

Finding the Narrow Way

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of self-examination, humility, and repentance in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Duration: 59:14

Scripture: Luke 13:22

Topics: "Following Christ", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of choosing the narrow path that leads to life, highlighting the need to examine ourselves, seek forgiveness, and make tough decisions to follow Christ wholeheartedly. It challenges believers to prioritize humility, repentance, and living a godly life, even when faced with difficult choices or peer pressure.

Transcript

In 2 Corinthians and chapter 13, we read a question that the Apostle Paul asks the Corinthians. And it's a good question for us to ask ourselves. See these Corinthians were not unbelievers, these are the Christians in Corinth where Paul had spent one and a half years teaching them.

You read about that in Acts 18 and he built them up. And then he wrote one Corinthians to them where he said, you know, God's going to confirm you and all that in Christ. But now he says in 2 Corinthians 13 and verse 5, test yourselves to see if you are in the faith, examine yourselves, or do you not recognize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you unless indeed you fail the test? Do you think those words could possibly apply to you? Or when you read scriptures like that, you say, oh, well, that doesn't apply to me.

Well, I think that a lot of Christians in Corinth felt exactly like that, and that's why they were lost. Now, if there's a word in scripture written for unbelievers, that's another thing we may say, well, I'm not sure whether that applies to me. But here is a question, a command rather, to test yourself, to see if you are in the faith.

Examine yourselves. It's quite likely that some of us have read through the Bible many times, haven't even noticed this verse, and I'm sure the devil doesn't want you to notice it. And the possibility of failing the test when we test ourselves, that's really something.

So let me show you another verse where Jesus answered a question once when somebody asked him in Luke's Gospel chapter 13. Luke 13 and verse 22. Jesus was passing from one city and village to another, teaching, proceeding on his way to Jerusalem.

Someone said to him, now let's read slowly, Lord, are there only a few who are going to be saved? What would you say is the answer to that question? Are there only a few who will be saved finally, who will be with the Lord for eternity? And his reply was, he didn't even answer that question. He didn't answer it the way they expected, whether it's going to be few or many. He said, don't worry.

I mean, if I were to paraphrase it was, don't worry whether a few or many, you make sure that you yourself are there. And that's what I'd say. Don't worry about the number of people who will be saved, but you make sure you yourself are there.

And that's certainly my responsibility when I stand up in this pulpit or any pulpit. As one who seeks to represent the Lord Jesus Christ and to proclaim his word accurately, I believe my responsibility is to give those who hear me, who have years to hear, as far as possible, an accurate diagnosis of their spiritual condition. You know, like a doctor, a good doctor, a good preacher is like a good doctor.

He doesn't work for money, but he's really interested in the patients to make sure that everybody's healed and that people know exactly what their sickness is. Is it enough to say, well, I'm 95% sure I'm saved? Supposing a doctor, you went to a doctor and he told you, you know, you've got a 5% chance of having cancer. There's a 5% possibility that you already have cancer.

We say, oh, that's okay, 95% there's no possibility. So you ignore it and it may be true that you did have cancer. He couldn't rule it out completely.

A healthy person would go to the same doctor and he'd say, you don't have cancer at all, zero. You ask yourself this question. Supposing you went to a doctor because you had some pain somewhere and he takes a scan and he says, I can't say for sure, but I think there's a 5% possibility you've got cancer.

You need to do some further tests. What would you say? Say, oh, it's too expensive for the test. I'm not worried.

Well, if you've got a wife and small children to look after, you better do something about your health instead of leaving them as fatherless and widows. See, that is the test which proves to us that we fear cancer more than we fear eternal separation from God. It's true.

So many people, I feel a lot of people come to CFC here and imagine that because we're listening to good messages and fellowship with good people, we're going to be okay. I just want to shake you out of your comfort and ask you to think. Look at Jesus' reply.

Verse 24, Luke 13, 24, strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Many will want to enter and not be able? Is that right? That there are people who want to be with the Lord forever and won't be there? We thought it's only those who reject Christ, who don't want Him.

Now here it says there are people who want to enter and won't be able. And then one day the head of the house gets up and shuts the door and they stand outside and saying, hey, open Lord. And he'll answer, I don't know where you're from.

And you'll begin to say, but we broke bread every Sunday. We took part in the cup. That's the meaning of that.

