



**Two Gates**  
**Red Letter City**  
**August 7, 2016**  
**Courage Church, Detroit, MI**

We have taken the sermon on the mount, which is Jesus first and probably most famous teaching, and we have been studying it section by section, really since Easter.

We started with the beatitudes... and then the introduction passages of salt and light and the law, and

from there, we went into the issues of the heart... and all the sections in which Jesus said things like:

You have heard it said \_\_\_\_\_  
but I say to you \_\_\_\_\_

and in each of those cases, anger, lust, divorce, oaths... Jesus shows us how even if you do the right thing physically, if in your heart you want to do the wrong thing... that is still a big problem...

then we studied retaliation and what it means to really love your enemies.

After that, Jesus goes into the works of righteousness, which are: giving, praying, and fasting... and the thing that is so fascinating about that section of the sermon on the mount, is Jesus takes the same heart approach that he takes earlier, when he talks about lust, and anger, and things like that... but he applies it to good things.

He shows us how we can even do good things, but for the wrong reasons, and still be wrong.

Then he goes into the progression in which we try and control our lives, and all of the things that it leads too... controlling one area of our life, to

trying to control everything about our lives... to eventually trying to control other people so that you can still have the controlled life that you want... and he ends all of that by giving us the golden rule.

He says, “ask, seek, and knock.” and do unto others what you would want them to do to you.

And truthfully, the golden rule is kind of that last summary of everything we have been learning about since Easter. It is the main point of the whole sermon... it is that one “big idea.”

Jesus says it in the sermon on the mount, and in the greatest commandment, and in other places... that all of the laws and the prophets can be fulfilled by keeping this one commandment.

So, what we know to be “the golden rule” is the summary of the sermon on the mount, and the beginning of the last section of Jesus’ amazing sermon...

the conclusion.

Today we have come to the beginning of the end.

Jesus leaves us, at the end of the sermon on the mount, with three images, all consisting of two contrasting versions of the same thing.

First he talks about two gates.

Then he talks about two trees.

and then he ends the sermon by talking about two houses.

and let me just say this... the way Jesus ends this sermon is hard. It is not very politically correct.

So if you would open up your bibles with me to Matthew 7:12-14 -

“**So** whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

“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. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

Lets Pray.

This, for many people, has been a hard passage to reconcile with so many other scriptures in the bible that talk about salvation being a free gift, and that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved...

so I am going to try my best to help reconcile that some for you today.

I am going to give you one of the most significant observations about this passage right now. And try and hang with me because for a few minutes we are going to go to the original language.

See, most of us envision this as a narrow path (or road), not a narrow gate. and where it is true that Jesus uses the imagery of a broad path or a road to describe the way that leads to destruction, he does something slightly different when he describes what is on the other side of the narrow gate.

But first of all: What does Jesus mean when he says “the gate is narrow”?

The word “gate” is the Greek word “*pylē*” (pu-la) and it is the gate that is in the wall leading into a city.

The way you enter into the Kingdom of heaven, the red letter city... is a gate.

and this gate leading into the city is narrow.

The word narrow is the word “*stenos*” and it means strait.

Now, there is a very big difference between the word strait, like you see here... and the word straight - as in not having any turns, or curves, or bends, or angles.

A strait is a narrow passage of water that connects two larger bodies of water... its small. Its cramped.

Mostly likely the only English word that you have seen using the word strait (without a g) is the word "straitjacket" - its incredibly restrictive.

Let me first explain this from a salvation perspective...

Because the thing that makes the gospel so offensive to people is the narrowness of the whole thing. Because most people want to be "in" because of what they have done... They want to feel like, "I get to go to heaven because I was a good person."

"I get to go to heaven because I gave tithes, and I helped people, and I was nice to everyone."

"I get to go to heaven because I sacrificed everything for someone else."

All really noble and amazing things... things that everyone should do and be willing to do... and **BETTER BE DOING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GATE...** but the gospel says that even though those things are great and noble, they aren't how you enter the gate.

