

Seek and Enter - God Commands You to Enter by the Narrow Gate

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the urgent command to enter through the narrow gate and prioritize God's kingdom above all else to avoid destruction and face judgment with hope.

Scripture: Isaiah 6:2, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:13-14

Topics: "Eternal Judgment", "Seeking God"

Description

In this sermon, a woman describes a horrifying scene where people were screaming in horror and their faces were distorted. She claims to have seen her own father burning in hell. The sermon then shifts to a story about a woman who seeks shelter from a storm and asks for an umbrella from a stranger. The preacher uses this story to illustrate the burden of strangers constantly asking for favors. The sermon concludes with a call to seek God's kingdom and righteousness, emphasizing the importance of standing before God and acknowledging His glory.

Transcript

We are so grateful to the Lord for allowing us to meet together in this manner. Together with Musa Nkosi Seme, Emmanuel Shongwane, and their wives, their brides. I ask from the bridegrooms like Mr. Shongwane, is there a verse that you have on your heart regarding this wedding? He said, yes there is.

I asked which one? He said, yes, Matthew 7 verse 34. Verse 13, enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and there are many who go by it. Because narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way, which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

I went to Musa Nkosi Seme last night and I asked him if he had a word on his heart. He said, yes there is, and actually it's very close, and in close relationship to the verse which I've read for you. Matthew 6 verse 33, some know these verses off by heart even if they don't open their Bibles.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Let us pray. We ask you Lord that your word would be sharp and reach the depths of our hearts.

Lord we know that on that great day when we will all stand before you and give account before you, that your word will be like lightning. And we ask that your word would be in that manner today. Amen.

I asked the bridegrooms then regarding these verses, are there some particular points of great meaning to you regarding these texts? And then Mr. Shongwane said we go in through a narrow way. Though narrow is the entrance, God insists, enter thereby. But the broad way is an entrance which is just easy to slip into, to drift into, and its end is hell.

And the narrow way has few that go thereby. Those who go on the broad way, they are many, but they go into destruction. And the bridegroom of the Seme, he said of importance to him is that each and every one must seek God's kingdom first.

Don't be distracted by anything else, let the first thing be God's kingdom. I was grateful. I was thankful to hear the bridegrooms speaking in this manner.

And I was thankful on behalf of the brides because they are to be grateful to have husbands like this. You are privileged. I've heard of some ladies, mothers who have said, we want our daughters to come here through the mission, because in our places where we live, there are no girls of any value.

There is, they're not worth any dowry. No, they got married, but we didn't get any cattle. There was no dowry involved.

They said, we'd rather that our daughters believe and are Christians here. Now, it's a privilege for them to get such wonderful spouses. Because not all have got the cattle.

Some men don't have the cattle. Even though they might have the cattle, live cattle, but they may not have... But it would be good if the cattle are good cattle, not that together with them, everything collapses and dies. Let us return to the word of the Lord.

These words were spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ, he himself, the last day, we all shall stand before him. He commands to get to the kingdom of God, to get to the kingdom of God, to get to the kingdom of God, seeking it alone. He doesn't say, by the way, if you feel like it, if you would like to, he demands that of you.

And I do not have the authority to tell a person, do this, do that. I don't have the authority to say, you get married to that one, and that other one, that will be your spouse. No, only the one who is almighty has that decision and authority.

Very often people come inquiring in that direction and asking, and I say, look, I am not your Lord, I am not God, you seek God for yourself and ask him. Jesus gives his command here to seek first the kingdom of God, to seek first the kingdom and to enter in by the narrow gate. It is not just a general offer, and I am not in line with those who say, God is the supreme gentleman, he doesn't tell you to do it, he begs of you.

No, here he commands and says here, do it. God is seeking no favor from you, he is commanding you, and woe to you if you do not do it. Bow to that command, it is not his head that will be hurt, it is yours, and your brains will spill out.

