

Two Gates and Two Outcomes

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[0 : 00] So we've talked for the last two weeks about how the theme of Matthew 7 is judgment.

! We've heard Jesus command us to judge properly.! We've heard Jesus tell us how to obtain the godly wisdom necessary to judge properly. And although the judgment theme will continue through the end of the sermon, tonight's verses also start a new division of the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 7, verses 13 through 27 contain what we would call today the application section of the Sermon on the Mount. From the beginning of the Sermon in Matthew 5 all the way through Matthew 7, verse 12, Jesus has laid out several principles that his followers are expected to model. He's also identified several character qualities that differentiate true believers from unbelievers. Starting with verse 13, Jesus calls us to look at ourselves and others to consider how well we measure up to Jesus' standard.

Let's read our text for tonight. It's only two verses. That's Matthew 7, verses 13 and 14. Jesus said, Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

[1 : 40] For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. So Jesus has been giving God's standards throughout the Sermon, standards that are holy and perfect and completely opposite of the self-righteous, self-sufficient, and hypocritical standards of man.

And of course, man's standards were typified by those of the scribes and the Pharisees. Jesus has shown us what his kingdom is like and what kingdom people are like.

He's also shown them what kingdom people are not like. Now he presents the choice of entering the kingdom or not. So here the Lord focuses on the inevitable decision that every person must make.

Everybody comes to a crossroads where he must decide on the gate he will enter and the way that he will go. Think back to what we've seen so far in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Beatitudes showed us the character of the true believer and how true believers are to demonstrate that character. Jesus has warned that when we demonstrate the godly character, the world probably will dislike us.

[2 : 51] Despite that, believers are to be salt and light in the world. Jesus also has taught us that the standards against which we are to measure ourselves are God's standards.

Jesus' original audience considered the scribes and the Pharisees to be the epitome of piety. We know already that Jesus has rocked their world when he said that unless somebody's righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, that person will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus has showed us the real standard that God requires for giving, praying, and fasting. The scribes and Pharisees did those activities to be seen by men.

True Christians do those things to honor God. For some, the standards that Jesus set are too high. Like many of his original followers, some people today walk away from following Jesus because they believe the requirements are too hard.

Worse yet, some people settle for a watered-down version of supposed Christianity that fails to meet the biblical standard. These people fool themselves into thinking that they are believers when they never have been truly saved.

[4 : 03] In this last section of the sermon, Jesus uses several illustrations that call us to evaluate whether our salvation is real. Remember what we've discussed several times during the lessons in this study through the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus preached this sermon to his followers. Matthew 5, 1 and 2 say, Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them.

I should have worded previous lessons more precisely. I've often said throughout these studies that Jesus taught this sermon to believers. I actually should have said that Jesus preached this sermon to people who profess to be believers.

And now that Jesus begins the application portion of the sermon by asking his hearers to judge themselves, Jesus wants them to judge whether they possess the faith that they profess to have. In the application section that we start tonight, Jesus says that few people live up to the standards set by God, and that is why Jesus challenges us to evaluate whether we truly have the faith that we profess.

[5 : 18] So that's the main idea. Jesus challenges each of us to judge whether we truly possess the faith that we profess. We likely would be correct to presume that every believer has doubted his or her faith at some point.

But Jesus wants us to have the sweet assurance that we are children of God. And that's why Jesus calls each of us to examine whether our profession of faith is real.

We know that the Bible is clear that when someone truly is saved, the person can never lose that salvation. As we finish the study of the Sermon on the Mount over the next few weeks, we'll look at hard questions that Jesus asks, and we'll look at pointed examples that he gives.

So let's use his words to show us whether we are true believers. And if the last few verses of the Sermon on the Mount cause us to doubt our eternal destiny, let's use Jesus' words to challenge us to make things right with him so that we can have the assurance of salvation that Jesus wants us to have.

We'll break tonight's verses into three sections. In just the first sentence of verse 13, we see the clear command. So the clear command is the first thing that we'll look at tonight.

[6 : 38] In that first sentence of verse 13, Jesus said, Enter by the narrow gate. We'll dig into this command by answering a couple of questions about it.

And one of the questions that comes to mind is enter what by the narrow gate. When Jesus talks about entering through the narrow gate, he's talking about entering the kingdom of heaven.

