

# Choices

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 03 January 2024

Preacher: Pastor Wolski

[ 0 : 00 ] All right, well, you got your Bibles, then how about you turn to Matthew chapter 7. And here we are, first service in the new year. If you caught on to that or not, it's 2024 now, according to our calendar.

I don't know what the Lord has in store for 2024, but He brought us through 2023, didn't He? And here we are, still here. So we'll just stay here until He calls us home.

Today could be the day. This could be the year. The Lord knows. The times and seasons are in His hand. If you would have asked my dad back in the late 70s when he was in Bible school, if you'd ever see 2024, he would have laughed.

He would have sold everything he had and put his money on the fact that we are not going to be here very much longer. And here it is. And here it is.

40, almost 50 years later after all of that. And we're still here. And the Lord knows what He's doing. So we just need to do what we know to do. Stay faithful.

[ 1 : 11 ] Stay right with God. So you got Matthew chapter 7. I want to read a little bit of this chapter here. We're going to start in verse 13. And read with me just two illustrations that Christ used in His teaching here on what they call the Sermon on the Mount.

And if you look through the teachings of Jesus Christ, you're going to see a lot of illustrations, a lot of comparisons. And here's two of them that I want to point out today.

Verse 13 and 14. He begins by saying, And now skip down to verse 24.

And there's another illustration. I want to look at these two together tonight. Verse 24. Therefore, I want to draw your attention to these two illustrations and show you that in each of these, the individual is presented with a choice.

These, you might call them commands, but they're more so counsel. And you're presented with a choice. And the first, it's a gate of which to gain entrance.

[ 3 : 13 ] And I never thought much about it until really today and realizing it's about an entrance and it's a gate that you're looking at. You're looking at a straight gate and you're looking at a, where's the other one?

Wide gate. Verse 13. You're looking at two different gates and you're supposed to enter through one of them. And he tells you what's on the other side of it. And that's interesting to me.

You're going to gain entrance at a particular gate and travel a particular way as consequence. Then secondly, the choice is about a location of which to build a house upon.

Either a rock or sand. Now, this gate that we're looking at in 13 and 14, this illustration, it's an entrance.

And it can be an entrance tonight to anything in your life. It could be an entrance into a career. It could be an entrance into a marriage. It could be an entrance into a home environment.

[ 4 : 16 ] It's an entrance that you're about to make a decision to go one way or another. And there's a road that's going to, there's a path beyond it based upon the choice you make.

It could be even just something as simple as what church you're going to attend. It's a choice. It's an entrance. It's a gate in front of you. And then the second part, there's a house.

And the house could be very much the same thing. It could be building upon something. Building your relationships upon something. Building your career upon something.

Building your home or anything in life. And so the two illustrations have their similarities and their differences. But in each, as I'm showing you, Christ informs that there's an option.

One that leads to success. One that in one case, eternal life. One that shows stability and a security. And then another one that leads to demise, to destruction.

[ 5 : 22 ] And the choice is yours. I want to notice that Christ teaches that men have choices. We have a choice. The thought is you ultimately decide.

You decide for yourself. I don't decide for you. Nobody decides for you. You decide for you. You're going to make a choice which way you're going to take. Which gate you're going to enter through. You're going to decide how you're going to live your life. And based upon the conclusions of his teaching, you would think that this should be an easy decision. Right? I mean, he tells you which way, what's going to happen.

You know the end, the outcome. According to Christ, if he's reliable. If you can lend him your ear and believe what he said. According to Jesus Christ, if you take a particular way, it'll end up here. If you take another way, it'll end up here. If you build upon this, it'll end up this way. If you build upon that, it'll end up that way. The option's yours. Based upon his teaching. It sounds like it's a simple decision.

[ 6 : 25 ] So then my question. Why would anybody choose to take the path that would lead to destruction? Why would anybody choose to build their life upon the sand?

Why would anybody knowingly exert their life's energy, their life's resources, the days, the weeks, the years of their only one life.

In something that's going to end in destruction. Why would anybody do that? That doesn't make sense. That's not a sane decision. To choose, knowingly choose, destruction, pain, failure.

Why would anybody do that? Those are great questions tonight. And to bring it to us right here tonight. Why would any born again Christian spend any amount of their life on the broad road that ends in destruction?

