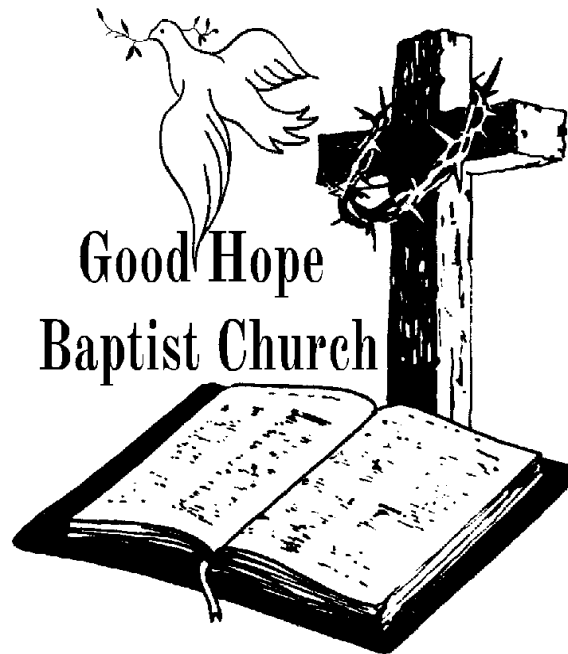


# Decision – Direction - Destiny

Matthew 7:13-14



Good Hope  
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

4038 Graham Sherron Rd  
Wake Forest, NC 27587

Pastor David Buffaloe  
Home 919-562-9456 Cell 919-600-4925  
online at bibleteacher.org

**FOCAL Read Responsively** Matthew 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: (14) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

**Mark Dice** (author of *The New World Order* and *The Illuminati*) recently did a “man about town” interview, asking people “**Why do we celebrate the Fourth of July?**” In the first interview he asked, “**Are we celebrating independence from Nazi Germany?**” The man he asked responded “**No, not Nazi Germany. ... From, I don't know, you're putting me on the spot, man. .... from the Civil War, the North and the South**”. Mark told the second person, a young woman in her twenties, “**We're approaching the Fourth of July. We celebrate Christopher Columbus founding this great country. What does the Fourth of July mean to you?**” With a straight face she agreed that this was the reason we celebrate the Fourth. He asked another young man, “**How many stars are on the American flag?**” He replied, “**I believe there's fifty two, fifty three, or fifty four**”. Two older ladies came up, appearing to be 40 or so years old. Mark asked “**Other than Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and Johnny Ringo, who else signed the Declaration of Independence in Tombstone?**” One lady replied, “**Was it Ben Franklin?**” A twenty-something black American woman came up and Mark said, “**July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776, Christopher Columbus discovered this incredible country, and we've celebrated every Fourth of July ever since?**” The lady said, “**Yeah ... for me it means freedom ... from**

**Mexico**". Mark said **"Is it weird that we set off fireworks made in Mexico to celebrate our independence from Mexico?"** The lady replied **"Well, we're friends now"**.

What is the Fourth of July about? It is a time to celebrate the liberty that God has given us in this great country. On **July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776** after many years of seeking fair government from Great Britain, the Continental Congress adopted a **Declaration of Independence**. This was a unanimous declaration of the – at that time - thirteen United States of America. The Declaration of Independence was written by and signed by God fearing and God following men. The Declaration states, and I quote:

**"When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."**

The Declaration of Independence goes on to charge the **King of Great Britain, King George III** with a number **"of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in**

**direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States"**. In those days those who held the Office of King were considered to be put in that Office by God Almighty. As such, to break away from Great Britain was not only considered treasonous, but also blasphemy against God. The Continental Congress addressed this by stating in the latter of the Declaration of Independence:

**"We therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions ...."**

Congress laid its Declaration of Independence at the feet of our Lord, **appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world**.

People have said that the United States is not a Christian nation. Regardless as to its state at this moment, America was founded by Christians. The first colony, **Plymouth Colony**, was **settled by Christians**. The framers of the **Declaration of Independence** and the **United States Constitution** were **Christians**. **George Washington** was a **Christian**, and wrote in his prayer journal:

**"Let my heart, therefore, gracious God, be so affected with the glory and majesty of (Thine honor) that I may not do mine own works, but wait on Thee, and discharge those weighty duties which Thou requirest of men"** (Peter Marshall, *The Light and The Glory*, pg 278)

**George Washington** also said:

**“The people know it is impossible to rightly govern without God and the Bible”** James L. Adams, *Yankee Doodle Went To Church*, pg 205

When **Ethan Allen**, leader of the **Green Mountain Boys** (militia from Vermont) attacked **Fort Ticonderoga on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1775** he ordered **British Captain De la Place** to surrender the Fort. When asked **“By what authority do you demand our surrender?”** Ethan Allen replied **“I demand it in the Name of the Great Jehovah, and the Continental Congress”**.