You enter through Jesus. Because of what He did.

and when you look at our world right now it is not hard to see how a message like that would be considered incredibly narrow. People want to believe that there are a million different ways to find life, but Jesus tells us there is only one.

It is an exclusive way.

But it is inclusive to everyone who wants to take that way.

It is NOT a gate that reaches its capacity and only a few people even have the ability to make it in... it is a gate that is so small there is only one entrance... but on the other side of it is a world so big, controlled by love... and it has the capacity to hold everybody.

See, Christianity is the only religion in the world in which you enter the gate, and then into life.

Every other religion will tell you that the gate is the last thing... you get to the gate based on the road that you walked all the way through life.

But Jesus says that in Him, the gate comes first.

and when you are through the gate... this is what you awaits you... and this is where I think we get it wrong. Because we think that just like the gate, that the entire path after we get saved is narrow.

But what the bible teaches us is we aren't waiting for heaven. The moment we accept Jesus into our lives as the only cure for our brokenness, that is when we enter the Kingdom of heaven... and from there, when we do leave this world, we just step over into eternity... in the Kingdom of Heaven.

but we don't see it that way.

We see it as path. A narrow road that we are walking on our whole lives, and we see it as this, sort of, balancing act. Like you are walking on some 1 foot wide road your entire life and on both sides of you is destruction and if you slip up, then you fall into an infinite abyss of a black hole.

So everything about this brings insecurity. And questions. And doubts about your future.

“Am I going to slip? Am I going to fall into a world of nothingness? Am I going to go to hell even after I accepted Jesus and gave my life to Him?”

But Jesus doesn't say you are on a skinny road...

The thing that is narrow is the gate!

What he says about the road, is that it is “hard”

well... We translate it as “the way is hard that leads to life”

Some translations translate the way that leads to life as “narrow,” but it is not narrow as in “a tight space” - it is not the word “*stenos*” like the word we just talked about, as in a strait, or a narrow passage.

it is narrow as in something being pressed together... or made to be narrow.

it is the Greek word “*thlibō*” (tha le-bo)

and it means “to press hard upon”... as in grapes being pressed into wine.

There are several images in the bible, specifically around judgment, to do with wine pressing.

and here is the idea... when someone presses wine... what they do is they crush the grapes, and they extract all of the juice... everything that makes that grape good comes out... and then everything else gets thrown away.

I don't drink wine, but my wife loves to make these juices, and we found this awesome, industrial level juicer on craigslist really cheap that we have in our kitchen... and we can put a piece of fruit into that machine and it will press every single nutrient out of that fruit into a juice, and it will leave us with this gross pile of excess that doesn't have much, if any nutritious value. It separates what is in the fruit, and we throw away what isn't necessary for the nutrients.

Next week, we are going to talk about a tree and its fruit... and it is a similar process. Jesus in John 15 says that “I am the vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. And every branch *in me* that that does not bear fruit he takes away, and **every branch that does bear fruit he prunes**... so it can bare more fruit.”

So even Jesus went through this process. It is the idea of a farmer cutting off the bad fruit from a tree, so that everything that is good and healthy has room to grow. And then Jesus says, “I am the vine, and you are the branches!”

It is a pruning process, in which the things that don't bear fruit in our lives are removed, to make room for the things that do bear fruit. But what is amazing is after Jesus says all of that, he says this: (John 15:12-13) -

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

You are being pruned for something specific!

And Jesus is saying, that is what is on the other side of the narrow gate for you. It is not a tight rope that you need to walk on egg shells through. It is a process in which I am going to refine you, and press everything good that is in there, and use it for the Kingdom of heaven... and everything that is bad, or just not necessary, we are just going to throw away.

Again, its judgment language. But not all judgment language has to be limited to death... because here is the reality...

Your life will eventually get pruned, to make room for love.

Either you can do it now, on this side of heaven, or God will do it there, later.

Can you accept Jesus, and continue living your life without showing others love, never really helping out much or contributing anything... and when you die you still go to heaven?

yes. I would say so, the bible makes it very clear that we are NOT saved by works, and if your love for Jesus and acceptance of his gift is genuine, then I believe the answer is yes.

but it may not be as pleasant as you think it will be.

