

The Narrow Gate: The Path Where Man Finds Himself

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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:¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Matthew 7:13, 14, KJV).

In these two compact verses, we find a profound reality. There are two gates: one is strait, the other is wide. There are two roads: one is narrow and occupied by a few, the other is broad and well-populated. There are two results: life for those found on the narrow path and destruction for the many that are on the broad one. It behooves us to fasten our minds around the meaning of these two verses that we might know the interpretation; and that knowing it, we might give all diligence to choose the road least travelled and stay on it.

H. Leo Boles in his work entitled MATTHEW (published by the Gospel Advocate Company in 1936) had these remarks that provoke thoughtful meditation.

The way of life is entered through a narrow gate. The pathway to life is hedged and hindered by many difficulties and troubles. It must be walked with care and watchfulness, lest the way be missed and evil befall us. The way of life is a plain and simple way, but there are obstacles and difficulties in man's tendencies to go his own way that hinder his walking this pathway with safety.

The idea that Christianity is easy is unfounded in truth. One might remember the prophetic utterances regarding our Lord which spoke of his difficulties on earth.

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.⁴ Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. (Isaiah 53:3-5, 7).

The road less travelled will be the one where you will find those who choose to live godly. Lovers of one's enemies will occupy the narrow road. The pure in heart will walk this path. Those who continue in the words of Christ will walk this way. Those who do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly nor stand in the way of sinners nor sit in the seat of the scornful will be on this road that is narrow. Those who are constantly at war with the works of the flesh (that is to say who battle against being overcome by those things spoken of Paul in Galatians 5:19-21) have found the strait gate and are on the narrow path leading to life.

The narrow gate is definitely unattractive to the natural man. Glimpsing through it he sees persecutions and tribulations that have overtaken the few who have made their way through it. He sees what he considers those unfortunate souls bowed down by the weight of trouble; he sees faces awash with tears because of the transformation process; he sees some crawling to the end goal which is some incredible distance away. He now considers his own station. He is standing on his feet. His face is tearless. He looks around him and finds numerous souls who are laughing and walking down a broad path that is decorated on either side by what appears to be trees fit for a Garden of Eden containing all manner of fruit. The sun is out and the breeze is balmy and welcoming. What is not realized by those walking on this broad path is that farther down the road the laughter will turn to sorrow, the attractive trees will become ugly vines filled with the fruit of bitterness and woe, and the sunshine will turn to darkness and the balmy breeze will turn wintry offering hardly any visibility in all directions.

Had the man stayed at the narrow gate long enough, he would have seen those souls who were overtaken by persecutions and tribulations rise to their feet, straighten their backs and move forward. He would have seen those faces washed with tears changed to faces beaming with hope furnished through that transformational process that turns problems into perseverance and trouble into triumph. He would have seen that each person on that narrow and dangerous road had company. If he knew his bible he would know that the same one who was with the Hebrews in the furnace in the Book of Daniel was with those on this road. It was his hand that was lifting them up from their bowed condition. It was his words that turned their tears to shouts of joy. It was the knowledge of his presence that gave them feet like mountain goats to navigate the high and narrow passage. It was his presence that lighted their pathway so that everything was illuminated. Yes, the “natural” man would have seen this had he stayed. Now he is in the wintry storm where the visibility is zero, and although there are many people on the road with him, he is alone in his misery. Let us pray that the visibility will return to those who are on the broad path that they may shout with David---***I thought about my ways, and turned my feet to your testimonies. I made haste, and did not delay to keep your commandment (Psalms 119:59, 60).***