

Matthew 7:13-14 *Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

THE CROSSROADS OF LIFE

Yogi Berra once said, in his tongue-in-cheek manner, “*If you come to a fork in the road ... take it!*” It has been said that life is a series of choices and subsequent decisions. Some choices have little consequence and most have some degree of consequence, but not life-changing. But there are a few choices and decisions that have major, life-changing consequence.



One such life-changing choice would be: Should I marry and if so, whom? Our choice of career path would be another. But the most critical, life-changing choice and decision of all is whether or not we follow Jesus as our Lord. For this is the fork in the road that either leads to eternal life with God or eternal separation from God. We must not ignore it, and we must choose wisely, for it is literally the decision between heaven and hell forever. There is no more critical fork along life's road.

Matthew 16:24-26 [Jesus:] *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he loses the whole world and forfeits his soul?”*

THE TWO GATES

This critical life's decision or “fork in the road” is what Jesus refers to in his Sermon on the Mount as “the narrow gate” or “the wide gate.” The narrow gate is the entrance to life, and the wide gate is the entrance to destruction.

The “narrowness” of this gate refers to the following:

1. **One person at a time** - like a turnstile. Each person must make his own decision regarding Jesus as Lord. You can't make the decision for another, or force the decision upon another. And choose we will, for ignoring is choosing.
2. **This is God's only option for eternal life.** God gets to make the rules – and His rules say this is the only way – the narrow way.
3. **God is speaking truth, not rigidity.** Think of this message of “narrowness” as a loving disclosure of truth, rather than a rigid message of exclusion to the many. $2 + 2 = 4$ is extremely rigid. That the sum is only 4 is “narrow” – but it is also the only truth.
4. **Jesus, God in the flesh, is the only “gate” or “door.”** Many see this as hyper-exclusive, but if Jesus is indeed the divine Son of God, as He claimed to be on multiple occasions and with multiple miraculous signs, it makes sense that the only way to God is through God.

Jesus as the only way to God, to eternal life and to heaven is a clearly taught Biblical truth:

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

1 Timothy 1:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

John 10: 7, 9 Jesus said to them ... “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who come before me are thieves and robbers ... I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved ... “

In the brief earthly ministry of Jesus the Christ He spoke often about His being the only way and the “I AM” of heaven come down to mankind.

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever ...

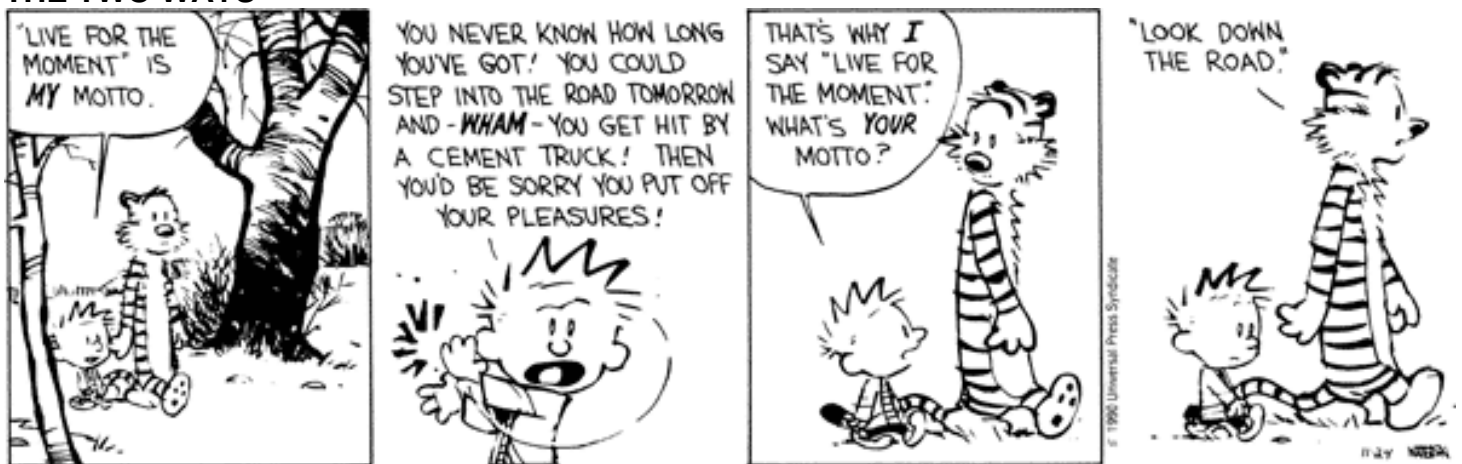
John 8:12 I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 11:25 I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?

