

Audio Teaching Sermon

Message #27

Coming to Jesus is Difficult

[**A** Intro – Pastor Jefferson 0:00 thru 1:26]

Hey everybody. I am Pastor Jefferson, and I want to welcome you to **Message #27** of the DWJD audio teaching sermon series. In the last message we were discussing the words of Jesus delineating the difference between the narrow gate versus the on ramp leading to the superhighway. Both of the access points lead to well-defined and quite certain destinations, with the narrow gate leading to **eternal life** with Christ and the broad gate finding its terminus within the **Lake of Fire** to face eternal damnation. Now, if I was sitting next to any person on the globe today and I asked them this simple question, “**Which destination would you choose?**” How do you honestly believe that most folks would answer? I think we all know what the reply of any person of sound mind would be. So, why did Jesus tell us that not very many are seeking the narrow path with the constricted gate and instead are choosing to take the wide, easy highway with the broad entry, you know the one with a gentle downhill slope? That’s a simple question to ask, but far more difficult to answer. So, let’s see what Jesus had to say on the topic.

[**B** Fulfilment of Isaiah’s Prophecy 1:26 thru 3:03]

Open your Bible up to where we left off last time, **Matthew 7**, and **verse 14**. Here we are about to discover where Jesus delivers what we might call “**a zinger.**” A **zinger** is defined as ‘**a surprising statement, a shocking report or a piece of electrifying news.**’ To put this conversation in its proper perspective, Jesus had just recently come out of the wilderness, where He’d been led by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil. He left his hometown of Nazareth and went to Capernaum and settled there which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. You can read the full account in the **4th chapter of Matthew**. I recommend you pause the audio and take time to read it when you can. This happened in fulfilment of the prophet **Isaiah**, who said in **Isaiah 9:1**: ¹ “*But there will be no more gloom for her* ² *who was in anguish;* ³ *in earlier time He treated the land of Zebulun* ⁴ *and the land of Naphtali with contempt,* ⁵ *but later on He shall make it glorious,* ⁶ *by the way of the sea,* ⁷ *on the other side of Jordan,* ⁸ *Galilee of the Gentiles.”* Isaiah made this prophecy over **700 years prior** to the birth of Jesus. So for him to know the exact names and location so far in advance is plenty spectacular.

[C PDF Administrivia 3:03 thru 4:14]

Hey, I want to point out one of the additions I have made recently to this sermon series. Back around **message 10** or so, I began adding **full color pdf transcripts** of these audio messages. And around **message 20**, I went back and divided each of the verses displayed into their basic thoughts. It is critical to divide up each verse in this manner, as it greatly enhances the Holy Spirit's opportunity to bring the true meaning of God's word to your mind while studying. Each thought is essentially a nugget of God's truth. So, you will now see highlighted numbers being displayed within each of the verses. The placement of each number is not set in stone, so if you decide to split up the verse differently, that is perfectly okay. The point is to capture each thought and to understand what God is telling us. To that end, each of you should have received all the sermon series messages in the new format, which includes this pdf with basic thoughts displayed.

[D Coming to Jesus is Difficult 4:14 thru 5:57]

So, in **verse 14** of **Matthew**, Jesus goes right back to describing the narrow gate, the important gate, if one wishes to choose Heaven and avoid the Lake of Fire. He says, ¹ "For small is the gate ² and compressed is the way ³ —leading to eternal life, ⁴ and few are those discovering it." Jesus is giving us more detail regarding the narrow gate, which as He mentioned in the previous verse, is a contrast between the two gates and the two associated roads. The word we discover in **thought 1** for **small** is the word [1] **sten-NAY** and it is also another word used just once. It has the same meaning as **sten-NES**, seen back in **verse 13** and means '**a narrow strait, as in a tight passageway.**' The word we see for **compressed** in **thought 2** is [1] **TETH-lim-men-nay**, is yet another word seen in Scripture only this one time. It translates '**to make narrow, strictly by using pressure alone.**' It is a term used metaphorically to describe situations of affliction, distress or trouble. The word emphasizes that the holy road of discipleship leading to Jesus is marked by many antagonistic societal pressures and frequent adverse challenges as one makes their way along. Jesus is clearly warning us coming to Him ain't no picknick.