Our Country – regardless as to what politicians and newspapers may say – is founded on the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord never compelled anyone to choose to be a Christian. He said **“Follow Me”**, but never made one person follow Him. Christianity is a faith based on freedom of choice. When this country was founded, it's founding was not based on **“separation of Church and state”**. You will not find these words anywhere in our Constitution, though they are often parroted by foolish people who seek to denigrate Christianity. Our country was founded on the Bible, on the Lord, and on Christian principles. One of the chief of the principles of our faith is that *every person has the right and freedom to choose*. You may choose to believe Christ, or you may choose to disbelieve Christ. You may choose to heed the Holy Bible or the other so called religious texts. You have freedom of choice. **You can choose the strait gate and the narrow way of Christ, or you can choose the wide gate and broad way of the world.**

The decision you make will effect the direction your life takes. And the direction your life takes will ultimately determine your final destination. Our Founding Fathers chose wisely and, because of the decision they made, America was able – against all odds – to break away from Great Britain. Our Founding Fathers chose the way of Christ, and the Lord gave life to America! Choose life. Choose Christ!

## **1. You Have A Decision To Make**

**FOCAL** Matthew 7:13 **Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:**

**ILLUSTRATE** There are four million miles of highway in the United States. Some are good, some are bad. I watched a movie just the other day where a group of young people decided to go out into a desert. Before they entered the desert they saw a store, and in front of that store a sign that said, in big letters:

**"Last Stop For Water! No Water For 186 Miles!"**

If I had seen a sign like that, I believe I'd find another road. Instead these four young people made the choice to continue on their way with the four small bottles of water they had. As a result these people died horrible and lingering deaths in the desert.

A bad decision brings with it bad consequences!

**Word Study** Jesus tells us today "**Enter ye in at the strait gate**". The word translated "**strait**" is the Greek STENOS (στενος pronounced sten-os'), which means "**an area that is narrow because of obstacles that are placed about**".

**ILLUSTRATE STRAIT** You've seen a good illustration of this on the Interstate Highways, usually around the time that rush hour traffic is in effect. The road crews will, after spending a day watching one man work, finally decide to get busy. Two men will go out on a truck, one man driving and another dropping those *orange safety cones* you see. They'll start putting cones down a mile or so from where they plan on working. Then the cones will gradually come in, hopefully forcing even the most hard headed motorist into the one safe lane. Along with the cones there are signs that many people ignore. "Lane narrows in one mile .... Merge left". Some people will ignore the signs until the last minute. I have even seen people *run over the cones* and drive on the shoulder of the roads just to keep going their own way.

**FOCAL** Matthew 7:14 ... **strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**

**Word Study** "**Strait**" means "**narrow because of obstacles**". The word translated "**narrow**" is the Greek THLIBO (θλιβω pronounced thlee'-bo), which means "**a very small and narrow way**". The Way that leads to life is a *narrow way* with *numerous obstacles* that point you to it. What did Jesus mean by this?

It is YOUR decision to make, whether to wide road or the narrow, but God does everything He can to point you to the *narrow way*. What does God do to point you to Christ?

First of all, the Bible says:

**Romans 2:4** {Do you despise} **the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**

God has been good to you, and has been good to me. The Bible says that

**Matthew 5:45** {God} **maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**

a. God keeps on giving good to all. God has given each and every one of you good things. You have had in your lives blessing, and I dare say much more blessing than there has been cursing. The Lord blesses the farmer who loves Him, and blesses the farmer who curses His Name and plows the field while skipping Church. As a Pastor I have been to hospital rooms, praying with and for people who had little care for God while they were in good health. But once sickness comes they seek the Pastor, and beg the prayers of the Church. Then - lo and behold - the Lord heals them through the doctors and medicines. They leave, stop by the Church once to nod their head in appreciation, then go about their regular business of

living selfishly for themselves.

Jesus spoke of the foolish but rich farmer. He said:

**Luke 12:16-17 ... The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: (17) And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?**

The man received a blessed harvest - a wonderful abundance. **Rather than go to the Lord Who blessed him and say, "Lord, what would you have me do with this abundance?"** the man thought within himself. He became his own God. **"What shall I do, because I have no room to put my fruits"?**

The rich man's heart had no room for God, and his barn had no room for God's blessing. So he ignored his heart, and built a bigger barn. What happened? **God took his soul from his body, and left his fruit filled barns for others to use.**

**Luke 12:20-21 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? (21) So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.**

Oh how foolish to receive the blessings of God, to see the signs that point to Him, and never choose the narrow way!

b. God not only keeps on giving of His goodness, but He

also uses suffering and pain to draw us to His side. A trial or a trouble is not a bad thing if it leads you to Jesus' side.