The bible says that in heaven, all of your darkest secrets will be made known... everything not repented of will be exposed. Jesus says that nothing is hidden that will not one day be made manifest (Luke 8:17) and Paul says “God judges the secrets of men.” (Romans 2:16.

So when you think of the process of a wine press, you realize, Jesus is trying to do something in you now... he is trying to prune you now in this life so that he won't have to do it later, and so you can be more effective, here, and now.

And there is language similar to this all throughout the bible. Here is a similar concept:

Solomon in Proverbs 17:3 says:

He says "The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and **the Lord tests the heart.**"

What is that about?

**A crucible was a pot that held metals so that you could put them under fire... you put silver in the crucible and then you could place the crucible in the fire so you can put the silver under extreme heat. The crucible could hold up in the heat while even the metals would melt.**

So, there is something in silver, and in gold, called the dross, and it is a **mass of solid impurities that was just kind of mixed in with the silver.**

So what would happen was if you put the silver in the crucible, and you put it in the furnace, the silver would come under the heat of the furnace and and when it got hot enough the dross would separate from the silver... **and then the silversmith could then come by and he could scrape off the dross and then they would have a totally pure piece of silver.**

That is how one would "purify" silver.

Are you with me so far?

Now... Jesus begins the entire sermon on the mount by giving us "the beatitudes." And the 6th beatitude says:



“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

now get this.

The word “pure” is the Greek word “*katharos*” and in the physical tense... the way that we can actually apply this word to our lives, it has two meanings, and you may be surprised by what they are:

The first is, when something is “purified by fire.” Just like what Solomon says. The Lord tests the heart in the same same way that a silversmith separates the dross from the silver.

He will let you go through some things that will bring out what is really in there... and hopefully then, do away with the bad.

and the second is “like a vine cleansed by pruning and so fitted to bear fruit.” - exactly like what we just talked about, what Jesus said in John 15.

All that is packed into one beatitude.

On the other side of the narrow gate is a process... and English translators give it the English word “hard” - the way is hard. But the way is refining. The way is about pruning. It is about going through the necessary things in life that will make you into who you are supposed to be, and getting rid of everything else.

The gate is narrow, and can only be entered by Jesus Christ.

and when you are through it, you are going to have all sorts of opportunities in your life to demonstrate to Jesus...

**IS THIS REAL CHANGE?**

Is the dross really gone?

Is this person pure in heart?

Ultimately the *gospel* is narrow. You enter one way. But on the other side of the narrow gate, there is room for everyone who accepts it. Everything on the other side is about growth. It is about pruning. It is about Jesus getting all of the bad things off of you, and turning you into a Kingdom person.

and ultimately, everything on the other side of the narrow gate... the evidence of what you are becoming in life, is found in how you treat people.

The whole bit in John 15, Jesus talks about pruning, so that ultimately we can love another another.

The litmus test for what your life on the other side of the narrow gate looks like is the golden rule:

“**So** whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

Remember the key word that a lot of people miss when they read the golden rule, like we talked about last week, is the word “so.”

It is a Greek word that means “these things being so” - or a more simple way to say it would be: “therefore”

so Jesus is saying, that because of everything that he had just taught us.... about salt and light, and the law, and lust, and oaths, and enemy love, and works of righteousness and how we control our lives...

if these things are so and our lives are as they should be... then:

“whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.”

Then He goes into the narrow gate. There is a total flow of thought here, but most people separate all of it, and they isolate this passage from the rest of the sermon and just assume that the wide gate is the people who party all the time, who set no boundaries on their lives and live any way that they want to... the ones who ignore the commandments, and break the rules...

and the narrow gate... the ones who enter that way are the ones who keep all the rules, and do all the right things...

Except the only way to draw that conclusion is to lift that passage out from the entire rest of the sermon... you have to remove it from the flow that Jesus has so intentionally and obviously created here as he walks us through this sermon.