We ate and drank in your presence. Lord, you were there and we broke bread and we drank the cup. We were there every Sunday.

We missed many of the other meetings, but we didn't miss the breaking of bread. We were there. And he'll say, I don't know where you're from.

Depart from me. What is the reason for departing? That is sin in your life. That's the only reason why anybody will be kept out of God's kingdom.

Evil doers means those who do evil. In other words, those who commit sin. The only reason why God will keep anybody out of his kingdom is because of a wrong attitude to sin.

Either open indulgence in it, and it doesn't matter whether you're young or old, or a casual attitude towards it. It's like if you play the fool with electricity, you're going to die one day. I mean, you may escape a few times, but one day you're careless and that's the end of you.

So we're careful in these areas. In this area too, if I play the fool with sin, you may think, okay, okay, okay. One of these days I'll repent.

I'll tell you. Let me tell you something about sin. Every time you sin, it becomes more difficult to repent.

I sin twice, a little more difficult. I sin 10 times, it's a little more difficult. I sin a hundred times.

I can repent, but it's going to be more difficult. And particularly after I've known the truth. If I didn't know the truth, then of course I don't even know it's sin.

You see, I don't have an understanding. But once, I mean, all of you who come here, you know the truth pretty well. You sin and you take it lightly, you sin and you take it lightly, and that's the reason why after so many years, we find some brothers and sisters here don't seem to have light on their true spiritual condition.

That's really sad. I don't know their private life, but I can tell you one thing when I look at their, see, I've known folks here more than 20 years ago, 25 years ago. And I can fairly accurately gauge their spiritual state just by talking with them and even looking at them, looking at their eyes.

And I find that many of them have not grown, they're slidden back or in the same condition. And the reason is in their life, they're not taking sin seriously. That's the main, one would say the only reason.

So I want to encourage you to listen to what Jesus said, are there only a few going to be saved? Strive to enter. Where have you heard an evangelist who is preaching the gospel, telling people how to be saved and telling them, dear friends, strive to enter in through this door. Because there are many here who will want to enter and will not be able to enter.

I've never heard in my life an evangelist preach the gospel like that. They always say it's so easy. Just raise your hand, sign this card, say Jesus come into my heart and look at these fellows how they live after they've done that.

That's a false gospel. I'd rather believe what Jesus said than what all the evangelists in the world put together say. Let every man be a liar, it says in Romans 3, 3, but let God be true.

I'll tell you another thing, Jesus said heaven and earth will pass away, but this word will not pass away. And like you've heard me say often, when the rich man went to hell, do you think he got a surprise? The story of the rich man and Lazarus is a true story. I think he got the biggest surprise of his life because he never missed a Sabbath at the synagogue.

The chief priests told him he was okay because he was rich and everybody else flattered him and made him feel okay. And when in some moment he dies, he discovers he's in the flames and he said, how did I get here? The bishop was wrong. The priest was wrong.

All the preachers were wrong. They fooled me. They didn't tell me the truth.

And then all of a sudden he's concerned. You read all that in Luke 16, oh, I've got five brothers. They're rich too and they've been listening to this rubbish that the bishops and the priests are telling them.

Abraham, would you please send somebody to go and tell them? Because I know why I came here now. Listen to the confession of a man in hell. It's not a parable.

It's a true story. Jesus never used names in parables. You read all the 40 parables that Jesus gave and you'll never find him using a name like Abraham, Lazarus, never.

Abraham was a real person. Lazarus was a real person. Rich man was a real person.

There's a real man in hell and who is there even today. And this is what he told Abraham. Luke 16, 30, if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.

Repent means they will turn from sin. He knows that the only reason why he went there was not because he didn't read the whole Bible. It's not because he didn't go to the synagogue every Saturday.

It's because he did not turn from sin in his life. It's an awareness that hits a person as soon as you reach hell. A lot of big people, rich people, scientists, famous people on earth who were very famous and popular, great politicians and leaders and respected everywhere.

When they die, they're immediately in hell. In a moment, they know why they're there. Doesn't take long.

In a moment, my attitude to sin was wrong. I played the fool. It's not only old people.

There are young people who cross the road and die in an accident or get some sickness. They suddenly go to hell. They thought, hey, I thought I had a long life ahead of me and now eternally I'm here.