So this is the appeal that Jesus has been moving toward throughout the whole sermon. He gives the call to decide now about becoming a citizen of God's kingdom and inheriting eternal life or remaining a citizen of this fallen world and receiving damnation.

The way to life is on God's terms alone. The way to damnation is on any terms a person wants because every way but God's way ends with the same fate.

So how do we know that Jesus is talking about entering the kingdom of heaven here? We know that because that is what Jesus consistently talked about throughout the sermon so far.

[7 : 44] Let's look at a few quotes from just the Sermon on the Mount to remind ourselves of that. Here's Matthew 5, 3. Jesus said there, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Just a few verses down in Matthew 5, verses 8 through 12, we see several implied and several direct references to the kingdom of heaven. Listen to Matthew 5, 8 through 12.

Jesus said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Then in Matthew 5, 19 and 20, Jesus said, Therefore, whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

[8 : 59] But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

And here's the verse we've looked at a lot. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Then in chapter 6, verses 19 and 20, Jesus said, Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. So now we know what Jesus is talking about when he says to enter through the narrow gate.

The second question we need to think about, though, is who or what is the narrow gate? We also can answer that question with scripture.

Jesus answered that question in some of the famous I am passages in the Gospel of John. Listen to John 10, verses 7 through 9.

[10:06] Again, this is John 10, verses 7 through 9. So Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

So here is John 10, 9 again. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The word translated as door in John 10, 7 through 9 also can be translated as gate.

And some of your translations may have that as gate instead of door. Listen now to what Jesus said in John 14, 6. John 14, 6 says, Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. Some people incorrectly teach that Jesus is a way, but the Bible clearly says that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and that's what makes the gate to heaven so narrow.

[11:24] John MacArthur said, the way to life is on God's terms alone. The way to damnation is on any terms a person wants, because every way but God's leads to the same fate.

That's the quote we looked at earlier, and you can see how true that is. John Stott said, What is immediately striking about these verses is the absolute nature of the choice before us.

We would all prefer to be given many more choices than only one, or better still to fuse them into a conglomerate religion, thus eliminating the need for any choice.

Instead, Jesus insists that ultimately there is only one choice because there are only two possibilities to choose from. Throughout the Bible, we see the truth that people only have two choices.

To illustrate that, here are a few Old Testament passages. Listen to what God instructed Moses to tell the Israelites in Deuteronomy 30, verses 19 and 20.

[12:31] Deuteronomy 30, 19 and 20 say, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.

Therefore choose life that you and your offspring may live. Loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Listen to what Joshua told the Israelites in Joshua chapter 24, verses 14 and 15. Joshua chapter 24, verses 14 and 15 say, Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the river and in Egypt and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And this is what God said to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 21, 8.

[13:55] Again, this is Jeremiah 21, 8. And God said, And to this people you shall say, Thus says the Lord. Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.

When Jesus gives the clear command to enter through the narrow gate, he's commanding us to accept God's way of salvation. And that salvation is only obtained by faith in Christ.

Christ is the gate to the kingdom of heaven and he is the way, the truth, and the life. There really always have been only two systems of religion in the world.

One is God's system of divine accomplishment and the other is man's system of human achievement. One is the religion of God's grace. The other is the religion of men's works.

One is the religion of faith. The other is the religion of the flesh. One is the religion of the sincere heart and the internal. The other the religion of hypocrisy and the external.

[15:04] Within man's system are thousands of religious forms and names, but they're all built on the achievements of man and the inspiration of Satan. Christianity, on the other hand, is the religion of divine accomplishment and it stands alone as the only religion that is that.

many people admire the principles of the Sermon on the Mount but never follow those principles. Many people respect and praise Jesus Christ but never receive him as Lord and Savior. Because they never receive the King and never enter the Kingdom, they are as much separated from the King and as much outside his Kingdom as the rankest atheist or the most unethical pagan. That was a quote from John MacArthur and it sets up the second section of our lesson. In the last sentence of verse 13 we see the chilling caution.

So the chilling caution is your next set of blanks. We'll hear that chilling caution as we read the rest of verse 13 and it says, for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many.