No! The narrow gate is the ones who accept Jesus. And on the other side of that gate is LIFE. Life in the Kingdom of heaven. Life, where you treat other people the way that you want to be treated.

The narrow gate has to be connected with the golden rule... Because this beautiful concept of us treating others the way that we would want to be treated, Jesus says here and in other places... is what all the laws and prophets fall on.

If you just do that... then you have done everything. Its the exact same in the great commandment. Love God. then love people just as much as you love yourself... and if you do those things, then you have done everything.

Now, this may seem obvious and easy to you...

but you must understand what the nature of the world was at that time.

To the average hearer of the sermon on the mount that day... retaliation and war and payback were the things that were on their minds, not loving their enemies and treating everyone like they are friends. Rome was taking over the entire world, and they were doing it through violence.

They wanted their worlds back!

And then Jesus comes in and says things like "The meek inherit the earth."

- to this group of people who had every reason to draw the opposite conclusion... that Rome, coming in with their swords and their armies were the ones who were inheriting the earth...

And that is what makes the whole sermon so upside down. It is an upside down kingdom in which the ones who think they are first will be last, and the last will ultimately be first. and so for them to hear something like “broad is the way that leads to destruction...”

it would have sounded just like the beatitudes.

“Narrow is the gate that leads to life” would have sounded just like “blessed are the poor in spirit.” Blessed are the ones who come to Jesus broken enough to realize “I can’t make it on my own.” So instead they lean on the saving blood of Jesus Christ and he says to them “enter life.”

Don’t you see? “The two gates” is the way that Jesus begins his conclusion, and just like that, in the end, we are right back at the beginning.

Jesus says “come to me broken, and I will show you a new way to live.” In this new Kingdom, we don't take up arms and and attack Rome to get what we want. That is the broad road. That is the road that leads to destruction. Instead blessed are the meek... blessed are you when you restrain your strength for the sake of the greater good of the Kingdom of heaven.

Restraining your power is hard. Using your power to gain things, or even to get things back... that is the broad way.

In this Kingdom, if you even hate someone, then you are guilty of murder. Hate is the broad road. Its easy to be bitter.

Its hard to forgive. Its hard to love your enemy. Those things take refining. They take pressing to do.

But we try and downplay those words to excuse our behavior. And we even take verses like the one I am going to mention in a second, to sort of, justify NOT doing what Jesus says in the sermon on the mount.

But essentially Jesus says that if you heard nothing else this entire sermon, hear this: Do unto others as you would want someone to do unto you.

In Matthew 18 Jesus lays out what the process looks like when you are correcting someone... when you are trying to restore them. Because what tends to happen in the church, is a restoration process usually either goes one of two ways... it goes well... or it goes TOTALLY SOUTH!

1. The person repents, and they are restored. Or:
2. The person refuses to repent, and they are cast out, and made to look like an enemy of the community.

So Jesus addresses that. and he kind of lays out this amazing process for what it looks like, and what he says is “if someone sins against you... go to them!”

“tell them their fault, to their face!”

Don't go tell your other friends about it. Don't post about it on Facebook. Go directly to the person... and if he listens to you then you have gained a brother! You have gained someone who you can actually be open and honest with, and have meaningful dialogue with and actually work out your problems so you can actually do more for the Kingdom, together.

and Jesus says that if that doesn't work, take one or two others with you... and sit down together... because when there are a couple other people there, then there are witnesses that you have tried to work toward reconciliation.

Then if that doesn't work, then that is when you get the church involved. The people who collectively bind and loose things over their community. (Matthew 18:18)

And then Jesus says something very interesting. He says, after you do all that... you take it to the person... and it does no good... then you go to the person again, this time with witnesses, and it does no good...

then you take it before the church community where there is a corporate agreement on what is allowed and what is forbidden... and if then there is still an issue with that person...

then Jesus says that you “let that person be to you like a tax collector or a Gentile.” (Matt: 18:17)

and so most of the time, this is where we give up on people.

and when Jesus’ audience would have first heard it, that is probably exactly what they would have thought too... “that person is out of the fold... they are no longer one of us...”

until they saw the way that Jesus treated tax collectors.