Why would any born again Christian choose to exert any of their energy, put any of their resources, any days of their life building upon the sand? Why would we do that?

[ 7 : 31 ] Why would anybody think and do that? When you know from the word of Christ, the word of God, how it's going to end up. Why would we be foolish? Verse 24 said, Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine.

And we've heard the sayings of Christ. We're not drifting out there in the world in life. We've heard the word of God. We know the truth. We have the truth. We've been around the truth.

So ye that know the truth, why? Why would any believer choose to live their life in sin? Choose to live any portion of their life with the world?

Why would they not strive to live for Jesus Christ who gave himself for them? Who died and rose again so that they might have eternal life? So that they might know the truth and the truth will make you free.

Why? You say, well, we're in church on Wednesday night. You're not preaching to us. But have you spent any time in your life on the broad road?

[ 8 : 35 ] Have you been tempted to go back to the broad road? Have you been tempted to turn aside from the narrow road? Have you been tempted? Have you not been drawn? Have you not been frustrated?

Have you not felt the calling, the pulling, the luring to build your life on something else? I want to show you there's some reasons why even born-again Christians will make those choices.

And the reasons, they revolve around the choices. And the first thing I want you to see, look in verse number 13 and 14 again. Something about these gates that we're looking at.

And enter ye in at the straight gate. For wide is the gate, broad is the way that leadeth to destruction. And it says, many, many there be which go in thereat.

But in verse 14, straight is the gate, narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. And few there be that find it. So there's a straight gate that opens to a narrow path.

[ 9 : 36 ] And according to the Christ, there's just a few people on it. There's few on that path. And it's understood that that's the right gate to enter into.

The other gate is large, it's wide, it's popular. And it's filled with travelers. Many there be which go in thereat.

Would you, should you choose to go to that gate and enter therein, you're guaranteed to find some people there that you can get along with. Because there's so many. You're going to find some place to fit in.

You're going to find other people to connect with. There's so many to meet and greet on the broad way in the wide gate. And so I want to consider one reason why even Christians would choose to

walk in that path, to go through that gate, is because that wide gate promises them companionship. It promises them there's many here, and herein is the choice. Do you choose to live your life with many or few?

[10:48] Now I know you could argue that and say, well, I have a lot of friends. But according to the text, there's many, many, many, many on that way, but only few on the other.

So do you choose to have many or few friends? Do you choose to go with a crowd and fit in with the world and find friendship and companionship among those that are headed to destruction? Or do you choose the path where you're not going to be guaranteed a large crowd? You're not going to be guaranteed to have a lot of close friends.

The majority of men and women rejected that gate to go to a bigger one, to go to a popular one, to go to one where there's more people and more potential friends that they can connect with and find company in.

If you take the narrow gate, you may find yourself alone at times. And I wonder this evening, is it worth it to you? Is it worth it to you to stay in the straight and narrow way if it means you'll have to lose some companions?

[12:01] You won't have the broad company, the many that are in the other path. Now we know better than to say that you'll ever be alone. We know that somebody promised to never leave you, never forsake you.

And we know that the few people that are on that path, in my opinion, are the greatest people in the world. They're the greatest the world's ever known. It reminds me of a passage in Hebrews 11 about those men and women of faith where the Bible says the world was not worthy.

The Bible believe in Christians are the best people in the world. I have some truth, some things in common with a Christian that knows Jesus Christ and believes this book that there's good people everywhere in some circles, but it's just like they're the best of the best to me.

And there's just a familiarity and a blessing in that. And if it's few, so be it. But those few are wonderful few.

So I ask you the question, the choice is companionship. The one will promise you companionship. The other doesn't promise you that much.

[13:13] It promises you few. But then there's something else, another reason, because of the apparent difficulty. And there's a choice to be made because one way seems to be harder than the other.

Just by the looks of it. One's narrow. It's a straight gate. It's not much wiggle room there. And the other one's broad. Good night. Everybody's on it. It's got to be the easiest thing in life.

It's got to be easy. And apparently, one's more difficult than the other. So why would you want to struggle through life when you can enjoy it and have it easy? And there ends the choice.

The choice that Jesus Christ puts before you. If you've ever been in mountain skiing, you know that on different slopes or different signs, what's the word?

