

# The Last Door

by Richard E. Bieber

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*We must let go of our attachments and follow Jesus to enter God's kingdom, but many of us are stuck at the door due to our inability to let go.*

**Scripture:** John 6:60

**Topics:** "Surrender To God", "Material Wealth"

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## Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the narrow road to the Kingdom of Heaven, emphasizing the need to let go of worldly possessions and desires in order to enter through the narrow door. He illustrates how individuals and churches often hesitate at the door, unwilling to part with their 'rifles' of anger, 'wagons of gold' symbolizing material wealth, or 'painted pavilions' representing a desire for comfort and ease. The sermon warns against blocking the door to freedom by compromising with these hindrances, urging listeners to enter clean-hearted and fully surrendered to God's will.

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## Transcript

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in."

Matt 23:13

It would be nice to be able to think that once we've jumped down from our high horse of pride, taken off our wide mask and gone through the narrow door of the Kingdom, our days of going through narrow places are over. The road may be narrow, but it seems possible to pick up a few bulky goodies along the way and take them with us.

But every so often the road goes through a place so narrow that we find ourselves having to trim down our lives again in order to get through.

The narrow road continues through the Kingdom of Disappointment which we call this world, until at the very border there is one last door cut through sheer rock.

Through this door travelers can see sunshine,

blue sky,  
green grass,  
fountains and rivers,  
and fruit trees in abundance.

By the time they arrive at this point travelers are moving in clusters. At this door each cluster halts, and the travelers must move through single file. Recently a cluster of travelers arrived at this last door and shouted for joy when they saw their destination on the other side. But when they tried to move through single file strange things started to happen. One man was carrying an automatic rifle. When he got to the door, the rifle flew up and blocked the door as if glued there by a magnet. To go through the door the man would have to leave the rifle behind ... this he didn't seem to want to do.

Two women were pulling a wagonload of gold. The wagon wasn't very big, but it was still too wide for the door. Another couple had a painted pavilion on bicycle wheels and would take turns pushing each other in this pavilion which had no windows but was painted inside with magnificent landscapes giving the inhabitant the feeling of continuously pleasant surroundings ... but the pavilion wouldn't go through.

So the cluster of travelers stood around the doorway and took turns trying to get their equipment through but nothing seemed to work. A messenger appeared.

"Sorry folks, but you can't block the door! Either start filing through without your equipment or move your group away from the door.

See, over there is Hesitation Park. If you don't want to forsake your equipment, you can move your group over there and establish yourselves."

And, sure enough, there must have been at least 750 groups in Hesitation Park gathered in tents, houses, some had even built churches. They were praying, singing, and listening to sermons. Some were holding seminars, some were engaged in spiritual group therapy. There was the church of "God and Mammon" the tabernacle of "Sanctified Racism" the community of "Christian Revenge" the "Spiritual Assembly of the Refined" where people had to demonstrate a thorough acquaintance with the best art, literature, poetry and dance. There was the "Church of Positive Thinking" where no mention was permitted of sin, death or hell.

This particular gathering of people by the door refused to move.

"We don't want to go to Hesitation Park, we want to go through the door. If only we can figure out how to take these few items along."

"I can allow you only one more minute," pleaded the messenger.

The group still refused to move. Suddenly there was an explosion. When the smoke cleared the people were scattered all over the place holding their heads, or sitting bewildered on the ground.

By the next afternoon they were busy establishing themselves in Hesitation Park and the door to freedom was clear again.

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in."

When Jesus died on Calvary and rose on the third day he opened the door in such a way that any one who desires to may enter. But no one is permitted to stand at the door and hesitate and block it for others,

The same Jesus who invites us all so graciously....

"I am the door ....."

"Come to me all you who labor...."

...this same Jesus has a way of forcing us off to the side if we insist on standing at the door with our rifles, our wagons of gold, our painted pavilions ... blocking the way for others.

Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them,

"Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before?"

It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

But there are some of you that do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. John 6:60-66

But a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it

remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. Acts 5:1-6

As a flock and, as individuals, we arrive ever and again at a new door, a new passage into light until we stand at the last door. Through each door we can see the Light of the throne of God and the Lamb and the fountain of the Spirit...new strength and new refreshment waiting for us. But we've picked up something along the way that won't fit the passageway. We want God but we also want this other treasure. Our choice is to either leave the treasure and keep going on into light or step aside and play church in Hesitation Park. But one thing God will not allow us to do: He will not allow us to block the door by being individuals of compromise, or a church of compromise right on the path others need to take for freedom.

Our problem, as a church and as individuals, is that while we want no part of Hesitation Park there are things in our lives that simply won't fit the narrow door ...and we want to stop here in front of the door. But God won't let us block the door.

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments; Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother." And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Mark 10:17-21

The man was standing at the door, Jesus was urging him to let go of the last thing that was holding him back.

"Don't stand there and hesitate. Come...enter ..follow me."

At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful;

for he had great possessions. Mark 10:22

Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants, When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. Matthew 18:23-27

Now the man is standing at the door...one step and he's in. To take that one step all he has to do is forgive as he has been forgiven

But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and ...he turned aside.

On the other hand we have Peter eating breakfast with his Lord after the resurrection.

"Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?"

Feed my lambs...feed my sheep...follow me."

....and Peter went in.

Today each of us is standing again at the wonderful door...one step and we're in. But to take that one step means that we have to come in clean, bringing nothing with us, have hearts that are attached to nothing but God... and we seem to be having problems.

Some of us are stuck at the door because our automatic rifle won't go through. That rifle is so much a part of our lives we can't bring ourselves to let go of it. It is the rifle of anger ...forever spitting fire at those around us.

"You can't bring that with you," says the messenger. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Either lay your gun down and come in or go over there in Hesitation Park and shoot everybody in sight, but you can't stand here blocking the door with that rifle."

And some of us are stuck at the door with a wagonload of gold. We may be rich or we may be poor but we've fallen into the habit of thinking we can control our situation by means of money and have become slaves to money and the things money can buy.

We love God and we want to be in his Kingdom but we can't bring ourselves to let go of mammon.

"Leave your wagon there by the door and come," says the messenger. "God will take care of you. You will have the money,

the food,

the clothing,

the shelter you need, all the way to Paradise."

"What if I leave the wagon behind and take only a few little nuggets?"

"Friend, you can keep it all if you just take your wagon over to Hesitation Park. But if you want to clear this door you have to come through clean."

And some of us are holding out for only one thing: pleasant surroundings.

"I'll serve God. I'll work hard. I'll pray every day. All I ask is some green grass and blue sky and peace and quiet."

We've been pushing a little painted pavilion all through our lives this far and the thought of exposing our tender spirits to the harsh realities of the raw world scares us to death.

"Surely there must be a way to push my pavilion through."

"My friend, says the messenger, "take a look through that door. Can't you see that the beauty of the Lord himself far exceeds the painted landscapes of your fantasy world? Come, leave it behind and enter real life. But I must warn you that you can't hesitate here. If you want to keep your pavilion move it over there to Hesitation Park."

Each of us knows what it is that keeps us from getting through the door. The Spirit pleads with us:

- "It's not worth it!

- Leave it behind and move!

- Do it now!"

Soon there will be a final surge of travelers on the Narrow

Road. It will number in the millions. One day the last cluster of

travelers will reach the door. And those who choose to do so

will enter...the others will settle in Hesitation Park. Then the

door will close and it will never open again in all eternity.

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