Take a moment, and look in the Scripture. Most of the people who came to follow Jesus came because of their infirmities.

As the Beloved **John the Baptist** lay in an unjustly imposed prison cell he sent word to the Lord Jesus. **"Jesus, are you the One, or should we look for another?"**

I do not pray that you all be healthy. No, I pray that you could all come to that place where you have to look up. People are saved when, stripped of pride, unjustly accused, in pain, without a friend it seems in the world, they come to the Lord Jesus. **Jesus, are You the One? Are You the Messiah? I'm in pain, Lord, and I'm so lonely in this place. Is it You? Is it You?** How did Jesus answer?

**Luke 7:22-23 ... tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. (23) And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.**

The rich are rarely saved, for they rely on their riches and on their own strength. The Bible says:

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh,**

not many mighty, not many noble, are called: (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Many choose the **wide gate and broad way**. They choose Jesus along with many other gods and goddesses. They choose their own works, their own riches, their own wisdom, their own nobility.

But if you were to look back over your lives you would see many times when something miraculous happened. Someone intervened. Someone helped you. That Someone is God!

## 2. The Decision You Make Effects The Direction You Take

**FOCAL** Matthew 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: (14) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The decisions you make *always* effects the direction of your life. Listen, Beloved:

Once you decide, your decisions begin to decide for

you.

What do I mean by that? Decisions take on a life all their own. Decide to step off the top of a ten story building, and you are then committed to that decision. Jesus said:

**FOCAL** Matthew 7:13 .... broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Many have followed the **broad way** of the world, and have destroyed their lives. Some have followed the **broad way in sexual experimentation**. They have thought, “What could one time matter?” You can contract AIDS or HIV from one encounter with an infected individual. A young girl says “yes” when she should have said “no”, and now compounds the sin by **aborting her child**. Some have followed the **broad way in drug experimentation**. They tried Methamphetamines or some other illegal drug, and now are *hopelessly enslaved* to that which they tried. Others have taken the **broad way in chasing riches and fame**, and now find themselves enslaved to that which they sought.

The Narrow Way of Christ Jesus is the most desirable gate to enter, for this gate alone leads to Life!

**FOCAL** Matthew 7:14 ... Because **strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,**

Please notice that **the gate is strait and the WAY is narrow**. If you are born again, you are called by God to

walk a *narrow way*. You walk the way that Christ walked, because Christ is in you. It is inconceivable - and certainly unscriptural - that a born again Christian perpetually walk the broad way. It just doesn't work that way! Salvation is freely given by Almighty God, but once you are saved God **works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure**. The Bible says:

**Isaiah 35:8-10** And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. (9) No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: (10) And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The narrow way is a joy filled way, a holy way, a way the Redeemed walk, for the Redeemed walk with their Lord.

The Narrow Way is a Clean Way, not a Filthy Way. It is a Certain Way, not an Uncertain Way. It is a Clear Way, not a Convolutated Way. It is a Confident and Cheerful Way, for it is the Way of Christ!

Oh that every person would come to Jesus Christ and be saved! Jesus Christ is the home of the Christian, the rest upon which we lean. He feeds our souls, and carries us through the harshest of times. Men often ask where the

**Gate of Eden** is, wanting to go to the place that Adam was thrown from.

The Gate of Eden is Jesus Christ our Lord. To rest in Him is all the Eden a soul could ask for. In Jesus we find a home. In Jesus we find peace. In Jesus we are released from the slavishness of this world. In Jesus I have not only Eternal Life, but I have a better life right now. The Bible says:

**1 Corinthians 7:22-23** For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. (23) Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

The only truly free person is the person walking in the Narrow Way of Christ. So many people are *enslaved to peer pressure*, and do foolish things because others expect it.

A dead fish can go with the flowing river – but the Living Children of the Living God can go against the current trends and foolishness of this dead world.

Jesus has promised those who believe in Him:

**John 10:10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

What a great joy it is to be saved by Jesus Christ!

### **3. Come To The Lord Jesus Christ Now With Empty Hands and Open Hearts**

We read in another place:

**Luke 13:24-28** Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. (25) When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: (26) Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. (27) But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. (28) There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

a. Some will never enter Heaven, for they will wait too long. They will keep saying “Tomorrow, tomorrow – I’ll call upon the Name of Jesus tomorrow”. When your life ends, the **Master of the House will have risen up, and will shut the door.**

God is the Great “I Am”, the constant TODAY. Those who would be saved but who cry out TOMMORROW can not serve the Eternal God of TODAY!