Just the degree of difficulty of the slope. And if you know about that, you've seen it if you've skied. And those slopes do that. And I kind of imagine these gates almost have a supposed degree of difficulty.

[14:16] Should I choose to go in this narrow way that there's only few on it, it's got to be tough. And I couldn't make it. But the other way, just by reason of popularity, that's got to be the easiest of the two.

And these two gates and their subsequent paths suggest a difference in the travel, in the ease or the quality of travel thereon. One suggests a comfortable way, while the other implies more energy exerted, more awareness must be exerted and required.

In the Proverbs, we read about the path of the wicked. And I want to show you this. It's consistently downward. Isn't it easy to go down? Isn't it easy?

Just doesn't, doesn't just your momentum just begin to carry you further and further? It's so much easier to go down than it is up. Look back at Proverbs chapter 2. I want to run you through a few of these verses.

We could spend the rest of the night in the Proverbs looking at the scriptures about different paths and ways and which one's right and where they lead to and who's on them.

[15:27] Much of this book carries that theme. But go back to Proverbs chapter 2. I'm going to read a little section here of the end of it, the last half, from verse 12 on.

And just follow the language and notice where it goes. The beginning half is telling you to get a hold of wisdom and understanding and just the knowledge of God and the fear of the Lord.

And it says in verse 12, to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh forward things who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness.

Who rejoice to do evil and delight in the forwardness of the wicked whose ways are crooked and they forward in their paths to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words, which forsaketh the guide of her youth and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

For her house inclineth unto death and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life, that thou mayest walk in the way of good men and keep the paths of the righteous.

[16:43] For the upright shall dwell in the land and the perfect shall remain in it, but the wicked shall be cut off from the earth and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it. And you may notice they leave the right paths and join others in the wrong paths and it inclines to death and to the dead.

And hold that thought and turn over now to chapter number 5. Proverbs 5. And look at verses 5 and 6. Again, a very, very similar context here.

And notice verse 5. Chapter 5, verse 5. Her feet go down, down, down. They go down to death. That's where they're going in chapter 2. Her feet go down to death.

Her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life. Her ways are movable, that thou canst not know them. And it keeps you there.

It keeps you going. It keeps you going down further and further. Look over at chapter 7. Proverbs 7 and verse 22. And here's a woman that's a harlot or dressed with the entire of a harlot.

[17:52] And she's calling somebody to deceive them and have him follow her. And in verse 22. He goeth after her straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter or as a fool to the correction of the stocks till a dart strike through his liver as a bird hasteth to the snare and knoweth not that it is for his life.

Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline down to her ways. Go not astray in her paths for she hath cast down many wounded.

Yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell going down to the chambers of death. One more is the end of chapter 9 and another similar context where there's wisdom that's crying and calling to a simple man and then there's a foolish woman that's doing the same thing and she says to him or just look at verse 18 the very last verse where it says but he knoweth not that the dead are there and that her guests are in the depths down the depths of hell.

And this matches Christ's depiction of the broad road. It's destruction. The end of it is destruction. And I'm pointing out that it's just consistently declining.

It's easy to go down. It's easy to get sucked in and just move further. Why? It's easy to take the broad road because it's an easier road.

[19:30] It looks like fun times. It's the world at your fingertips. And if you're a lover of pleasures then you're going to find the pleasures of sin all over this road but not preparing for the destruction that ends.

It doesn't take any effort to fall into sin. And you find yourself surrounded with sinners on this way pushing you further on. The downward degree just facilitates travel further on the broad way.

But the narrow way that Christ speaks of back in Matthew 7 that narrow way looks like it might take some effort. And so one will look at the two and say but this is so much easier.

I don't want to fight the good fight of faith. I just want to take it easy. I want to enjoy my life. The world tells you you only live once. You're a fool not to do what you want.

to live it up. And the narrow way just doesn't look like it's fun. There's not a lot of flexibility on that way. It's not a lot of forgiveness. And it's true.

[20:39] And it's evident by the few people that are on it that this isn't for everybody. I think the further along that those few travel though you may expect in your mind that down the way they're going to be beat up and tattered and just worn down because it's so difficult.

But no the truth is the few that are on that road the further they stay on that road the stronger they get. If you know anybody that's been living for Jesus Christ for any amount of time chances are they're stronger than they were when they started.