He didn’t cast them out! He loved them! He went to parties with them!

The gospel writer Matthew, who penned the account that I just told you about as well as the entire sermon on the mount...

WAS A TAX COLLECTOR.

I will say it again: The man who recorded the words that we are reading... was a tax collector.

I can only imagine as Matthew sat down and was recalling the words of Jesus as the Holy Spirit breathed life into the gospel that he was recording... and he remembered Jesus’ words here... he probably took a moment and paused,

maybe having a vision of kicking someone out of the church... maybe with a justifying smile on his face before suddenly realizing...

wait a second!

Oh... Jesus is saying that we should treat those people the same way that Jesus treated *me*.

and we can use lines like that, that say “let them be like a tax collector” and we can use it as opportunities to make enemies with people... and to oust them, and to give them whatever we think that they deserve...

but that is a broad gate.

its the easy way.

It is easy to give up on people.

The hard way is to love someone when everything about them seems unlovable... when everything about them is pushing all of your buttons.

I remember last year, I went and ate lunch at the taco truck, On the way back from the taco truck, I saw a man laying on the sidewalk in front of the church steps. And people do that a lot... I am fine with it. I would rather they be at Courage Church than under a bridge somewhere... but this man didn't look like he was well.

I asked him, "Sir, are you ok?" and he said, "no."

I said, "Is there anything I can help you with?"

and he shouted to me, "I am hungry!"

So I went into the church, made him a sandwich, gave him some pretzels and a couple bottles of water, and tried to sit him up under the tree. He was so drunk, he couldn't even hold his food, so I literally had to feed him the first couple bites of the sandwich before he finally took it. He rested under the tree for a while.

Ron came by to mow the church, so he helped for a few minutes as well.

About an hour later, Ron was still mowing, the man (I think his name is John) was still outside, and it started to pour. Lightning, Thunder, a ton of rain. It was a mess.

So I invited them both in. Ron and I helped get the man up the stairs and he sat in the pew in the lobby. I asked him if he wanted some coffee, and he said yes, so I went to warm water and I made him and I a pour over. He kept asking for food, so I grabbed him more pretzels, and I gave him 50

cents of my own and 1 dollar out of the benevolence box so that he could go and buy a taco after the rain stopped. Not much, but its something.

So we just sat in the church lobby, and had coffee together. I could barely understand anything that he was saying, at one point he asked me for sugar for his coffee, but I (not evening comprehending that people still take sugar in their coffee) could not figure out what he was asking... I thought he kept saying "Sir." He got louder and louder. "Sir!" - "yes?" I would respond. Finally he said, "Are you (then he used an inappropriate word \*\*\*F-ing\*\*\*) stupid?"

I said to him, "excuse me?"

He said it again. I got a little angry for a moment but I stayed calm, and finally realized he wanted sugar. So I put sugar in his coffee, and he was very happy. He said "thank you."

Then he asked me, "are you the preacher?"

I said, yes!

He asked, "What do you preach about?"

And i told him, "well, we are in a fruit of the Spirit series, so this Sunday...

he then interrupted me asked me if I knew what Ecclesiastes 3 said... to which I responded "I haven't memorized it, but I believe that is the chapter about a time for everything under heaven... a time to be born, a time to die."

and he responded, "NO! Are you some kind of IDIOT! Its about David and Goliath."

"What kind of preacher are you? You don't even know the bible."

Now, I am not going to claim for a moment that I know everything about the bible... but I do know for sure that Ecclesiastes 3, a book written by David's son who was born long after David was already KING, is not where the



story of a young shepherd boy named David, who faces a giant called Goliath, is found.

and I just sort of smiled... and sat with him, and we waited out the rain. And after the rain stopped, Ron helped him back outside, and life went on.

and I know it was just a coffee... and some sugar... and money for a taco, and a roof over his head during a storm... and there was probably more that I could have done.

But I also could have said "GET OUT!"

