**Life is a Journey**

**The Word**

Read together Matthew 7:13-14

**The Big Idea**

Rather than thinking of the Christian life as a single transaction, Jesus invites us to consider life with him as a journey with a gate, a path, and a destination. He invites us into a life that has difficulties and challenges and requires us letting go of our pride and self-sufficiency, but in the end he invites us into an eternal life of joy.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Jesus’ image of the narrow gate/path is one with which many of us are familiar. How did Sunday’s message add to or even change your understanding of Jesus’ image?

2. On Sunday we talked about the “path” of following Jesus as being both a difficult and joyful path. Where specifically are you experiencing the difficulties of following Jesus, and where are you experiencing the joys of following Jesus at this time in your life?

3. Sunday’s message ended with the idea that the “path” is not optional but is absolutely a necessary part of reaching our destination. This idea challenges the common American church notion that getting to heaven is just about “praying the prayer.” How do you respond to the idea that the path is absolutely necessary? What questions/issues does that raise for you?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. The Christian life is a journey

A. The Christian life is not simply isolated events. Salvation is not a single transaction. Life is a marathon.

B. There is a starting point (“conversion” = the “narrow gate”)

C. There is the journey itself (“sanctification = the “narrow path”)

D. There is the destination (“heaven” = “life”)

II. Jesus’ metaphor in Matthew 7

A. The Wide gate

1. It’s easy to get through. You can take all the baggage you want. You don’t have to get rid of anything to go through this gate

2. There are many who go through this gate

3. But this gate leads to destruction

B. The narrow gate

1. It’s difficult to get through. You have to leave baggage behind at this gate.

2. There are few who find it. The majority will reject it.

3. This gate leads to life (and at the end, there will be innumerable travelers who will be there (a “great multitude” –Reve 7:9)

III. Two questions that must be repeatedly asked

A. Must we go through this narrow gate? Is conversion necessary?

1. Answer: Yes! Ultimately, Jesus himself is the gate (see John 10:9)

2. At certain times, in history, this aspect of the journey must be emphasized

B. Must we travel the path? Is discipleship necessary for salvation or simply optional?

1. Many people treat it as though it were optional (Ex. “I’ve got my get-out-of-hell-free card and I can live however I want” or “I prayed the prayer once so I must be a Christian”)

2. The path of sanctification is as crucial as the gate of justification. This is the clear message of Scripture (see warning passages such as Matt 24:13; Col 1:23; Heb 12:14)

3. At certain times (such as our times today), the necessity of the journey must be emphasized