Because that road has a way of strengthening them. And they gain in hope and gain in life and gain in peace and conquering and victory over sin. But the broad way as easy as it seems tends to weaker and weaker and weaker to where you can't do much of anything.

You're holding with the cords of your sins. the narrow road looks like it's going to take some effort and so there's a choice.

Take the road that looks like fun looks like it's easy and just going to have a great time and just pretend to ignore what Christ warns us about or take the road that's going to take some effort and believe and take faith and say that effort is going to be worth it.

[ 22 : 02 ] It's going to be worth it to take that to put the effort into this and to separate myself from that crowd and to walk with the few that are on that road and to follow what Jesus Christ said is right.

It takes effort and I assure you it's worth it. But don't take my word take the word of God. Now there's something else come back to Matthew 7 and there's something else the first the first reason revolves around that choice of company and companionship why some won't take the narrow road because there's not enough on that road anymore.

They want to go where everybody else went. And then the apparent difficulty and the struggle that it perceives to be. But then there's another thought I want you to be aware of and this will go to the building in verse 24.

And notice again in verse 24 where Christ said therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them notice there's somebody that hears and responds he does them and then verse 26 and everyone that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not and there's a choice right there both hear both hear everybody hears but some choose not to do some choose to reject we'll call this the choice of how you're going to respond to the sayings of Christ or to the word of God how will you respond after that you've heard you've heard that bad choices lead to consequences sin has pleasure for a season but in the end thereof it's corruption and destruction how will you respond when you hear that some hear and they do the sayings of Christ they respond and take the straight way they respond and they build upon a rock because they understand storms are coming but others hear and they don't respond to that they reject that some hear and do and they're called wise some hear and don't do and they're called fools and the end is destruction and I want to ask again what I asked in the beginning why why would a born again

Christian choose to spend any amount of time on a broad road that they know from the word of God is going to lead to destruction why would any born again Christian spend time with those people that are on the broad road why would they build from their heart and put their affections into something upon sand that's just going to be destroyed why why would they choose to live foolish and not do what the word of God teaches do they not believe God do they not believe the Bible is true do they think it's just for you know maybe maybe not take it or leave it fairy tale do they not believe this is true is that why I don't know if that's why I don't think that's why do they not trust God that he's better that he knows better that his ways are better do they not believe that take your Bibles and turn to James chapter 1 and you can be done in

[ 25 : 36 ] Matthew for now James chapter 1 I want to consider some reasons here why a child of God would do so foolishly as to choose the broad gate the wide gate the broad way the sand for his house and there's a few reasons here in James and I want to draw your attention to them and see if we can get some help from this and get some truth verse number 21 verse number 21 the Bible says wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls but be ye doers of the word and not hearers and hearers and hearers and doers and hearers and doers and hear James warns to be hearers and doers but in verse 21 but in verse 21 before you can receive the word he tells you to do something else he says lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and I believe there's reasons why a child of God would do so foolishly in this life when they heard the truth but they won't follow it they won't do it it's because number one they don't do it they don't want to lay aside their sin they don't want to lay aside or lay apart the filthiness that they've gotten themselves into and that they're enjoying keep your place here just turn a page or two back to Hebrews chapter 12 really close back to the left Hebrews chapter 12 and notice a similar statement here in verse 1 wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us there's a path that we're to be on and to get on that path and to stay on that path you're exhorted to lay aside

some things and one of them is a sin which doth so easily beset us in James chapter 1 it's to lay apart all filthiness things that will hold you back you know why Christians don't want the narrow path it's because they want to hang on to their sin that's the truth that's the bottom stinking line they love their sin it's so much fun it feels so good

I know what I'm talking about because I spent years of my life holding on to filthiness that was keeping me from Christ and keeping me from the joy of the Christian life and from growing instead I just wanted that sick sin and to taste the pleasure a little longer and I wouldn't lay it down and Christians today they'll be on that broad road they'll be going down and down and down because they won't repent of their sins they won't let go of them they find pleasure in the sin they won't fight the sin and they're weak and they're content to stay weak and to go with the flow and you know what they find on the broad road I already told you they find friends they find company that allows that same sin in their life and so if they're doing it I'm doing it and it's no big deal and they'll find company that excuses the very thing that the word of God says is wrong so they can keep it as it leads to their own destruction and to them some Christians sadly it's a fight not worth fighting and then there's something else back in James chapter 1 in verse 21 there's a sin that some won't lay aside and there's something else in verse 22 but be ye doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving your own selves that guy Christ called a foolish man that built his house upon the sand he heard but he wasn't a doer and the case here