The Bible says:

**2 Corinthians 6:2** ... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

b. Others will put off salvation because of pride.

**ILLUSTRATE** I remember once taking my children to a park, and there was a little child sized house there. My kids could walk right in without stooping at all. But if I wanted to go in, I had to go in on my knees.

If you want to enter into Heaven, you can only enter on your knees. **Narrow is the gate.** The doorpost is low. **You must enter as a little child.**

c. Others will never be saved for they are trying to earn their way into Heaven by their own goodness. A rich young ruler came to Jesus saying:

**Matthew 19:16** ... Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

This young man went away when Jesus told him:

**Matthew 19:21** ... If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

You must stoop to enter through the narrow gate. Jesus stooped. He stooped from the glory of Heaven, to come to this earth. While here He lived, suffered, and gave Himself for you and I. **He humbled Himself, even unto the death of the Cross. He made Himself of no**

reputation.

You must stoop. You **must recognize yourself as a sinner in need of the Savior**. There are many who will not be saved because they feel themselves to be good enough of their own accord.

d. Yet others will be lost because they will trust in their position in society rather than in the Lord Jesus.

**ILLUSTRATE** I heard once of a very wealthy woman who, on her deathbed, called her minister to her side. She asked, “**Do you think sir, that when I am in Heaven, such a person as my maid Betty will be in the same place that I am in? I could never endure her company there! She's a good servant in her way, but I'm sure that I couldn't put up with her in Heaven.**” The Pastor replied, “**No Madam, I do not think you will ever be in the same place Betty is going**”.

The Bible says:

**Psalms 49:6-8 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; (7) None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (8) (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever:)**

Our pride must be put away if we are going to be saved. The rich man need not glory in his wealth. The noble man need not glory in his nobility. **Let him that**

**glories, glory in the Lord!**

e. Others still will not be saved, for they will not surrender their sin to God.

**ILLUSTRATE** To enter another country you must go through a Customs Inspector who will look for contraband. You cannot bring that which is forbidden into another land. Dear friend, if you are going to be saved, you must **repent! Turn your sin over to the Lord Jesus, and ask Him to dispose of it for you!**

Jesus Christ never saves us in our sins – He saves us from our sins. No sick person says to the Doctor, “Doc, I'd like to be well, but I want to keep my fever”. Absolutely not! He says, “Doc, I'm sick. Please give me something to get rid of this fever!”

No, we must come to Jesus with empty hands, laying our entire lives down at His feet. Then He, the Great Physician, will save us to the uttermost. We need only bring one thing to the Lord in order to be saved: **Our thirst.**

Come to Him thirsty. Come to Him with empty hands. Come to Him believing that He, the Lord Jesus Christ, is able. Jesus Christ is that Narrow Way:

**Revelation 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.**

The Alpha and Omega, Eternal God in human flesh, calls unto you. Come believing on Him, repenting of your sins, and be saved!

**ILLUSTRATE** In Chicago there is a night club that is called "The Gates of Hell", and just down the road from it a Church called "Calvary". A man was trying to find his way to the night club, so he stopped a passing police officer and asked him for directions. The policeman - a Christian - said "Just stay on this broad way. Just ahead of you is Calvary. Go past Calvary - just keep on going - and you will easily find the Gates of Hell.

If you want to find the Gates of Hell, just keep on going down that Broad Way that leads to destruction. My prayer, however, is that you turn to the Lord Jesus Christ today and be saved!

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



**FOCAL Read Responsively** Matthew 7:13-14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: **(14) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**

**1. You Have A Decision To Make**

Matthew 7:13; Romans 2:4; Matthew 5:45; Luke 12:16-17; Luke 12:20-21; Luke 7:22-23; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

**Word Study** Jesus tells us today "Enter ye in at the strait gate". The word translated "strait" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Word Study** The word translated "narrow" is the Greek THLIBO (θλιβω pronounced thlee'-bo), \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- a. God keeps on giving \_\_\_\_\_
- b. God not only keeps on giving of His goodness, but He also uses \_\_\_\_\_

**2. The Decision You Make Effects  
The Direction You Take**

Matthew 7:13-14; Isaiah 35:8-10; 1 Corinthians 7:22-23; John 10:10

Once you decide, your decisions begin to decide for you.

**3. Come To The Lord Jesus Christ Now  
With Empty Hands and Open Hearts**

Luke 13:24-28; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Matthew 19:16; Matthew 19:21; Psalms 49:6-8; Revelation 21:6

- a. Some will never enter Heaven, for \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Others will put off salvation because \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Others will never be saved for they are trying to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Yet others will be lost because they \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e. Others still will not be saved, for they will not \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_