And yet I heard the message so many times. God gave me so many chances to repent. And I'll tell you, you'll care for your brothers who are still on earth.

Say, please send someone to warn them. And Abraham says, they don't need a Lazarus to go back from the dead. They've got the Bible, verse 31.

They have the Bible. Those days, the only Bible was the first 39 books called Moses and the Prophets. And if they don't listen to the Bible, they're not even going to believe if somebody gets up and says, I came back from heaven or I came back from hell.

You know, there are all types of stories floating around the internet of people who came back from heaven, who imagined they came back from heaven, who imagined they came back from hell. And there are a lot of foolish believers circulating those stories thinking, hey, this will scare people. Listen to the word of God.

If these fellows don't believe the Bible, they're not going to believe these stories. And if you have more faith in these stories on the internet of people who say they came back from heaven or hell, more than the words of Jesus Christ, oh, brother, you really need to be saved. Imagine putting the word of some unknown guy who lives in some part of the world you never even heard of.

Most of it is fiction. More than the words of Jesus Christ, I wouldn't do that. Well, they've got the Bible.

That's why I say to all of you, if you've got a Bible in your own language and you've got a copy of it, you have no excuse. It's there. All you've got to do is read the gospels.

That's all. Strive to enter. Are there few who are going to be saved? The Lord says, strive to enter in through the narrow door because many will seek to enter and will not be able.

And you ask yourself, why will they not be able? You know, Jesus once said, you know that statement that he made when the rich ruler turned away and went away from the Lord. Jesus said in Mark chapter 10, when the man went away, it says in verse 22, Jesus said to him, you lack one thing. Essentially, he was saying you love your money.

I want you to say one thing here. Jesus never tells everyone to sell all that they possess. This man, he said in verse 21, Jesus felt a love for him, a tremendous love for him and say, hey, listen, I love you and you can be saved, but you've got to sell all you possess and give to the poor.

Now, I don't have time to show you, but if you read in Luke 19, there was a man called Zacchaeus who was equally rich and who said, I'll give half my goods to the poor. And Jesus said, that's fine, you're saved. So how is it Zacchaeus had to give only half? This man had to give 100% and some of the others probably gave less than half.

That's okay. You don't get salvation by giving money to the poor, no, or to God or in the offering box. It's like cancer.

You know, sometimes you have cancer in an organ, a stomach or some other part of the organ, some other organ in the body. The doctor may examine and say, well, in your case, I think I've got to cut off part of the stomach or part of that organ and you'll be all right. Another person comes, oh, yours is worse.

I've got to cut off at least half of it. Half your stomach has to go. Another person comes whose cancer has spread much more.

He said, I'm sorry, I've got to remove the whole organ. Otherwise you'll die. See, that's it.

The people gripped to different extents by the love of money, which is like a cancer. And to some, the Lord says, yeah, it's okay. You don't have to give up everything because it doesn't have a hold on you.

But this guy, he had the money at such a hold on him, he said, you'll never be saved if you don't break that hold completely. Your cancer has spread so much. Imagine he was a young man and by the time he was already enslaved to the love of money.

Usually people get enslaved by the time they're old. This fellow was enslaved when he was young. And then Jesus looked around at his disciples.

But remember these words, Jesus loved him. It's only somebody who loves you who will tell you the whole truth about yourself. A doctor who only wants your money, wants to keep you happy, will not tell you the truth about yourself.

And a preacher who's only interested in your money will not tell you the truth about yourself. Because he may hurt you, and then you won't give him enough money. That's why you must never listen to a preacher who's interested in your money.

Listen to people like Jesus and Paul, they'll tell you the truth. And when this rich man heard these words, he was sad. And he went away grieving.

For he was one who owned a lot of property. And Jesus looking around said to his disciples, how hard it'll be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God. It's not because of their wealth.

I think there are going to be a lot of rich people in God's kingdom. It's because the wealth that got a hold of them, the wealth was on their head, not under their feet. That's the point.

He didn't say it's impossible. He said it's hard. It's hard because generally speaking, wealth tends to sit on our head and very difficult to bring it under our feet.

But by the power of the spirit, it can be. The disciples were amazed because a lot of Jewish people around them were rich. And Jesus said, there's no hope for them.