Let me make this absolutely clear to every one of you, no matter what your background is or your country, whether you are English or Afrikaans or French or African, whatever nation you are from, this is a must, God demands it. There was once a great queen in England, her name was Queen Victoria. She ruled in England when the empire was huge, and it was said at the time that the sun does not set on the British Empire.

Why was that the case? Well, it was literally like that, for they ruled the world and had countries and colonies from hemisphere to hemisphere, and all the sides filled in all over, the sun never went down on the empire. And Queen Victoria answered respectfully. And she was one who, when she got the opportunity, she would love to go for a walk or stroll through the woods, the forests of England, and she would walk alone, completely alone, with no security, and she would say, I like to walk alone because for me it's an opportunity to pray, to speak to my creator.

One day when she was in the middle of the forest, the clouds gathered and a storm broke out. There was hard rain. Now, rain is very typical of England.

It's a land of much rain and mist in comparison to here in Africa. It rained as if there were buckets of water. Then she saw a cottage in the forest.

She ran to it and knocked on the door. The old lady within opened the door. And when the lady of the cottage asked, what do you need, she said, I need an umbrella.

Then she went back into the cottage and she had a number of umbrellas and she chose the oldest she could find, saying, oh, how burdensome it is to have strangers keep on knocking on one's door and asking favors like for an umbrella. Now, make sure you return this and do it. And as the queen, ruler of the greatest empire, walked off, this old lady called after her and said, and don't forget the broly.

The queen turned around and said, thank you very much. May God bless you. The next day, a top-ranking military officer arrived, came back with a card and the umbrella.

And the queen had written, may God bless you, Queen Victoria. It is said that the lady of that cottage almost fainted, she turned as white as a sheet. What if I had only known, if I would have only known, she was so remorseful and her heart was broken.

She said, had I known, I would have brought out the very best. But the queen never came by that cottage again. Today we speak of one who is far greater than Queen Victoria, the king of kings.

No one, small or great, will escape standing before him one day. And the Bible explains very clearly how we will see him. John, the old apostle, by this time, when he saw him, who was far greater than Queen Victoria, he didn't nearly faint like that woman of the cottage, he fainted.

He fell down. He saw his face, the Lord's face, shining brighter than the sun in all its power. He saw his eyes as fire, bright fire, flames of fire.

He saw the chest garment, which was of gold, which indicates that of a judge. His feet like glowing bronze, straight out of the furnace. If there is boiling hot bronze, even if there is earth on top of it, it cannot be contained, for it explodes through it.

His voice sharper than a two-edged sword. And his voice like that of thundering waters, many waters. And his voice like that of a thunderer.

If you go up to Zimbabwe, you'll see that many waters and rivers gather together as they pour thunderously into the Victoria Falls. If you go up to Zimbabwe, you'll see that many waters and rivers gather together as they pour thunderously into the Victoria Falls. John the disciple, remember, he, though a disciple, fell down as dead before him.

How will you stand before him? What would it be like for you when you die? This is the one of whom it is written, he who holds the leaders of the church in his hand. If only I had known, if only I would have known, and I'm introducing you to this man today, so that you won't say one day, if only I would have known. Know it now, this is the man you're going to face.

You will face this man. People who walk this earth, if they are not touched, and this doesn't penetrate them, they are falling headlong into eternal destruction. He who holds the leaders of the church in his hand.

If only I had known, if only I would have known. He doesn't ask you a favor, he's not saying if you feel like it, he commands you, he demands it of you, enter into the narrow gate. If you don't heed what he tells you to do, you'll go out of here being the enemy of God.

And you'll be remembered that on this very day, on this very date, you rejected his command. The bridegroom, when he mentioned this verse, he indicated and showed with his fingers how narrow this gate is. And so this is a demand, this is a command from God that you seek first the kingdom, that it is the priority in your life.

Otherwise, with the things that you might earn like money, it will turn into fire that burns you in your hands. I cannot forget what he said regarding his own co-workers, his preachers. He said, if I could, I would take my preachers and I would dangle them over the very flames of hell.