[16:24] The way that is broad is the easy, attractive, inclusive, indulgent, permissive, and self-oriented way of the world. That way has few rules, few restrictions, and few requirements.

All you need to do is to profess Jesus or at least be somewhat religious and you're readily accepted into that large and diverse group. The word translated wide means broad, spacious, roomy, and some manuscripts like the ones used by the ESV combine these images and call this the wide and easy way.

There's plenty of room on this way for diversity of opinions and loose morals. It's the road of tolerance and permissiveness. It has no curbs and no boundaries of either thought or conduct. Have you ever thought about what makes the broad road so easy? Well, the broad road is so easy because it allows the things that unconverted humans naturally want to do.

Paul perfectly describes the actions of the unconverted humans in Romans chapter 1 verses 28 through 32. So here are Romans chapter 1 verses 28 through 32.

[17:42] And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetous, malice.

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. Listen to this quote from John Stott about the broad and easy road.

John Stott said, travelers on this road follow their own inclination, that is, the desires of the human heart in all its fallenness. Superficiality, self-love, hypocrisy, mechanical religion, false ambition, censoriousness, these things never have to be learned or cultivated.

Effort is needed to resist them, but no effort is required to practice them. That is why the broad road is so easy. When you think about it, we should never condemn unbelievers for following the broad road.

[19:09] They simply are following their job description. Instead, we should pray that the Holy Spirit will open their eyes to the truth of the gospel, to the truth of their sin, and to their need for salvation through the only way possible.

Remember this, too. Jesus spoke this sermon to the people who were following him. The original audience likely included few, if any, rank unbelievers. The rank unbelievers would have no interest in what Jesus had to say.

Jesus' original audience included those people who professed to follow him. And through these words, Jesus is asking those people whether they're demonstrating the true faith and true behavior that are the standards for entering God's kingdom.

Churches all over this country and the world have people who claim to be followers of Christ but who have yet to be truly saved. Next week, we'll see more of what Jesus has to say about false prophets who deceive their flock into false assurance.

In Jesus' day, the false prophets included the scribes and the Pharisees. And we've seen Jesus go after the scribes and the Pharisees throughout this sermon. Remember that the Pharisees had concluded that the only thing that mattered to God was what a man did.

[20:29] If a man behaved himself outwardly, they thought he was acceptable to God even though his heart was unclean. Jesus dismissed the Pharisees' practice of the law.

He taught that if one does not understand the demands of holiness of God, he will never conform to those standards in conduct. Perverting the holiness of God, the Pharisees demonstrated all manner

of false practice and still thought themselves to be righteous.

In our day, false prophets include people like Kenneth Copeland, Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, Michael Todd, and others who teach a false gospel. And unfortunately, the Tulsa area has been and still is a mecca for a lot of those false prophets going all the way back to Oral Roberts. In our verses tonight, Jesus is imploring his audience to analyze whether they are following the broad, easy, damning way. Those words are harsh, but those words are straight from this passage. Look again at what Jesus said in the last sentence of verse 13. He said, For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many.

[21 : 44] Jesus is as plain there as he can be. The wide and easy way leads to destruction. The wide and easy way also is the popular way because many enter by it.

Because man recognizes that he's responsible to God and God must be satisfied, the unconverted person sets aside God's revelation because it's too difficult to attain and he substitutes a religion of his own.

But certain things always characterize a man-made religion. Think about this main characteristic. Man's religion never imposes demands that a person cannot meet.

It never sets a higher standard for a man than he can attain. So let that point sink in. Man's religion never imposes demands that a person cannot meet. It never sets a higher standard for a man than he can attain.

And that's one way you can tell if somebody is preaching a false gospel because we know we can't obtain God's standard on our own. Paul wrote about man's standards in an earlier section of Romans 1 than what we read earlier.

[22 : 57] And here are Romans 1 verses 18 through 22. Romans 1 18 through 22 say, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them for his invisible attributes namely his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made so they are without excuse. For although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened claiming to be wise they became fools. Is it any wonder that unsaved people will find the gospel offensive until the Holy Spirit reveals the truth to their hearts and minds? Those words we just read are hard but God is God he's the one who gets to make the rules.

J. Dwight Pentecost said a holy God has the right to determine the basis upon which sinners come into his presence. God has determined that no man can find forgiveness of sins and be accepted of God unless he receives Jesus Christ as his own savior and trust in him alone for salvation.