But Jesus answered, it's not just the wealthy. Listen to this. Those of you who were quite happy that you don't fall in that category.

Jesus answered again and said to them, children, how hard it is for anybody to enter the kingdom of God. And you put in, how hard it is for anyone to enter the kingdom of God. Is that the message you've heard in the gospel you heard? That it's very hard to enter God's kingdom.

That's what Jesus said. But that's not what the preacher told you, right? He said it was very easy. Jesus said it's very hard.

Whom are you going to believe? I like to quote scripture. I remember a brother sending an email, you know, we get lots of emails in response to our internet messages. And one brother said, I appreciate what brother Zach preaches because for everything he quotes a scripture.

Then I know that it's not his ideas, but what God has said. And that's why I make you turn to your Bible so often. Because I don't want your faith to rest upon my cleverness.

I want it to rest upon God's word, what Jesus said. So listen to this. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

Why can't a camel go through the eye of a needle? You know how small the eye of a needle is. I mean, you can't even put your finger through, leave alone a camel. And Jesus had a great way of exaggerating, you know, make something as huge as a camel.

He didn't even say a dog. And going through the eye of a needle, the camel says, boy, I can't get anywhere. I can't even get my nose through that.

And then you look at a, you know, one of the smallest creatures is a thing called an amoeba. So small, you're going to need a microscope to see it. And the amoeba says, hey, that's no problem for me.

I go in and out of the eye of a needle so easily. To an amoeba, that eye of a needle is bigger than this door, which is going in and out easily. You find it difficult to go through this door? Not at all.

Neither does the amoeba. What's the difference between the camel and this little amoeba? One is so big. The other is so small.

That's the thing. You have to be small in your own eyes to enter into God's kingdom. The trouble with man is most human beings are big in their own eyes.

The cleverer they are, the richer they are, the better they are than others, the more they think of themselves. And you know our children are trained in that right from school. The prize goes always to those who come first on the athletics field or in the academic field.

It's competition. Competition. Who's going to come first? Every school in the world.

I'm not saying that's wrong. But at the end of it, if your children do come first in school or on the athletic field, I hope you tell them to humble themselves, give the glory to God. Otherwise, if you also boast about it, you're going to ruin your children.

I'm not preaching what I haven't practiced. I remember when my own children would come home after a prize-giving day, I would say, don't ever tell anybody about this, what you got, and don't ever show it to anyone. Don't ever show your report card to anyone.

And don't ever think that you're more acceptable to God just because you got a prize today. There are 800 students sitting there who couldn't get prizes, but who may be better boys than you are. They may be more unselfish than you.

They may be humbler than you. I used to tell them that every year. Do you tell your children not to glory in their achievements, accomplishments? You want to save your children? Let them be small in their own eyes.

Very, very important. You keep praising a pretty girl and saying how pretty you are, pretty you are, pretty you are. You're going to ruin her.

You got to be careful. I mean, it's all right when they're very little children, I can understand. But as they grow up, be careful.

You who admire people's dresses, oh, what a lovely sari you. In other words, you're not one of those poor people in the slums, you know, you're one of the rich guys, right? You got a sari, you can afford to buy this type of stuff. What all things believers talk about, it's amazing.

And how does it help that person to be saved? It doesn't help that person to be saved at all. It helps that person to be a little more proud that I'm not poor like the people in the slums, I can afford this rich sari. You just pushed him or her a little further towards hell.

I don't want to do that. I don't want to be responsible in the final day for one single soul going to hell. Maybe a lot of people who listened to me for many years will finally go to hell, but it won't be because they didn't hear the truth.

I believe what Jesus said, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man or rich in many ways. We can be rich. Many people think riches is only money.

It's not money. You can be proud of your intelligence. You can be rich in intelligence.

You can be rich in capabilities. A man can be a plumber, a first class plumber, and he can be proud of that. It's basically pride.

You know what Abraham said, that there's a big gulf, he told the rich man, between you and me. Those who are there can't come here. Those who are here can't come there.

And that gulf, I believe, is pride. This man was proud there's a big gulf between him and God, and he can never get to God's kingdom. I want you to turn now to Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 7. See this morning as I was praying about what I should share here, this is what was laid on my heart, and that is why I'm sharing what I am sharing.