Then they would know for certain what to preach. Just to carry on from the previous one, you may not have expected this as a wedding text, you might say, but this is not what I expect. I would be hellish if I wouldn't use this opportunity with such a text to present this truth to you.

Remember, you will stand in the presence of God and you will stand in the presence of God. You will stand finally one day before this very one, this one whose face shines brighter than the shining sun in its brightest, whose voice is like many waters. This one.

And so this is a command that nobody can escape from, including you who say, I am not a Christian. So why does this have to do with me? This isn't my religion. So why does it bother me? This is a command.

And when it says the narrow gate, it means narrow with pressure. This compressed entry and this continued pressure of the Lord, he applies it daily. Every day that you are not under pressure by God, not like those who say, oh, I'm liberated to do as I want to do.

No, but under pressure from God, if you're not under that, then you are under his wrath. When I was telephoned by a young person who was facing death, hearing him crying of the phone and asking him, what is it? He said, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. He said, God has taken me to task and I am suddenly faced with the reality of my inner being, my haughtiness, my boastfulness, everything that is stands up against God.

Jesus does not play around. Billy Graham once said, recently the Lord showed me my sins and how awful they were, how shocking to me. What is it like before you? What will it be like if you stand before him? When we stand before him, we will see.

When Isaiah the prophet saw God in the temple, he saw the glory of the Lord so much that the seraphim who are flying, the angels that were flying, crying out, holy, holy, holy is the Lord, covered their faces,

covered their feet with their wings. What will it be like if you stand before him? God the Father who is holy, God the Son who is holy and God the Holy Spirit. Yes, we easily take the name of the Lord in vain and it's as easily as saying that you hurt yourself or you say, oh my God.

Well, he puts you on the narrow way. I remember when I got married and I was visited by some important dignitaries of Wazoo. When I was married, I said to my wife, when we were visited by these Zulu dignitaries, I said to my wife, now you go down on your knees and you serve these people properly.

For the Bible says, Don't be like the queen ant who rules the roost or the ant heap, but know God says you are to be the servant of all. This is a narrow way. This is a way of extreme pressure.

This is a narrow way. This is a narrow way of the Lord at all. So narrow is the gate that there is space only for you.

That includes you who are getting married today. You are to set your shoulder to the plough. Don't be one who looks back.

Even in Lot's situation, he was commanded not to look back. For you are to go in this narrow gate alone with the Lord. It's not a broad way, but his narrow gate and way.

That means literally the kingdom first, nothing else. Not your matric, not your university education or your financial career. Nothing of that.

If you put that first, you will land in hell. We will hear your cries from hell. And I say this lest you should say one day on that day of judgment, on that day, Lord, we heard Olo Stegun preaching and he just fed us sugar, sweet things, niceties, and he didn't tell us the whole truth.

This is a narrow way. It includes your whole you, including your body, that you enter in. Jesus said it is difficult for the rich man to enter into heaven.

He said it is impossible for it is like a camel going through the eye of a needle. It means a radical meeting with God of such a nature that he wrings you out, that he works on you where you are so distraught with yourself that you cry out to him for mercy. That is the one who enters in the narrow gate.

He had said, seek first the kingdom of God. He also said no one can serve two kings. No one can serve mammon and God.

You cannot worship God and something else, and your wife, and your husband, and your child, and your girlfriend. Jesus said that he must be greater than anything else and that the one who regards his mother or whatever loved one, relative or himself more than he does is not worthy of him. You who are getting married today, you are faced with life and death.

If you first seek God's kingdom, and you brides, even as you go to your new families, you serve the Lord alone. You cannot serve two masters. In seeking first, there is the Greek meaning behind it with the intention of saying it is an absolute focus.

It is an aim that is sharply directed absolutely at the target, and so too, you can't continue your life without this sharp focus. This is not an up and down today when it's nice. Tomorrow when it's not nice, you don't feel like doing it.

This is to be an absolute rule. This is the narrow way. This is seeking first the kingdom of God that is total, and whole, and right to the end.

