



CROSSROADS

2015 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Study 5

Your Choice

Matthew 7:13
Enter through the narrow gate



Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia Children's Ministry

Your Choice

Objective

To present the Gospel in a clear and concise way, giving the opportunity to every child to make a decision for Christ.

Key Verses

Matthew 7:13-14

Deuteronomy 30:19-20

John 10:9-10

Revelation 21:4

John 3:36

Proverbs 3:5-6

Memory Verse - Matthew 7:13-14

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Hook

Review yesterday’s memory verse, 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

On the board, have the students make a list of their favorite foods and their least favorite foods. Ask them, “For dinner tonight would you rather have your favorite food or your least favorite food?” This should be an easy choice.

We have been talking about decision making all week. Tell the students that at the end of class today you are going to present them with a choice, and that this choice is going to be the most important of their whole lives.

BOOK

The first two passages we look at today mirror each other. Both Matthew 7:13-14 and Deuteronomy 30:19-20 both effectively say the same thing, though in slightly different ways. Both of these passages present us with a choice, and that choice is between life and death. Deuteronomy 30 tells us that the choice is ours. God will not force us to make the decision that He wants us to make, but He does present us with a very good argument for why we should make it. He tells us that the greatest choice we can make in life is the choice between life and death, between blessing and cursing. The choice is ours, but God is pleading with us to choose life.

Matthew 7:13-14 tells us that sadly, even though the choice should be clear, there are many who are going to choose to walk down the wide road that leads to destruction. Again God is pleading with us to seek and find the narrow gate that leads to life, but He will not force us to take it.

Our final passages explains how to make that choice, and what that choice *really* is. Jesus in John 10 claims that He is the gate spoken about in Matthew 7, that making the choice for life is really making a decision to follow Jesus. He says “I am the door, if anyone enters by me he will be saved.” The whole Bible, in essence, is giving us the opportunity to trust Jesus and His promise to save us, or to trust our own strength which we know will fail us and cause us to perish, just like Proverbs 3:5-6 says.

LOOK

Over the last two days we have been looking at really difficult choices. Do we honor God when nobody else is? Do we do what is right even when we are afraid? Sometimes the choices we have to make a really easy. For dinner tonight do you want to your favorite food or your least favorite food? That’s really easy, obviously you would choose your favorite. Let’s make the choice even easier. For dinner tonight would you rather have your favorite food or a bowl of dirt?

In Deuteronomy 30 and Matthew 7, God presents us the easiest choice you would think we would ever have to make. He asks us, “Do you want to live forever in a place where there is no suffering, no tears, no pain, and no sin? (Rev 21:4) Or do you want to die?” I can’t think of an easier choice. One of the choices is going to bring you happiness and joy forever, and the other nothing but sorrow. Notice that God doesn’t force you to make the decision that He knows you should make, He just makes the choice really obvious.

Sadly, Matthew 7 tells us that the choice is not as obvious to people

LOOK

as we would think. In fact, it tells us that *most* people will, for whatever reason, choose death. Only a small number will seek out the narrow, difficult gate that leads to life. You might ask, “Why do only a small number of people want to live in paradise for eternity?” The answer is found in John chapter 10.

In John chapter 10, Jesus tells us that He is actually the narrow gate. We are not actually choosing between doors, we are choosing to either follow Jesus, or to follow our own will. This is why so many people will make the wrong choice: because they want to do whatever they want. Jesus tells us very plainly that if we enter by Him we will be saved, that He has come to give us life and life to the fullest measure, and that if we follow anything else we are being lead astray by thieves that want to kill steal and destroy.

In John 3:36 we read, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” How do we choose life? We choose to make Jesus Christ both our Savior and our Lord. That means trusting Him for everything in our life, it means believing that He died on a cross for the forgiveness of our sins, and it means putting aside our own selfish desires and doing things God’s way. We cannot save ourselves from our sin. Only the blood of Jesus Christ is able to cleanse us and make us clean. Only by choosing Christ, and Christ alone, do we enter through the narrow gate that leads to life. It all comes back to Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

TOOK

As a class memorize Matthew 7:13-14

Give the students the opportunity to respond to the message of the Gospel. Be careful not to coerce a response, be careful not to force something that is not truly there. Ensure that before they leave, every child has heard that Christ gave up His life so that they could live.