I was concerned that there could be many people, young and old, who are coming to CFC regularly, who may not enter the kingdom of God. And I said, Lord, I don't want anybody's blood on my hands. I mean, it should not be because they didn't hear the truth.

It should be because they rejected the truth. Or it should be because they said, oh, Zach's a fanatic, forget about him, that's okay. But it should not be because they didn't hear the truth.

Now, we're going to make the truth plain and clear in the words of Jesus. Matthew Chapter 7, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, and I would say the whole Sermon on the Mount can be summed up in two sentences, you know, two sentences. The whole Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 6, and 7, love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.

That's it. And everything that's taught there fits into that. And it's the second part, which he mentions in verse 12, Matthew 7, 12.

In everything, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the message of the whole Bible. Treat people the way you want them to treat you. Do you like people yelling at you? How many of you like your boss yelling at you at work? I mean, is there any crazy person who says, I just love when my boss yells at me at work? No.

Then don't yell at your wife then. Treat others the way you want other people to treat you. Do you want some shopkeeper to cheat you? No.

Don't ever cheat anybody else. Don't sell secondhand stuff without telling them what's wrong with it. Little, little things.

It's one word which can answer many, many questions. Treat other people the way you want God to treat you. We had a little girl working in our home for some time, sent by her parents because she was very sick and her sister had died and they were afraid she would die too.

Anyway, we took care of her and she's grown up now and married. I remember the years she was at home helping my wife. I felt God would treat me the way I treated her because she was a servant, you know.

I never called her a servant, never in my life. I called her a helper. Same title as for the Holy Spirit.

I said, the way I behave to her is going to be the way God behaves to me. I want to tell you this. The way you treat those maidservants who work in your home, it's going to be the way God treats you.

I know she's at a lower level than you. You are at a much lower level than God. So treat other people the way you want to be treated yourself.

It's good logic. And I'll tell you, you'll even be healthy if you do that. And then at the end, Jesus said in verse 13, verse 13 onwards to the end of the chapter, he's saying the possibility of two ways in which we can go or two types of trees in which we can become or two types of houses we can build.

He's summing up the Sermon on the Mount and says, now you guys have to make a choice. Are you going to go this way that I've spoken of in the last three chapters? Or are you going to go the easy way? Which religious people are going to tell you? My advice to you, Jesus says in verse 13, is enter through the narrow gate. You remember we read that just now when Jesus, they asked him, are there few to be saved? And he said, strive to enter through the narrow gate.

Here it is. Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide. The way is broad that leads to destruction.

In other words, the easy way is the road to hell. You know, some people think the road to hell is full of cliffs and potholes and no, no, no, no, no, no. The road to hell is paved beautifully.

It's much better than all the Indian roads paved beautifully. And it's not a steep, you know, downward thing to hell. It's very gentle.

You won't even know that your elevation is dropping. You won't even know it. It's a gentle, easy way.

And after a few years, you realize you've dropped 10,000 feet already and say, I didn't even know it. That's it. That's how the road to hell is like that.

Nicely paved and very small gradient so that you don't even know that you're going downward slowly. Now, just stop a moment and ask yourself, many a few years ago, you asked Christ to come into your life. Think of that day when you decided to give up certain sins in your life, like watching certain types of movies or watching certain programs on television or anything that would stimulate sexual lust.

You decided to be absolutely honest and money matters. I think people are really converted. Take some of those deceased like that, that they are converted.

They ask forgiveness from others whom they have hurt and then it's a joy in their heart when they're saved. The first week or so after they are saved, it's almost like heaven. Or if somebody had an experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, it's like that too.

One week you think you're in heaven. Now, compare your present condition today with that day. You feel you've gone a little upward.

The way to heaven is also very slow gradient, but it's going upward, small gradient. You feel today you permit in yourself certain things that you would not permit then. And of course, you explain it away saying, oh, I was very legalistic.

That's exactly what the devil wants you to say. Oh, I'm not so legalistic like those people who are so fanatic about all these things. I've learned to be like Jesus.

I'll tell you, it's another Jesus. You're just fooling yourself. You ask yourself, I don't know your life.

I don't know your private lives of anybody sitting here. Do you allow in your life things that you would never have allowed the day you were converted? Then you know whether you're up or down from that position. The day you were converted, you take sin very seriously.

