

The Narrow Gate: What did Jesus mean by the “few”?

Have you ever wondered what Jesus meant when he talked about the narrow gate? Or how many actually will be included in the “few” mentioned in Matthew 7:13-14?

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

What is your understanding of these verses? _____
_____.

As we think about this passage, we want to know at least three things. First, what is the gate? Second, how many will be allowed through the gate, the “few”? And third, how will I know if I am worthy of being one of the “few”?

The problem with this rational approach to Jesus’s declaration is we limit the spiritual dimension of His message. So, let’s look at the spiritual side for answers to these questions. When asked, “*Lord, will only a few people be saved?*” {Luke 13:23}, Jesus did not answer the question directly. Instead, he said, “*Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*” {Luke 13:24}. Jesus asks us to open our hearts to Him, to recognize ourselves as sinners, in need of His salvation, His forgiveness, His love, needing the humility to accept His mercy and to be renewed by Him.

Pope Francis, spoke about this passage as the Gate of Faith. He said it is not important to know how many are saved, but rather, it is important to know what the path of salvation is. Jesus tells us that there is a gate that allows us to enter into God's family, into the warmth of the house of God, of communion with Him. **This gate is Jesus himself.** “*I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.*” {John 10:9b} He is the gateway to salvation. By following his example, He will lead us to the Father. ([Pope Francis Explains the Gate of Faith and Why Jesus Speaks of a Narrow Gate? - Europe - International - News - Catholic Online](#))

How do we know when we get to the gate we will be among the “few”? If we are following Christ, we will find our way through the narrow gate. This is the way of the cross. It’s not about physical narrowness, but rather the demanding journey toward eternal life. If we strive to honor God through our words and actions, **the gate that is Jesus is never closed, it is open to all! It is only limited by not recognizing ourselves as sinners and asking God for help.** God’s love is open to all His children, not just Catholics or Christians, but all humanity.

At this point, we’ve answered the first two questions: what is the gate and how many will be allowed through? Now let’s look at question three from a spiritual basis. How will I know if I am worthy of being one of the “few”?

Do you sometimes feel you are not worthy of God’s love? Maybe you feel like the centurion when he said, “*Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof.*” {Matthew 8:8} If so, it may be because you don’t fully understand God’s love for you. We feel this way, not because God thinks we’re unworthy, but because we’ve created this sense of unworthiness in our minds. Where did that self-concept come from? Can you remember a time in your life when someone said you were not good enough? You couldn’t do anything right? Despite these remembrances, how do you think God sees you? _____.

God has much to say about our worth and our value in the Bible. In the first book of the Bible, God says **we are made in His image**, the very image of God. {Genesis 1:26-27} We're also told **we are God's own possession**, chosen for the praise of His glory, and that **we have an inheritance** in heaven with Him as His children. {Ephesians 1:13-14} **We are worthy! Wow!**

These phrases all have one thing in common: they are things done to us or for us by God. Not things we have done for ourselves, earned or deserved. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding [feelings]."* {Proverbs 3:5} God encourages us to understand that *"You are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you."* {Isaiah 43:4} So, who are you to trust? Your feelings or God's Word? _____.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if once we answered the question, "Why does God think I'm worthy?", we could be free from having to answer it again and again. Yes, but that's not realistic. Even St. Paul, 20 years after his conversion, cried out, *"Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"* {Romans 7:24} The way he was able to move forward was trusting in God's love for him, knowing he was God's own possession. *"Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* {Romans 7:25} And that's what you need to do, **trust Jesus!**

Reflective questions:

1. What makes the wide road appealing? _____

2. Knowing that God loves you and that you are striving to serve Him, can you be one of the "few"? Why or why not? _____

3. Is there something you need to change to be sure you're on the narrow path? _____