You are yelling at me and insulting me and trying to provoke me.

That would have been easy.

but it would have been broad.

But that was a pruning moment. It was a crucible moment. It was a winepress moment.

Guys, the people who have entered through the narrow gate and live their lives according to the way of Jesus... they fight for people even when people aren't fighting for themselves.

We talked in depth about retaliation... and about loving our enemies... and we made the case that the ONLY type of enemies that a Christian should have, are the people who set themselves against the Christian because of Christ.

If you have an enemy for anything that you did, you need to repent.  
If you have an enemy because of something that someone else did... you need to forgive.

It is sinful to have enemies, for any other reason than someone else pitting themselves against you because you stand for Christ. And if you hold something against someone else, for any reason whatsoever... you are going through the wide gate.

It is not okay to treat someone like your enemy because they don't do whatever it is that you think that they should do. Even if what they are doing is wrong. You will never reach people that you treat that way.

I refuse to have enemies. As long as you view someone as your enemy, you will never treat them the way that you want to be treated.

I know that I can't be everybody's best friend either, but if there is anything that I have to say about it, then no enemies for me... I always want to leave the door open for a relationship to bloom or to position myself to be a part of meeting a need in someone's life that I may not be able to meet if I have allowed myself to be cut off from that person.

Because when you walk that path... the one that is always ousting people... and trying to separate yourself from people, and being okay when other people suffer because for whatever reason you think that they deserve it...

Eventually that bitterness toward one person will bleed into other areas of your life. Hebrews calls it "a root of bitterness." (Hebrews 12:15) and it forms when you fail to strive for peace with people. It forms when you fail to see to it that everyone obtains the grace of God in their life.

and when you, as a carrier of grace, withhold grace from others, you are laying down roots in your own life and it will rob you of your purpose. and before long you will find yourself on a very broad road with a lot of other angry people.

And the reality that makes the broad way so scary is people are on it and they don't even realize it. They are angry, and they don't even know why.

maybe they think they entered through a narrow gate... but the whole refining process is proving that their lives look nothing like Jesus.

They go in the crucible, and the dross and the silver separate, but they never clean the dross off so it hardens right back on when it comes out of the furnace.

The the problem with reading all of those sets of scriptures like what we just read in Matthew 18, through our American minds is we read them and try and use them as a way to justify our anger.

We look for excuses to give up on people. We look for reasons to stay angry and not have to feel guilty about it.

But that only shows how broad the road is that we travel on.

But why not strive to live a life that doesn't need justifying?

If you live your life treating people the way that you want to be treated, then there will be nothing to justify. Because we all know the way we want to be treated.

Why not enter through the narrow gate, into a world of love that see's people through Jesus' eyes and treats them like they are our own family.

We went out and visited families in the neighborhood on Wednesday. We have been doing that a lot more lately, just checking in on people, seeing if they need anything, see how they are doing...

think about joining us one of these days... its definitely a winepress on the other side of a narrow gate... for me it was a hard one to step into. I thought I was going to feel like a Mormon and assumed that people would treat me that way... the way that I have treated the mormons in the past when they knock on my door.

but we aren't out there trying to sell Jesus to people, we are just seeing how they are doing... we are trying to build relationships with people, and I feel like we are beginning to make some great friendships.

Anyway, one of the houses we visited, it just so happened that during our backpack giveaway, when we raffled the bikes, two kids from this same family won bikes that day.

And when we got there, they were outside, both riding on their bikes.

and we asked them, “what did you guys do today?”

and they said “we rode our bikes.”

all day.

And to me, I can't think of anything that would have been sweeter to my ears in that moment. Because what was, to us, a bike... something that we bought or something that one of the mission teams bought as a giveaway...

to those kids is a whole summer of fun.

and I think about my kids... and the times I have gone outside with Milly and tried to teach her how to ride her bike up and down the sidewalk on our street...

that is how I treated my kids. I got them bikes.