And how is it since then? Why is it so many people go down so much? It's because the road to hell is a slow, small gradient downwards. It's a wide way broad that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. You know, today, we're in the day of lots of what they call mega churches, where you have 30,000 people sometimes sitting in one church building.

Does that mean they've got the truth? I would seriously question. Sometimes people ask me, Brother Jack, how many people in your church? I say we have 400 chairs. And most of them are full on a Sunday.

But how many disciples? I don't know, because I don't know their private lives. Why would we preach discipleship? Supposing an angel were to ask Jesus, Lord, how many disciples in CFC? I'd like to hear that answer. Supposing the Lord says 20.

That's the strength of the church. 20 disciples like those first 11? Oh, we could turn the world upside down then. 11 of them turn the world upside down.

Radical, wholehearted against sin, really determining to live for Jesus every single day, turning from sin constantly every day, because we're discovering new areas of sin which we did not know previously. Boy, I wish we had a number like that. I want to be like that myself.

I've come to know the Lord more and more, not by studying the Bible alone, but because the Bible has shown me what sin is and how much Christ hates it. And it's made me turn from sin. I don't seek for the gifts of healing and miracles.

I want to turn from sin. Because that's the thing that God hates. And I would advise you to do the same.

And there's nothing that can make us turn from sin like seeing what Jesus did for us on the cross or how he suffered in Gethsemane. One of the little bits of a hymn I sing to myself very often is that whenever I'm tempted, Lord, help me to see my God alone. Outstretched and bruised on the cross, bleeding on the earth that he had created.

Help me to see that, Lord. And help me to see that it was my sin and nobody else's. And that was to him such a load that he who could bear the world on his shoulders could not bear it.

When you see sin like that, I keep singing that to myself many times. Just to remind myself, ever when tempted, make me see. Beneath the olive's moon-pierced shade, my God alone, outstretched and bruised and bleeding on the earth he made.

And make me feel it was my sin, as though no other sins were there. That was to him who bears the world a load that he could scarcely bear. Have you seen it like that? There's nothing that will make you hate sin.

Every sermon telling you to hate sin and hate the world will not help you as much as seeing what Jesus had to go through in order to save us from our sin. I'll tell you my case. That's the only thing that's really made me hate it.

To say, if you sin, you'll go to hell. These are all frightening methods of trying to save people. If you sin, you'll go to hell.

I don't preach like that. I say, if you sin, just think of what Jesus had to go through in order to save you from your sin. That has turned me more from sin than the fear of going to hell.

The fear that God may hurt me does not trouble me as much as the fear that I may hurt God. Have you thought of that? I'm not afraid God will hurt me, but I'm terribly afraid that I may hurt God by something I do or say. That's why whenever I sense in conversation or an email or anything that somebody feels hurt or a little disturbed by what I said, I apologize immediately.

I say, I'm sorry. I want to clear my conscience because I know that if it hurts somebody, it hurt Jesus Christ. And I don't want to beat around the bush like so many believers who never know how to say, I am sorry, brother, sister.

I'm sorry. I would say that to anybody because I know the price Jesus paid for sin. It's easy to go in one sense, if you're willing, but it's hard because it's so difficult to break our pride.

Have you ever wondered why it's so difficult, even to get a little child to say, I'm sorry, once he or she understands what that means? It's very difficult. They'll say any other sentence under the sun. They'll repeat a whole poem, but three words, I'm sorry, so difficult it doesn't come out of their mouth.

It's there rooted in children, the pride of Lucifer that came into Adam, that came into the entire human race. And as we have grown, we have developed in it. It's because we take sin lightly.

I want to tell you something. It's only when Zacchaeus restored and made restitution, gave back the money he had stolen from others that Jesus said salvation has come. And if you have not apologized to somebody you hurt, even with a small sentence, and you know you hurt him, and you just sort of acted friendly with him thereafter without saying those difficult words, I'm sorry for what I said.

I want to say, I seriously question whether you're forgiven by God. I doubt it. How could he do it? Now that man may be so gracious that he ignores it.

Supposing I've stolen a thousand rupees from somebody, he knows it, but he just ignores it. He says, okay, it's all right. I'm not going to take it seriously.