Now dear friend, you can tell me you're born again. You can tell me I'm a child of the Lord. But if you, your life is not an entry in a walk on this narrow pathway, seeking the Lord in this way, then you must know it's a lie that you're a child of God.

You're a heathen. You're on your way to hell. That's only one way, and that's this narrow way.

Not your children. Oh no. Not your husband.

Not your wife. Just him alone, and you'll stand before him on judgment throw on your last day. Count your days.

Remember them. Your last day is coming closer every day, a step of the way, and you'll have to give account before this man. I'm going to ask you a question, and I'm going to ask you a question, and I'm going to ask you a question, what good man would not repent and ask forgiveness for his sins." What good man would not repent and ask forgiveness for his sins.

That is the number one thing. That is what diets choose. One daar than the other.

If Jesus isn't the very first, it means absolutely the very first. I am so sorry for you, I pity you. I'm so sorry for you, man, when you meet up with your day of judgment, your day of death.

I was telling some recently that when we were in Mozambique and Maputo and we were traveling with some others, it was just in this past week, I told them about Hill, a preacher who would preach to children and he would gather enormous crowds, 20,000, 30,000 of them. Someone once asked him, preacher, why is it that you preach with such enthusiasm, with such energy, with such fervor? He said, when I was young at home, we had a very big home, a double story. I slept in the room below, my sister in the room above me, and suddenly it happened one day that I heard a terrible noise above me from my sister's room.

He said, I rushed upstairs and as I burst into the room, I found her there, sitting on her bedside, absolutely spellbound, screaming, her eyes were bulging out. I asked her, sister, what's the matter? When she continued to show that she wasn't even aware that I was there, I shook her, I said, wake up sister, what's the matter? She said, brother, I've come from hell. I've seen people burning in hell.

Waiting for it. She said, brother, it is indescribable, the way that the people were screaming in horror, it's as if their eyes were bulging out of their heads. Their faces were a picture of absolute horror.

Faces that were just grotesque and changed, and the horror of it, brother, I cannot describe to you. She said to him, they said to me there, go back and tell them what you have seen. She said, brother, then as I looked around, I saw father, our own dad, burning in hell.

She said, our dad was a leader in the church, a preacher at Sunday school, one who was leading in church activities, but there I saw him, brother, burning in hell. And he said, it is for that reason that I turned to the Lord, I entered that very moment, I said, I am going into the narrow gate, and he said to them, I've never looked back after that, I have warned continually, because hell continues, the flames do not go out, thus I preach.

Have you entered in, have you entered in on this day through the narrow gate, into the narrow way? If you refuse, you will reject this command by the Lord, and you will wake up in hell. If you refuse, you will reject this command by the Lord, and you will wake up in hell. How long will you let your wife keep you away from the work of the Lord, and you say, well, I'm serving the Lord in my way.

But you have allowed her to sit in your head, and you are bound in that way, and we'll have to see on the day of judgment, before the one where John fell down as dead before him, where you'll give account of every idle word that you've spoken on earth. You'll meet him. You'll meet with the one with whom the woman of Samaria met, that Samaritan woman spoke to the Lord, and he answered and told her how many wives, how many husbands she had.

She has gone through, and the same would be said of you, husband, even the one who lusts with the eye, the Lord sees it. Let's ask the Lord's blessing. Lord Jesus, hear your children bowing before you, and as they kneel before you with the bride in white dress, Lord, may her spiritual garments be the same.

I'm saying completely unblemished before you. Lord, may they always seek you first. May they not be anxious like the pagans and asking what shall we wear, what about tomorrow, but that they will seek you and your kingdom first, Lord.

And may your grace, Lord Jesus, be with them. And Lord, I don't know what the morrow will bring, but whatever it is, Lord, may they stay true to you, true to each other right to the end. May the love of the Father continue to overflow in their hearts, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with them continually till death, or when the trumpet shall sound in the clouds.

As you come in the clouds, coming from heaven, to fetch your church. Amen.

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