And what an honor to be a part of us doing that for someone else. Something that we know would make every kid's summer better in this city.

and on the larger scale like that we do for a few what we wish we could do for everyone...

but on all scales, we treat people the way that we ourselves would want to be treated. Because the golden rule is the summary of everything that Jesus laid out for us.

It is what life looks like in the Kingdom of heaven... on the other side of that narrow gate that we enter only by the grace of Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins...

and again, the verse that we studied today has been isolated for years and when you do that, its easy to make the whole passage about heaven, and about hell... about life, and about death...

and most people read it apart from the golden rule... but what they don't realize is that they are supposed to read it as a connection to the golden rule. and reading it that way does not take away from the significance of eternity it just reminds us of the way that every moment here on earth plays a role in eternity.

But there is one more thing that we must not forget when we read this passage:

See there are two gates.

One way leads to life.  
The other way leads to destruction.

and Jesus does say broad is the way that leads to destruction.

Jesus mentions a way, and its spacious and it is open and it is the way that most people are going.

Because everybody seems to think that they can earn their way to God. They can do good deeds and good works, and that will get them there. And where those things certainly should be in their lives as evidence that they entered through the narrow gate... the gospel in and of itself is about the way you enter.

And once you enter... then you walk the path. You journey. You struggle. And you wrestle with what it means to follow Jesus in your community and with the ways that you will be salt and light.

He says "I am the way you enter life. Exclusively me. No other way." and those who enter life, they will do what I say... and of course he just wrapped up the all the main points of the sermon on the mount and he concluded by saying that it can all be summarized with the golden rule... but think about the golden rule! Think about your life.

What do you want from your life?

Do you want life? Or do you want destruction?

Nobody wants destruction, we all want life. So if you are treating people the way that you would want to be treated... and you know that for you, you want life and not destruction...

then you need to relate to people in a way that leads them to life.

and that means love, every time, but it also may mean hard conversations sometimes.

But here is the reality... this is what makes what Jesus says so obvious, when for most people it is hard to understand... most people don't get it, they think... why do few find it?

Some won't find it because they are stubborn and they want control and they want to know that everything that they have is because of what they did...

others won't find it because We, Christians, are stubborn and afraid.

Few find it because SO FEW Christians are actually willing to treat others the way that they want to be treated...

So few christians are willing to tell people the truth. That there *is* a way that leads to destruction. There are many ways to let your life spiral out of control in this life, and create all sorts of hell for yourself and for the people that you love now...

and that there are eternal consequences for everything that you have done and if you don't accept Jesus into your life those consequences are awful.

That is narrow!

It is not narrow because it is exclusive to a specific, small group of people.

It is narrow because it is exclusive to a savior that died for all of them.

But if everything we ever teach and live out in our communities is solely about the social differences we can make, and yet we are too shy to tell people that there is an eternity... there is a forever...

then no, we are not treating people the way that we would want to be treated... because we had that chance... we were given the opportunity to hear about Jesus... and we were met in our brokenness by a savior who said "I will take it all."

And yes, there is a path in this life that leads to destruction... it leads to hell.

but its not about whether or not a person can get their life together...

The path that leads to hell is the path that rejects Jesus. and it is NOT because Jesus wants to send people to hell... but because Jesus is desperately trying to SAVE PEOPLE from hell.

and we don't talk about hell a ton around here, mainly because I believe that if we can teach people how to live Kingdom lives, hell becomes a non-issue. But when it comes up in the scriptures, we don't avoid it either. But we don't want to scare people into relationships with Jesus instead we want to show them how sweet it is to be in that relationship.

I love what Shane Claiborne said once... he was talking about hell... and he said something like this: I figure... If I knew the cure for cancer... I wouldn't go around talking about cancer all the time... I would go around telling people the cure.

And its like that with hell. We know that it is real. We know that it is awful. We get some images of it in the sermon on the mount and in other other parts of the new and the old testament... and we talked about some of those images earlier in this series... and may talk a little more about it next week...

but what we know for sure about it, is that Jesus is the cure!

He died for your sins, so that you can enter life.

It is a narrow gate.

But on the other side of that gate is life for all who choose it.