[24 : 25] To offer God anything other than the death of Jesus Christ as the basis for salvation is to offer a man-made religion. It is a broad way no matter what form it takes that leads men eventually to destruction.

One must approach God through the gate that God has opened that gate is his crucified son the Lord Jesus Christ. That brings us to the third section of our passage tonight.

In verse 14 we see the contrasting conclusion. So the contrasting conclusion is what we'll look at last. Jesus said in verse 14 for the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few.

We already have talked about Jesus being the gate but we need to dig a bit more into what Jesus meant when he said that the gate is narrow. narrow. The definition is even more narrow than it may first seem.

The word translated as narrow comes from a root that means to groan as from being under pressure and it's used figuratively to represent a restriction or a constriction.

[25 : 41] And here are a few restrictions and constrictions that Jesus followers must face. The person who enters the narrow gate must enter the gate alone.

We can bring no one else and nothing else with us. Some commentators suggest that a turnstile represents the idea that's implied by the narrow gate.

A turnstile only allows one person through at a time with no baggage. The Jews had the mistaken notion that they were all in God's kingdom together. The narrow gate also is the gate of self-denial through which we can't carry the baggage of sin and self-will.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 16 verses 24 and 25. Here are Matthew 16 verses 24 and 25. Then Jesus told his disciples, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. The narrow gate also demands repentance.

[26 : 57] Many Jews believe that simply being a Jew, a physical descendant of Abraham, was sufficient for entrance into heaven. And many people today believe that being in a church qualifies them for heaven.

Some even believe that simply being a human being qualifies them for heaven. Jesus and others throughout the Bible clearly taught that repentance is necessary for salvation.

Listen to Mark chapter 1 verses 14 and 15. Again, this is Mark chapter 1 verses 14 and 15. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. Admitting that we are sinners, repenting and asking for forgiveness are difficult things to do because those things go against human nature.

I like this quote from Charles Spurgeon. He said, you and your sins must separate or you and your God will never come together. listen to that part again.

[28 : 10] You and your sins must separate or you and your God will never come together. No one sin may keep you. They must all be given up. They must all be brought out like Canaanite kings from the cave and be hanged up in the sun.

Think about another restriction that the narrow gate offers. Turning from the broad way to the narrow gate requires a change in lifestyle. We've seen throughout the entire Sermon on the Mount that God requires his followers to live differently than unbelievers and God requires his followers to consider the cost of following him.

Listen to Jesus' words in Luke chapter 14 verses 26 through 33. Again, this is Luke chapter 14 verses 26 through 33.

Jesus said, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters and yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you desiring to build a tower does not first sit down and count the cost whether he has enough to complete it?

[29 : 27] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all see it, begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish.

Or what king going out to encounter another king in war will not first sit down and deliberate whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000?

And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. Therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

When Jesus says in these verses that we cannot be his disciple unless we hate our family, he is making a comparison. Jesus is saying that our love for him should be so great that by comparison, the love we have for our own family appears to be hate instead.

So think about this. God's way of salvation is remarkably simple, but it is not easy. We can give nothing and we can give up nothing that will earn us entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

[30 : 34] But if we long to hold on to forbidden things, those things can keep us out of the kingdom of heaven. That's another reason why there are so few who find their way to heaven.

The narrow way rejects the concept of man's inherent righteousness. It rejects any idea that a man can do something to win favor with God. The narrow way sees Jesus Christ as the only way to life and acceptability with God.

The narrow way actually sees the restrictions that the holiness of God puts on a man as protection against evil and sin. We can pay nothing for salvation, yet coming to Jesus Christ costs everything that we have.

The person who says yes to Christ must say no to the things of the world, because to be in Christ is to rely on his power rather than our own, and to be willing to forsake our own way for his.

Doing that can cost us persecution, ridicule, and tribulation. In Jesus' last instructions to his disciples, Jesus several times reminded them of the price that they would pay for following him.

[31 : 47] Listen to what Jesus told his disciples in John chapter 15 verses 18 through 21. In John 15 18 through 21, Jesus said, If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Remember the word that I said to you, A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. When we identify ourselves with Jesus, we effectively declare war on the devil, and the devil declares war on us.

