



SERMON

No Middle Ground (Matt 7:13-14)

DATE

Jun 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018

1. Read Matt 7:13-14. In this passage, Jesus contrasts two ways/gates.
  - a. In verse 13, how does Jesus characterize the wide gate?
  - b. In verse 14, how does Jesus characterize the narrow gate? Contrast this with the description of the wide gate in verse 13.
  - c. In no uncertain terms, Jesus makes the following truth crystal clear: There are only two ways. There is no middle ground. However, we often have a “middle ground mentality; We view our spiritual lives in the same way we view our fitness: “I’m not athletically fit, but also not overweight. I’m in the middle ground and that’s ok.” Why is this attitude towards our spiritual path irreconcilable with Jesus’ teaching in verse 14?
  - d. Using insight from our passage, what is the danger of a “middle ground mentality”?

**HEART CHECK:** Do you find yourself adopting a “middle ground mentality”? How can you practically meditate on the truths in verses 13-14 to counteract this?

This Sunday, we examined several reasons why the gate is so narrow.

## **2. EXCLUSIVE TRUST IN CHRIST**

- a. Read John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. How do these verses help to explain the “narrowness” of the way to God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Read 1 Tim 2:5-6. How does this passage give us insight into the accessibility of the way to God?

These verses are stunning. On one hand, Christianity is the most exclusive religion: The standards are so high that not even the most religious can find their way back to God (Matt 5:20)! The gospel says, “Everyone is a sinner, so everyone is excluded.” (Rom 3:23). On the other hand, Christianity is the most inclusive religion: All people, regardless of class or race, have equal access to God through the one mediator: Jesus Christ.

**In short, while the gate is narrow, it is accessible to all.**

- c. How does this truth (i.e. “The narrow, but accessible way of Christ”) evoke joy and worship in your heart?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- d. In our culture today, Christians are typically regarded as narrow, intolerant zealots. How does this truth (i.e. “The narrow, but accessible way of Christ”) help us to give a truth-driven, yet hope-filled answer to a hostile world?

## **3. OBEDIENCE NO MATTER THE COST.**

- a. Read Acts 14:19-22 and Phil 1:29. What do these verses say about the difficulty of the Christian life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Matt 13:44-45 and 16:24-25. According to these passages, why is the cost of discipleship ultimately worth it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. How can we ensure that these truths guard our hearts from having a rosy picture of the Christian life?