Does that mean I don't have to return it? How can my conscience be clear just because he ignores it? He's large-hearted enough. Supposing you hurt somebody, and he's large-hearted enough to ignore it, and you find you have a good fellowship with him, but you haven't set right that matter. You know very well that you did something wrong, maybe your wife or your husband or a brother or sister, and you never went to him and said, I'm sorry for what I said.

I want to say to you, you're not forgiven. Not by God. You can forgive yourself.

You're fooling yourself. When you sin against another person, it's not enough to confess it to God. You have to confess to that person.

What is hindering you? Only one thing. The size of a camel. Your pride.

The moment you humble yourself, the camel becomes an amoeba. Isn't that wonderful news? The moment I humble myself, the big camel in me becomes an amoeba, and I can run through the eye of a needle, up and down a hundred times easily. What appeared so difficult becomes so easy.

A needle's eye is difficult for a camel, easy for an amoeba. And so, he said another thing in verse 14, which he said earlier also, and here he answers the question, whether a few will be saved. Matthew 7, 14, the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Now listen, let me expand on it. The way to life is narrow, and there are many who understand it, but few who find it. Many will understand it.

I think a lot of you sitting here today, I'm not speaking in a language that you don't understand, and I'm not even speaking with words that go over your heads. I speak at your level. I believe even if there are eight-year-old children here, they'd understand.

You understood it, but whether you find it or not, that's up to you. I can't find it for you. Each one of us has to go one by one.

It's so narrow that you can't even take your wife with you. Two people can't walk along this way. It's a steep cliff this side, steep cliff this side, room only for one person to go through.

Your wife is welcome to come, but she's got to follow you. You make a choice herself. So also your children.

Every one has to choose them to find that way. In one sense, it's easy to find it if you're willing to humble yourself. That's why I say take this matter of asking forgiveness from those whom you've hurt seriously.

When I've hurt somebody, though I know clearly, you've heard it many times that I must ask forgiveness, but do I find it? No. I have seen with most believers, they don't find it. Do you know, I mean, I work with a lot of elder brothers in different parts of the country and elsewhere, and I found even among elder brothers, very difficult for them to say, I'm sorry, I was wrong.

I was mistaken. I'm really sorry for what I said or did. Most of them want to justify themselves because, you know, an elder brother can't afford to look wrong.

I've been wrong many times. Many, many times. And I presume that I will still not be perfect tomorrow.

And if I slip up somewhere, I'm going to say, I'm sorry. I slipped up there. You know, the Apostle Paul, he lost his temper once when he was around 60 years old before a high priest.

As soon as he was aware of it, he said it right. That's the man of God. See, we don't walk through this world saying a thorn will never come on my foot.

Okay, you wear shoes, you say a thorn will never come on your foot. What about a mosquito sitting on your hand? You say a mosquito will never sit on my hand. You can't say that.

But if you watch the mosquito sucking your blood and say, okay, go ahead, then there's something wrong with you. That mosquito may have malaria. You wipe it off immediately.

So a godly man is not one who says sin will not come. He says, I knock it off as soon as I'm aware of it. And I'll tell you something.

Sin, you'll feel it in your conscience just like a mosquito bite. Do you feel mosquito bites? Unless you've got leprosy, you feel it. It's not like a stab.

God doesn't have to stab you in your conscience. No. Your conscience tells you it's a little prick.

What do you do? Wipe it off, which means go and ask forgiveness. Set it right. Otherwise, you'll get something worse than malaria.

That's what it means by finding the way. In a difficult situation in your office, when you know that speaking the truth may even cost you your job, you may lose your job, you've got to find the way there. The narrow way is I shall honor God.

I know situations when I was in the Navy where standing up for my conscience could have meant a court-martial, disobedience to senior officers, and court-martial can even put you in jail. Even for small things. In the military, you're not sent to jail for murder and theft.

Disobedience to a superior officer, which could be something he told you to do and you didn't do it. I think of a few times when I stood up before at attention to senior officers and said, I'm sorry, sir. My conscience doesn't permit me to do that.

I'm a Christian. I was taken up to one step below court-martial and then the Lord set me free. But I tell you, I was only 22, 23, 24 years old, but those are the days when God gave me a spiritual backbone so that I could stand.

Dear brothers and sisters, those are the situations where you find the way. There's the broad way everybody goes. There's a narrow way.