James tells us is he's deceiving his own self you're deceiving your own selves when you hear but don't do how so well you're deceiving yourself and thinking you can control it you're deceiving yourself and saying hey I've heard I know better I know what's going on and I can get right whenever I want to and you're getting pulled down and getting pulled down and getting pulled further down and you think oh no I won't end up like the others and sin won't have dominion over me and there you are you're a hearer and you've heard Christ and you know the truth but you're not a doer and the trouble you don't see is that you're deceived in your mind and in your heart you think you've got it under control brother or sister you don't have anything under control sin will control you Paul said let not sin have dominion over you but when you walk in the broad way when you start building your affections on the sand and putting your life into something that's going to fall apart where there's destruction in the end of it you're pretending that you've got it under control when you know better you're deceived

Paul said be not deceived God is not mocked you won't mock him he will not be mocked by your life by anyone's life that has gone away from the narrow and chosen the broad and has made those decisions knowing what the truth is God won't be mocked there will be destruction their sins will find them out can a man take fire and into his bosom and his clothes not be burned uh-uh there'll be scars there'll be pain it's built in to the sin the consequences come but whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy otherwise down down down into destruction and so from James chapter 1 we see two things we see why a child of God would do so foolishly it's because they love their sin and it's because they're deceiving themselves about it but there's one more place

I want you to read in James 5 please flip over to James 5 I'm sorry James 4 James 4 and here's a here's a brief warning to close this out James 4 verse 17 therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him the individual the one that made the choice to him it is sin when you know what the right path to walk on when you know what the right location is to build your life upon and you choose not to do it it is a sin that you will be held accountable for in front of almighty God you will answer to God in how you respond to these choices now I want you to understand something this is not a burden what Christ spoke of in these choices it's not a burden to you rather it's a blessing because it's a blessing to know the truth it's a blessing to have your eyes opened consider this a lost man is blinded by the God of this world he's on that broad road headed to destruction and doesn't even know it so it's a beautiful blessing to have your eyes opened and to know what's going to happen on this road so why would any believer stay on that road why would he company with them on that road that doesn't make any sense that's complete and other foolishness well we know why because sin deception doesn't want to fight it's easier company the friends yeah that's why that's why but understand walking on the narrow road is not a burden at all it's a blessing to know how this is going to end up and to know what you're what you're avoiding by getting off of that road to know the destruction that's coming if I were to put my whole life on this sand and when the storms come there's going to be nothing left and imagine the pain and the despair versus having the knowledge that Jesus Christ inputs in you through the word of God to say hey that's a bad move

why don't you do something over here why don't you plant yourself in a solid  
[ 35 : 25 ] Bible believing church why don't you make some godly decisions for your life why don't  
you choose to raise your kids around the word of God why don't you make a decision that you're not  
going to miss church because this is right why don't you make why don't you build over here instead  
of building over there it's just going to it's just going to wipe out it's not going to be anything left you  
know that it's a blessing to know the truth it's a blessing to have adequate warning it's a blessing to  
have instruction about the choices that lie in front of us in life it's a blessing to know Jesus Christ  
cares about us to tell us to warn us to inform us and oh that we'd be wise then that we would  
respond to the scriptures that we'd that we'd put them to practice to use that we'd take advantage of  
having this light to guide our path thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path oh that  
we'd all take advantage of what this thing offers us in life it's not a burden it's a blessing you are of  
the few should you choose to follow this book you're of the few and it's a great few to be added to  
don't feel like you're missing out there's a song that says

I missed out on the heartache of living my life in sin amen don't be afraid to just go at it with a few  
and go at it in faith believing that God knows what's right I can trust him I'll build my life upon the  
rock something that's stable and secure something that I know will endure the word of God you  
have it so the choice is yours let's close with a word of prayer Father tonight we took a look at some  
thoughts where it's let go with a odd opening to be what's left to be is going ca to be a little because  
you have to love this room and let's continue to be about I'll see you well let's hope