[E Path to Eternal Life 5:57 thru 7:33]

Thought 3 uses the word **leading**, as in *leading to eternal life*, and here we find the other use of the Greek word [2] **ap-GAP-ooH-sah**. We just saw it back in **verse 13**, which still means '**to be seduced or to be led away.**' The word is reflective of the societal

structures of **authority** and **justice**. Here is a most important point which I want to highlight. This is why the use of a dictionary, coupled with access to the Holy Spirit is so critical. This word is telling us that the consequences of our choice—as to which gate we choose to pass through—is both legal and binding. Thus, just as in order to be convicted and punished of a crime, the guilty person must have awareness and knowledge of both the crime and the punishment. The use of this word in both **verses 13 & 14** eliminates the idea of someone unwittingly choosing which gate to pass through and which road they are taking without knowing beforehand the consequences of their choice. The word we see for **eternal life** is *dzo-EN* and translates **‘to life.’** But it means life in the fullest sense, both physical and spiritual. And while it is a commonly used word, it most often is used to describe eternal life granted through faith in Jesus Christ.

[**F** **Few Find, Uncover or Obtain** **7:33 thru 8:58**]

The constricted path to eternal life is quite the opposite of the broad highway leading to eternal damnation. Jesus says in *thought 4* **and few are those discovering it.** The word we see for **few** is *ol-LEE-goy* and translates here to mean **‘a small, little or insignificant number.’** This is not to say that the total number of folks who choose the narrow gate is small, only that the number is small when compared against the number of those electing to travel down the superhighway leading to damnation. For example, if I say **five hundred million** souls will be saved in the coming 7 years of **reformation**, that is not a small number. But if I instead make the statement that **8 & 1/2 billion** folks will die during the 7 years of the **Great Tribulation**, 500 million doesn’t seem so big anymore. The word we observe in place of **discovering** is [2] *hyoo-RISK-kon-tes* and it means **‘to find, uncover or to obtain.’** The word involves the idea of having an inability to punish such folks being mentioned in *thought 4*, because the people found there are glorifying God for what He did for them.

[**G** **Which Gate did You Choose** **8:58 thru 10:29**]

So, we have developed a picture where Jesus told us of there being two proverbial gates through which people pass on their way to eternity. One is constricted and narrow with the path being difficult and challenging. The other being like an on-ramp onto the interstate highway system. It is broad and spacious, smoothly paved, well-marked and easy to travel through. So, what gate have you chosen to enter, and on which road are

you traveling down? For some, this is a tough question to answer. The reason is because they know deep down that their journey is anything but difficult. And to be clear, I am NOT talking about the usual problems that we each face in this life. Everybody faces assorted levels of conflict and strife, dealing with disease or sickness, and all manner of trials and tribulations within our normal lives. No, here I am talking about our religious education. And furthermore, I am not talking about any jobs that you might be doing on behalf of the church or at the behest of the pastor or his staff. We are discussing the element of a Jesus-led Biblical study. And, after listening to 27 of these audio sermons, you know pretty well what I am getting at.

[**H** The Sermon on the Mount 10:29 thru 12:24]

Growing up in the church, I always thought that Jesus was painting a verbal picture of the whole of humanity in these verses, where the masses were on the wide road, and members of the church were walking the narrow. Nope. He is not! Jesus is speaking solely about the church. The rest of humanity is not included in choosing between the 2 gates. Allow me to give a bit more context. After reading **chapter 4** of **Matthew**, you now know that following His temptation in the wilderness, Jesus began His ministry. Soon after, He then selected His twelve disciples. We read that at least 4 of them were **fishermen**, (with the historical account telling us it could have been as many as 7) adding credence to Him beginning His ministry in a city by the sea. Jesus went all through the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the gospel, and healing every kind of sickness. His fame rapidly spread all throughout Syria. The result was that large crowds began to openly follow Him. None of this should we find surprising. It follows the pattern of human behavior right down to a tee. Open your Bible up to **Matthew 5:1**. And I am now reading out of the Greek, ¹ *“Having seen then the crowds,* ² *He went up on the mountain;* ³ *and having sat down of Him,* ⁴ *came to Him the disciples of Him.”* At this point in Scripture, this passage marks the start of what we today refer to as, **“The Sermon on the Mount.”** I assure you, I could preach 50 audio sermons on just this topic alone.