Pray: Ask any students who wish to give their lives to Christ to stand. Lead them in a sinners prayer of confession and repentance.

Parent Question: What does it mean to be saved? How do I make Christ the Lord of my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Deuteronomy 30:15-21, Matthew 7:13-14, and John 10:7-11 by David Guzik

Deuteronomy 30:15-21

2. (15-18) The choice.

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.

a. **See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil:** Under the terms of the Old Covenant, Israel had a choice: **life** or **death, good** or **evil**. It was up to them. God was going to glorify Himself through Israel one way or another. How it would happen was really their *choice*.

b. **The LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess:** Under the terms of the Old Covenant, Israel, if obedient, would see blessing. If disobedient, then Israel would **surely perish**. It was up to Israel, and based on their conduct.

i. It is essential for us to understand that we, in Jesus Christ, *do not* relate to God on the terms of the Old Covenant, but on the terms of a better covenant: The New Covenant. Under the New Covenant, my relationship with God is not based on what *I do* for God, but on what *Jesus has done* on my behalf. There is, of course, more to the New Covenant than this, but this is one crucial distinction between the two covenants.

ii. If this Old Covenant is inferior to the New Covenant, and if there was a high price to pay for rejecting the Old Covenant, should we not know there is an even greater penalty for rejecting an even greater covenant? (Hebrews 10:28-29)

3. (19-20) **Choose life.**

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.

a. **I call heaven and earth as witness today against you:** In these most solemn words, Moses set the choice before Israel. They had to choose between **life and death, blessing and cursing**.

b. **Therefore choose life:** At the same time, though the choice belonged to Israel, God cared about *what* they chose. When Moses pled with Israel, crying out **choose life**, we know he reflected the heart of God toward Israel. How God glorified Himself through Israel was up to them, but it was obviously God's preference that He glorify Himself through an obedient, blessed Israel. So He pled, **choose life!**

i. Man today, even outside the Old Covenant, is confronted with the choice. But the choice focuses first not on "Will I obey God or not?" but on "Will I trust in Jesus for my standing before God?" Jesus said, *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.* (Luke 11:23) Jesus is still asking the question, *who do you say that I am* (Matthew 16:15), and our choice in answering that question determines our eternal destiny.

c. **That you may love the LORD your God:** To love God this way, to really trust Him, is explained well in Deuteronomy 30:20. To love and trust God means to **obey His voice**, for a child who really loves and trusts their father will obey him. It means to **cling to Him**, for if we really love and trust Him, we will be attached to Him. It means to regard Him as our **life and the length of your days**, because if we love and trust Him, He is not *part* of our life, He *is* our life.

Matthew 7:13-14

2. (13-14) The decision between two ways and one of two destinations.

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

a. **Enter by the narrow gate:** Jesus did not speak of this gate as our destiny, but as the entrance to a path. There is a right way and a wrong way, and Jesus appealed to His listeners to decide to go the more difficult way, **which leads to life**.

i. He understood and taught that not all ways and not all destinations are equally good. One leads to **destruction**, the other to **life**.

ii. "The strait gate signifies literally what we call a *wicket*, i.e. a little door in a large gate." (Clarke)

iii. "Jesus is not encouraging committed disciples, 'Christians,' to press on along the narrow way and be rewarded in the end. He is rather commanding his disciples to enter the way marked by persecution and rewarded in the end." (Carson)

b. **Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life:** The true gate is both *narrow* and *difficult*. If your road has a gate that is easy and well traveled, you do well to watch out.

i. "You must not therefore wonder if my precepts be hard to your carnal apprehensions, nor be scandalized though you see but few going in the right road to the kingdom of heaven." (Poole)

John 10:7-11

3. (7-10) The true shepherd protects and promotes life; the false shepherds take away life.

Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly."

a. **I am the door of the sheep:** Jesus used another picture from sheep farming in His time. Out in the pastures for sheep, pens were made with only one entrance. The door for those sheep pens was the shepherd himself. He laid his body across the entrance, to keep the sheep in and to keep out the wolves. The shepherd was in fact the **door**.

i. "Primarily uttered for the excommunicated man, these words conveyed the assurance that instead of being outcast by his attachment to Jesus he had gained admittance to the fellowship of God and all good men." (Dods)

b. **All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers:** *Thief* implies deception and trickery; *robber* implies violence and destruction. These take away life but Jesus gives life and He gives it **abundantly**. These are the con men and muggers of the spiritual world.

i. Alford sees the **all who have come before** basically to be those religious leaders who were actually tools in Satan's hand - as Jesus told some of these religious leaders that their father was actually the devil. "Because the Pharisees are blind leaders, they are also bogus shepherds, and come under the category of those designated in John 10:8 *thieves and robbers*." (Tasker)

ii. "Jesus does not say that they 'were' but that they 'are' thieves and robbers. The emphasis is on His own day." (Morris)

iii. "Manes (that made heretic) made an argument from this text against Moses and the prophets, as going before Christ. But Austin answereth, Moses and the prophets came not before Christ, but with Christ." (Trapp)

iv. "klepthev [*kleptes*], and lhsthev [*lestes*], the thief and the robber, should be properly distinguished; one takes by *cunning* and *stealth*; the other *openly* and by *violence*. It would not be difficult to find bad ministers who answer to both these characters." (Clarke)

c. **But the sheep did not hear them:** Jesus seems to say that *His* sheep are evident because they will not **hear** (follow after) the voice of the thieves and robbers who come after the sheep.

i. "They no doubt assumed authority over the people of God and compelled obedience, but the true children of God did not find in their voice that which attracted and led them to pasture." (Dods)

d. **He will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture:** Jesus described the settled, satisfied life enjoyed by His sheep, those over whom He exercises a shepherd's care.

i. **Go in and out:** "This phrase, in the style of the Hebrews, points out all the actions of a man's life, and the liberty he has of acting, or not acting." (Clarke)

ii. "To 'go out and in' is the common O.T. expression to denote the free activity of daily life. Jeremiah 37:4, Psalm 121:8, Deuteronomy 28:6." (Dods)

e. **I have come that they may have life, and they may have it more abundantly:** Jesus said this to contrast His shepherd-like care with unfaithful and illegitimate leaders. They come to **steal, and to kill, and to destroy**. Jesus comes to bring **life** to His people.

i. "The Greek word for 'abundance,' *perissos*, has a mathematical meaning and generally denotes a surplus... The abundant life is above all the contented life, in which our contentment is based upon the fact that God is equal to every emergency and is able to supply all our needs according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus." (Boice)

- Abundant life isn't an especially long life
- Abundant life isn't an easy, comfortable life
- Abundant life is a life of satisfaction and contentment in Jesus

ii. "Life is a matter of degrees. Some have life, but it flickers like a dying candle, and is indistinct as the fire in the smoking flax; others are full of life, and are bright and vehement." (Spurgeon)

- Someone with a lot of life has *stamina*
- Someone with a lot of life has *increased energy*
- Someone with a lot of life has *a large sphere of living*
- Someone with a lot of life has *the ability to do things*
- Someone with a lot of life has *an overflow of enjoyment*
- Someone with a lot of life has *what it takes to win*

iii. Abundant life sheep give honor to the shepherd. They are a credit to him.

4. (11-15) The good shepherd will lay down his life for the flock.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, *he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*"

a. **I am the good shepherd:** Jesus said it so plainly there could be no mistake what He meant. He fulfills the ideal of shepherd-like care for the people of God as illustrated in the Old Testament and in that culture.

i. Jesus announced "Himself as THE GOOD SHEPHERD - the great antagonist of *the robber* - the pattern and Head of all good shepherds, as *he* of all thieves and robbers: the Messiah, in His best known and most loving of-fice." (Alford)

ii. What Jesus described as a **good shepherd** is actually a very remarkable shepherd. Shepherds may take risks for the safety of the sheep, but it is probably rare to find one who would willingly die for their sheep.

iii. "In the Latin tongue the word for money is akin to the word 'sheep,' because, to many of the first Romans, wool was their wealth, and their fortunes lay in their flocks. The Lord Jesus is our Shepherd: we are his wealth." (Spurgeon)

iv. **Gives His life for the sheep:** "*He is giving his life still.* The life that is in the man Christ Jesus he is always giving for us. It is for us he lives, and because he lives we live also. He lives to plead for us. He lives to represent us in heaven. He lives to rule providence for us." (Spurgeon)