You make a choice. All of us are making choices every day. Your office, your place of work, when you travel in a bus or a train, surrounded by selfish people who are only interested in themselves.

From the ordinary-looking person sitting there to the pickpocket, they're only interested in themselves. And in the midst of it, you, a child of God, gets into that bus or train. You're not going to behave like the others.

You're not going to fight for a seat like the others. You find the way there in different situations. The broad way that everybody's going in and the narrow way that leads to life.

That's the way we've got to teach our children also. When they go to school and they find that all the other children are talking about the latest movie stars and the movies and various things concerning which, do your children know all about it? Do you young people know more about India's and Hollywood's movie stars than you know about what Habakkuk and Zephaniah said? Habakkuk and Zephaniah, who are they? Are they from Bollywood or Hollywood? Do you know? I fear that many young people know more about film stars and cricketers than they know about people in the Bible. Do you know who Nathaniel was? Bartholomew? I don't mean the one in CFC, the other one.

Find that narrow way, dear brothers and sisters. And it's easy if you start when you're young. Because, I'll tell you something about this narrow way that I've discovered through the years.

In the beginning, it was tough. It was really tough. I was converted when I was 19 and a half, and I'll tell you a little story, I'm close.

And I used to go regularly to the movies before that with others. I used to invite them. And then one day I got converted.

And I was sitting in my cabin in the naval base in Cochin, and some of my fellow naval officers came up to me and said, hey, Zach, let's go to this movie. We had a cinema theater right inside the naval base for all naval staff. And I didn't want to go because I was born again now, and a new life had come in which wanted to stay away from all this.

But I didn't have the courage to say no to these two officers, my colleagues. How could I say no to them? They'll think I'm some crazy nut, or what happened? Should I be sent to a mental hospital? I didn't have the courage to say no. So I just got up quietly and walked along with them with an inward cry to God, oh, God, save me out of this situation.

I didn't know how God would do it. But that was a cry all the way. We walked up about half a mile to the naval base cinema theater.

There was a notice there saying the film reel did not arrive in time, so the cinema is canceled today. I was the only one who said, praise the Lord. They were disappointed.

It's a struggle in the beginning to find that narrow way. I came back to my room very happy. I felt the Lord say to my heart, I won't do that next time.

You've got to say no yourself the next time. Otherwise you'll never be strong. But that encouraged me so much that one time God did a miracle for me almost a week after I was converted that I said, Lord, I live for you.

If you'll do things like that for me, cancel a whole movie so that the entire naval base goes without a movie just because there's one child of his who wants to be protected from it, what a God you are. I'll do anything for you. The next time they came to me, I said, sorry, I'm not going.

Find that narrow way. It becomes easier. Today it's so easy for me to tell somebody I don't want to come to the movies, or I'm sorry, I'm not interested in watching that television program.

It's so easy. It's not difficult. In the beginning, it's like learning swimming.

Have you seen these fellows who enjoy swimming? Who can swim for a long time in the pool? It wasn't like that when they started. They started, they would stand at the edge of the pool, scared to jump in. It's like that, the Christian life.

In the beginning it's tough. How long it took. It's like learning the piano.

Ask people who learn the piano how long it takes. Then finally you see them playing. Boy, they seem to enjoy it.

The Christian life is like that. The godly man's life is exciting. Proverbs 14, 14.

Living Bible. I can say my life is exciting every day. I don't have a day without excitement.

That's the honest truth. I'm not trying to sell something. I'm not a salesman for Jesus Christ.

I'm a witness to tell you the truth. Dear brothers and sisters, seek that narrow way and seek it when you're young, you young people. Have the guts and the moral courage to stand against your friends and say no.

I don't want to do that. That's for you. While our heads are bowed in prayer, perhaps there are some little decisions you need to take right now.

Matters that you need to confess to God. Matters that you need to confess to some other human beings. Say, Lord, give me grace.

I'm going to do it. Help me. I really mean it, Lord.

I want to take my Christian life seriously. Test yourselves. Examine yourself, whether you're in the faith that Jesus proclaimed, or the faith that some hollow, empty preacher taught you.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the word you give us from your scriptures, clear as crystal for those who want to read it the way you spoke it 2,000 years ago. Help us to take it seriously. We do want to not only understand the way, but find it in the different situations of life.

Pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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