The one whom we formerly served now becomes our great enemy, and the ideas and ways that we once held dear become great temptations and pitfalls instead. Considering all these things, we can start to understand why Jesus said, For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life.

[33 : 06] But as you think about the things that make the gate narrow and the way hard, never forget the last part of Jesus' sentence. The narrow gate and the hard way lead to life, and that's the important thing to remember.

And that's why we call this section the contrasting conclusion. In verse 13, Jesus said that the broad easy way leads to destruction. Here in verse 14, Jesus says that the narrow hard way leads to life.

The circumstances and results are as different as things can be between those two alternatives. It's almost as if Jesus is saying, If you take the broad easy way now, you will face difficulty for eternity.

But if you take the difficult way now, you will have the easy way for eternity. The picture of the narrow way is designed to stress and impress this one great principle.

And that principle is this. Our desire, our ambition, our commitment, our decision, our hungering, and our thirsting are to be like him. That is, to be like Jesus and to be walking with him.

[34 : 14] So with all this talk about entering through the narrow gate, someone can fall into the trap of thinking that Jesus is talking about a works-based salvation.

Of course, we know that is false. Listen to what Martin Lloyd-Jones said. He said, I do not save myself by entering in at the straight gate, but by doing so, I announce the fact that I am saved.

The only man who does enter at the straight gate, which is a synonym for narrow, is the man who is saved. The only people on the narrow way are those who are saved, otherwise they would not be there.

Listen to that last part again. The only man who does enter at the straight gate is the man who is saved. The only people on the narrow way are those who are saved, otherwise they would not be there.

That makes a lot of sense. Why would we take the narrow, hard way if we weren't convinced that that was the right way that leads to life? After hearing Jesus' warnings and thinking about the consequences, we easily can understand why only truly saved people would show up at the narrow gate.

[35 : 29] And so you see, that's why Jesus' way completely contrasts with human nature. Verse 14 has one final clause that we have yet to talk about, and here is verse 14 again.

Jesus said, for the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Jesus says that few people find the narrow gate in the hard way.

Like we've already said, that's understandable considering what we've been discussing about this verse. But sad as those words are, they do contain some hope. Few will find the narrow gate in the hard way, but Jesus' words show us that some will find the way to salvation.

As sobering as this section is, all true believers must remember what Jesus taught us at the end of chapter six. True believers serve a master who knows what we need and who is willing and able to provide us with what we need.

Therefore, we have no reason to worry. So remember the main idea. Jesus challenges each of us to judge whether we truly possess the faith that we profess.

[36 : 43] Matthew 7, 13, and 14 are hard verses. This was a hard lesson to write. It probably was a hard lesson for you to listen to even more than that.

But rather than drive us to despair, we always need to remember why Jesus wants us to know whether we possess the faith that we profess. He wants us to know whether we have true faith because true faith provides more than just eternal life.

True faith equips us with the strength we need to face difficulties now in this life. Think about what Jesus told his disciples in John 16, 33.

Jesus said, I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world.

As we consider whether we have true saving faith, realize that the key is the direction of our lives rather than the lack of perfection in our lives. Here's another quote from Martin Lloyd Jones.

[37 : 49] He said, the questions that have to be asked in the light of this text are, have you decided for this narrow way of life? Have you committed yourself to it?

Have you chosen it? Is this what you want to be? Is this what you are endeavoring to be? Is this the life you are hungering and thirsting after?

If it is, I can assure you that you are in it. It is our Lord himself who said, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied. The man who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is not a man who is absolutely sinless and perfect.

There is no such person in this life. What our Lord is saying in effect is, my people are the people who want to follow me, those who are striving to do so.

They have entered in at the straight gate and are walking the narrow way. They often fail and fall into temptation, but they are still on the way. Failure does not mean that they have gone back on the broad way.

[38 : 54] You can fall on the narrow way, but if you realize that you have done so and immediately confess and acknowledge your sin, he is faithful and just to forgive you your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this sobering reminder to examine ourselves to make sure that we are on the correct way, the way that leads to life.

We also thank you for the reminder that this way does lead to life. Help us be willing to share this way and to demonstrate this way to others. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.