you want then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping he said to them Peter so could you not stay awake with me one hour stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak again he went away for the second time and prayed my father if

you cannot pass this cannot pass unless I drink it you will be done again this is the kind of commitment we need to our heavenly father we just need to persist in that again he came and found them sleeping for their eyes were heavy now I know they didn't know what was going to happen because had they known what was going to happen I am persuaded they would have been wide awake they just thought this is you know Jesus is praying like maybe he often did I am not sure how that was but he tried to tell them but they couldn't understand they didn't comprehend and they were just going to sleep and I wonder if that is also something for us to take let us stay awake let's not go to sleep there's there's this it's not true that humanity as a whole has just went down the drain in one direction away from God in the beginning after the flood the first church it all just kind of went down every revival goes down let us stay awake let's not sleep our time the time will come the time is here then he found him sleeping again so he didn't say anything so leaving them again he went away and prayed for the third time saying the same words then he came to the disciples and said to them are you still sleeping and taking a rest see the hours at hand the son of man is betrayed in the hands of sinners get up let us be going see my betrayer is at hand while he was still speaking Judas one of the twelve arrived with him a large crowd with swords and clubs with the high priest and the elders of the people now the betrayer had given them a sign saying the one I will kiss is the man arrest him at once he came up to Jesus and said greetings rabbi and kissed him Jesus said to him friend do you do what you are here to do then they came and laid hands on him on Jesus and arrested him suddenly one of those with Jesus put his sword hand on his sword drew it and struck the slave of the high priest cutting off his ear then Jesus said to him put the sword back in its place for all who take the sword will perish by the sword I think this was a crushing blow to Peter he didn't know what to do this is my idea he couldn't fight Jesus was being taken he run off do you think that I cannot appeal do you think I cannot appeal to my father and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels but how then would the scriptures be fulfilled which say it must happen this way so when we escape hard times, hard afflictions we need to embrace these things like we've been taught it will I think the choice is ours to embrace it's not something God is going to put on us and make us listen we cannot none of the brothers here can make somebody else do something it is our own heart willing to reach out and take this we can run off, we can call the cops we can get our guns we can do whatever to escape persecution we can make excuses that might be a little closer to home well, I didn't mean it that way it's not what I wanted to do but we have to allow these things to I have to and I suppose everybody else is human as well how then how then would the scriptures how can we be saved if we don't get squeezed we cannot there's only one other way we can go and that's the broad road or be squeezed I kind of like that I think narrow is pretty close to it too but being squeezed sounds a little tougher so the real name the ok so it gets narrow and then it gets even tighter at that hour Jesus said to the crowd have you come out here with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I am a bandit day after day I've sat in your temple teaching and you did not arrest me but all this has to take place so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled then all the disciples deserted he got arrested he got taken through trial and he was crucified he arose the story didn't stop there it is our time today and I think when I think of communion I just thought of these things thank you for listening to me and I just love you oh Let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me. Remember not the sins of my youth, Let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me. Let me not be ashamed, let not my enemies triumph over me.

Comfort each of us, The narrow entranceway go in. Great is the gain to us, Burdened for his suffering. Thereafter there be Therefore, O man, thy way prepared.

Wilt thou be in that kingdom blest, Eternally with righteousness. After this time, our chattels and spires Are peace and joy eternally. The righteous men this shall acquire, Whose paths will honor constantly.

But even thou from age shall go, The stairs to hell, this is the same. He now is lost, God rest shall know, But blest is he who's born again. To him that God prepared and thro' A crown eternal peace shall hold, It shall not pass away with your gain and gold.

O make the straight and narrow way, That thou, the passing crowd, Which God the Godhead church doth make, Which he hath cleansed from sin and stain. Therefore our way will always gain, Dirty, sharp, and full to their opiates, Dirty, sharp, away from all nonstake. So now we know that God shall live.

God understand the way he cometh, To him eternal self. But righteous deed is in the self, Though on your way your fancy see. Rest for the Lord till end of day, For through the price of life's new gain, All but for a stage upon this way Would be the lasting crown of fame.

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