[**I** Disciple Defined 12:24 thru 13:52]

As we read along in the text, we learn that Jesus after having seen the crowds, went up on the mountain for the purpose of teaching His disciples. Jesus picked a higher elevation which was suitable for speaking to a large gathering. And after assembling a

large crowd, now was the time He began teaching His new followers in earnest. Recall that the definition of a **disciple** is **'a person who is a pupil or an adherent of the doctrines of another.'** In this case, it can be *anyone* who is following Jesus. The crowd of people were technically disciples, as they were indeed following Christ. Now, the idea here is simple, you are a follower of Christ, when you are actively seeking Him. If you stop for any reason, such as losing interest or getting wooed away to chase after another quest or cause, at that moment you cease being a disciple of Christ. Discipleship has nothing to do with church membership or how often you attend Bible study. God knows our hearts and minds intimately. There is no fooling Him, even when we manage to fool all those around us and at times, even ourselves. At this point, you have not obtained salvation.

[**J** **The Crowd was Followers** **13:52 thru 15:21**]

Salvation is defined as when God the Father adopts you into His family—and until that moment—which folks are not aware of the exact instant when it happens—they are simply not yet saved. Being a disciple on the road to holiness is not the same as being saved. Now, as we've heard in a previous sermon, while on the journey to holiness, we are **100% protected** by Jesus. So long as we persevere in our journey to build an intimate relationship with Him, nothing terrible will happen to us. But should we leave the path leading to righteousness, all bets are off. As we read through **chapter 5**, we see many examples where Jesus is clearly talking to His followers on the side of the mountain. For example, we see in **verse 13** where He tells them they are **"the salt of the earth."** In **verse 14** He calls them **"the light of the world."** As you go through the chapter, you'll see where Jesus is drawing stark contrasts between those who are His disciples versus those who are not. Matthew ends the chapter saying in **verse 48**, ¹ **"Therefore you shall be perfect,** ² **as the Heavenly Father of you who is,** ³ **the perfect I AM."**

[**K** **We are Made Perfect in Christ** **15:21 thru 16:55**]

The word we see for **shall be** is **eh-SES-they** and means **'to be, to exist, or to be present.'** It is used to denote one's identity or state of being. God is saying that we will be made perfect (*in His likeness*) should we stick with Jesus. The word we see for **perfect** is [5] **TEL-eye-oi** and it means **'to be mature, complete or fully grown.'** So, clearly there is a maturing process when becoming a bona-fide follower of Jesus. We don't just go from infant in Christ over to fully mature person within a few seconds, minutes or hours. Jesus,

via His death on the cross, paid for our sin, which allows the Heavenly Father to impute His righteousness over to us. We go from being sin laden to perfection, all in the strength of the sacrifice Christ made on the cross. And it all begins when we make a sincere, genuine and conscious effort to build an intimate relationship with Him. So, the **Sermon on the Mount** was directed at the followers of Jesus. They are the ones who need to be mindful of passing through the narrow gate. Otherwise, those folks not heeding His words will be the ones who Jesus tells at the Great White Throne judgment, *"I never knew you."*

[**L** **Knowing Jesus Intimately** **16:55 thru 17:53**]

It all starts with beginning an earnest study of God's Word. It is the process called for within the words of Jesus as He issued the **Great Commission**. At the end of the day, it is not about knowing Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic. It is about knowing Jesus. Intimately. The sole purpose of discipleship training is to put you into a place where you learn from the mind of Christ on a consistent basis. I urge you to go ahead and order **volume 1** of discipleship training 101 off our website, **DWJDMinistries.com**. It will be quickly shipped to your door with all the materials you need to get started. I guarantee that you will be so glad that you did. What are you waiting for? Jesus is gently calling. He's waiting for you.

[**Z** **Some Final Thoughts** **17:53 thru 19:10**]

Friend, Jesus is not asking you to do anything different in your life, apart from giving Him the first **30 to 45 minutes** at the start of your day. This time is to allow you to go before Him and sit at His feet, where you give Jesus the opportunity to teach you from out of His word. Jesus said in **Revelation 3:20**. ¹ *"Behold I stand at the door* ² *and knock* ³ *If anyone should hear My voice* ⁴ *and open the door,* ⁵ *then I will come in to* ⁶ *him,* ⁷ *and will sup with him, and He with Me."* Jesus is talking about **communion** here, defined as **'the interchange of deep personal thoughts and emotions.'** Jesus desires intimate communication with us. That's how an intimate relationship is built. But first, we must be willing to meet with Him. Hey, that's all for today's sermon and message. **So, until next time my beloved, this has been Pastor Jefferson, speaking in God's Holy name and for His glory alone. Amen!**