Here I Go Again
Matthew 7:13-14

“Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”
- Matthew 7:14

The gate in an ancient city was heavily defended. The walls were thicker by the gate, and parapets covered the gate so an attacker would be caught in a cross fire. The city’s inhabitants did not want hostile troops outside the gate to burn it down or smash it in. Inside the gate was a constricted maze of turns and recesses in which defenders could be concealed. The gates were not usually wide; wide gates were breached easily unless they were immensely thick and expensive. They were narrow and strongly fortified.

The gate leading to life is narrow, and it leads to a road that is difficult. Difficult translates a word meaning “contracted,” “pressed,” or “troublesome.” The wide gate and the broad road are the “default” position for human beings, and there are many on this pathway toward eternal death. The narrow gate and the difficult road are the “deliberate” positions, and few find them. Yet Jesus urged all who heard Him preach the Sermon on the Mount to enter the narrow gate to eternal life. His gracious invitation to life is open.

Jesus wants us to see that what’s popular isn’t always best, what’s best isn’t always easy, and the path we take is a choice we each must make.

Getting Started: How do you usually make difficult decisions? Do you make a pros-and-cons list? Do you trust your instincts? Do you fly by the seat of your pants? Maybe you procrastinate until someone makes the decision for you? Share your decision making process with the group.

Read Matthew 7:13-14

1) Jesus is letting us know that **What’s Popular Isn’t Always Best.**

What popular decisions are people making that may not be the best? Why are these decisions so popular?

Can people claim to be on the narrow road, yet still be going 90mph on the wide? How do you see this in yourself or the people around you?

Paul says in Eph. 2:1-3 that we all were once objects of wrath when we followed the desires and throughs to our sinful nature. How do we curb our appetite for destruction and get on the narrow path in today’s culture?

2) Jesus is also telling us that **What’s Best Isn’t Always Easy.**

Psalm 73 is a picture of one walking the road of surrender. Though he saw many wicked people prospering, he nevertheless chose to stay on the right path—the only one that led to true life in the end. Read v.1-28 and answer the following questions:

How do these verses relate to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 7?
Scan back through the first part of the psalm. What was so frustrating to the psalmist?

Have you ever felt like that? What might make someone wonder whether the path with Jesus is really worth walking?

Look again at verses 16-17. What helped convince the psalmist that he was on the right road?

Why might meeting with the people of God to worship serve as a reminder that we are on the right road?

3) Finally, Jesus is letting us know **You Have to Choose** which path you will take in life.

Pastor Erik read from Matthew 7:24-27 in which Jesus describes the man who hear his words as “a sensible man who built his house on the rock.” How is choosing obedience in relationship with Jesus similar to building on a solid foundation? What kind of storms can it brave?

In what ways do you have to choose the narrow gate on a daily basis? How do those choices call you to be like Christ?

What area of your life is the most difficult to surrender? Why?

How might you daily remind yourself that surrender to Jesus is the right road to take?

**Application:**

There is no right or wrong way to make decisions, but there are consequences for the choices we make. Some consequences are immediate and temporary. Others affect us for years or even decades. Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 7:13-14 reveals the results of choices with eternal consequences. He explains that there are two ways—one through a wide gate that leads to destruction and the other through a narrow gate that leads to eternal life. The easy path is easy because it focuses on our desires and whims as our first priority. The hard way requires sacrifice but leads to eternal life. To walk the narrow and less-traveled road, our whole selves must be given over. Jesus requires absolute surrender. Like our song today, are you “going down the only road you’ve ever known?” Or will you surrender to Jesus and exit to the narrow road?

Close your time in prayer, asking God to give your group wisdom in their choices. Pray that God would reveal the eternal consequences of decisions and that they would choose the narrow gate. Thank God for sending Christ to model choosing the narrow gate. Pray that as a group you would become imitators of Christ, and pray for the discernment and perseverance it takes to follow Jesus on the narrow road that leads to life.
**Connect:**
Watch this YouTube video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0buwnMJRNY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0buwnMJRNY) If you saw yourself in any of those images, ask the Lord to show you the way to the narrow gate and surrender those things that are keeping you on the broad road.