

Is Life Closing in on You?

by Russell DeLong

The sermon emphasizes the importance of choosing the narrow path of righteousness over the broad way of destruction, highlighting the hope found in Christ amidst life's pressures.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 4:18, Proverbs 14:12, Matthew 7:13, John 14:6

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Spiritual Choices"

Description

Russell DeLong preaches about the two paths in life: the narrow, unpopular path that leads to abundant life and eternal happiness, and the wide, popular path that leads to spiritual death and everlasting misery. He emphasizes the importance of shedding sinful habits to enter the narrow gate and the consequences of following the wrong path, as illustrated by the shrinking walls of an adjustable cell. DeLong urges listeners to choose the right path, as depicted in Matthew 7:13-14, and warns against the deceptive allure of the wrong path, as highlighted in Proverbs 14:12.

Transcript

Scripture: Matthew 7:13, 14; Proverbs 4:18; 14:12

One of the most infamous instruments of torture used in the Middle Ages was a box much like a diver's suit. It stood about six feet high, eighteen inches wide, and a foot deep. Protruding from the back and sides were six inch, sharp spikes spaced about eight inches apart. Also on the inside of the door were similar spikes. The torture victim was forced to stand in this box and then the door was forcibly closed and pressed tight, causing these sharp six-inch spikes from the rear and also from the front to penetrate the body in dozens of places. Such a devilish apparatus was more than a torture device -- it caused unbearable, excruciating pain, resulting in a welcomed death. When the door closed the victim was secure and his murder was certain.

Another fiendish practice in a certain medieval penitentiary was consummated in a

specially constructed cell. It was about ten feet wide and twenty feet long. The thing that made this cell so different and so devilish was this -- the four walls were adjustable. The prisoner was locked in this strange room. Each day the walls moved in an inch, so that the cell became two inches shorter and two inches narrower every twenty-four hours. The helpless prisoner could count mathematically just how many days before the squeeze would be on and death would come. He could push with all his might against the moving walls to no avail. His screams for help went unnoticed. He was caught. As the walls moved in, life

shortened up. Day by day the sides of his cell got closer to him. Now the room had shrunk to a width of twelve inches and a length of two feet. He couldn't lie down or sit down; he had to stand. Twenty-four hours later the walls moved tighter -- now ten inches wide, twenty-two inches long -- then eight inches by twenty inches -- then

six by eighteen -- then four by sixteen. While the victim twisted and adjusted the walls closed in -- bones broke, blood flowed, skull cracked -- until all that was left was the bloody pulp of a crushed man. -- Life had closed in on him.

The spiked cabinet and the adjustable cell are terrible examples of instruments for physical torture. But life for the moral creature has worse consequences than mere bodily pain. Mental anguish and spiritual suffering are more acute. To be a failure, a traitor, a moral derelict, a spiritual apostate is far more agonizing than any form of physical torture.

Every human being grows either bigger and richer and more righteous or smaller and

poorer and more corrupt. Habits forge unbreakable chains. If they are good we become fixed and stable as worthy characters. If our habits are bad we become bound as prisoners of our own evil selves. The choice from the beginning is ours.

At the outset life offers two roads -- the right and the wrong.

The right is narrow and has a smaller entrance. It appears unattractive, drab, unalluring --

but it is right.

The wrong is attractive, colorful, alluring, and glamorous. It is broad and the entrance is

wide. But it is still wrong.

Jesus pictured these two roads when He said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7: 13, 14).

The right way is strait, narrow, unpopular, but it leads to abundant life and eternal

happiness.

The wrong way is wide, broad, and popular, but it leads to spiritual death and everlasting

misery.

We might liken the matter to a cylindrical cone or funnel; one end is very small, the other

very wide.

The right road Jesus called narrow -- it begins at the small opening of the funnel. To get

through one must shed all sinful, worldly, evil practices and habits. The beginning cost is great. The fact is the best things in life you always pay for in advance. But when you qualify and get in, from that moment on life becomes bigger and richer -- the circumference of the funnel gets greater and greater. It is as the Wise

Man proclaimed, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4: 18).

The wrong road Jesus pictured as wide and broad. It is easy to get in -- it is so spacious.

But it is the wide end of the funnel; the tragic thing is that it gets smaller and smaller. The further you go, the more life closes in -- until the press is on. The Wise Man also declared, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14: 12).

Every person is on one road or the other. Look at people -- some more buoyant and radiant with age. They are poised, calm, confident, serene, and happy. They have sowed good seed and are reaping a glorious harvest. They entered Christ's narrow way and have found it expanding and exhilarating. It leads to an unlimited horizon in God's eternal city.

But look at others. They entered the broad way -- sold out for pleasure and thrills. They

stabbed their better selves, spurned the pleas of parents and friends, and rejected the call of Christ and right. Now look at them -- broken in health, cigarette fiends, dope addicts, drunkards, few friends, irritable, nervous, condemned, burned out. Life has turned to ashes; the glow is gone from the cheek, the spring from the heel, and radiance from living. So they try for more thrills and kicks, but it all is fading. The funnel is getting smaller and smaller. Life is pressing in. Every day the walls come nearer. The horizons, instead of expanding, are contracting. As in the adjustable cell, one is caught, hemmed in, crushed, squeezed into eternal misery and death.

But there is still a ray of hope. Christ is the Saviour. Your life may be ruined but your soul can yet be saved by a forgiving, merciful, compassionate Jesus.

Plead for forgiveness and put your faith in Him before life crushes you and presses your poor soul into eternal night.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/russell-delong/is-life-closing-in-on-you/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net