Who could make these claims this in truth and not be “God with us” – our “Emmanuel”?!

THE TWO WAYS



If one enters through the wide gate – choosing any other gate but the narrow gate of Jesus – he finds that the way becomes wide and “comfortable” – allowing virtually every pleasure as acceptable. But this wide road is just a “trick” to keep you off the road that leads you home. For this wide, comfortable, road is heading for eternal destruction. There are signs along the way that seem to say “whatever is done on this road stays on this road” but it is a lie. For the Lord God knows all, and all will come to judgment in the end.

Other signs say “all you need is love” – but the love it speaks of is the free love of acceptance and tolerance for all and any deviant behavior. There are a lot of people on this road, and they seem to be happy on the outside, but inside they are often fearful, unconfident, lost, alone and searching for something they can’t even articulate. And any mention of that other narrow gate and other narrow road is usually met with scorn and quick change of subject.

Remember that joyfully “searching for fun” and “meaning” is not necessarily being on the right track.

Explorers are we, intrepid and bold,
Out in the wild, amongst wonders untold,
Equipped with our wits, a map, and a snack,
We're searching for fun and we're on the right track



But consider now the way that unfolds once one enters through the narrow gate of Jesus as Lord. It is a narrow way. The “narrowness” of this way refers to the following:

- 1. The way to heaven is difficult** – with many expectations. The “narrowness” is because of God’s gracious boundaries to keep us safe from ourselves and from the world. It is the correct path to heaven – but never the “easy” way
- 2. The way to heaven is dangerous** – the devil is active and temptations abound. The devil is pleased with the path of those on the wide way, but he is bound and determined to put those on the narrow way onto a “detour.” The enemy distracts with “stuff” (lust of the eyes), “physical pleasures” (lust of the flesh) and “worldly success” (the pride of life).
- 3. The way to heaven is straight** – with comparative ease of travel. Yes the narrow way is difficult and dangerous, but it is STRAIGHT. And when followed with faith in the Lord, it is the “shortest distance between two points” – that is, it is a wonderful and joyous road, with relative “ease of travel” when distractions are avoided and eyes are kept on the Lord of the road.

Proverbs 3:5-6 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

The New Testament writers used the metaphor of the Christian “walk” often to speak of this narrow, spiritual path that leads to heaven. Whereas the wide way of destruction has the motto of “Anything goes,” the narrow way favors “May God’s will be done.” Here are some of the New Testament author’s references to the Christian “walk”:

Ephesians

4:1 ... Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.

4:17 ... walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk in the futility of their mind ...

5:1 ... and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you

5:15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise ...

Galatians 5:16 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh ...*

Romans 8:4 ... do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit

1 John 1:6-7 *If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus the Son cleanses us from all sin.*

We must let go of the life we have planned, so as to accept the one that is waiting for us.

**I may not have gone where I intended to go,
but I think I have ended up where I needed to be**
Douglas Adams



A FEW FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. **“Destruction” is not annihilation.** The Bible teaches that those on the wide road of destruction will exist forever – but apart from God. That means apart from hope, love, comfort, pleasure, freedom, joy and all the rest that comes with the glorious package of God’s eternal life.
2. **Detours off God’s path rob us of blessing.** Imagine falling to a temptation on the road to heaven and taking a detour, wandering off the road to do “your own thing.” Once you finally wake up to your stupidity, repent, and travel back to God’s path again, don’t think that you return to where you left off. Rather, you will resume further along the path, having missed multiple blessings and opportunities. You will return forgiven & cleaned but having missed out.
3. **“Few” will be saved and “many” will be lost.** We can speculate as to what the percentage is, but Jesus used these very words to teach us the urgency of the call to enter the narrow gate. I think there are many on the road to destruction who sincerely believe they are on the narrow road to heaven. The remainder of the sermon calls us to wise discernment.
4. **There is no “third choice.”** For years Bob Barker called people out of his audience to choose door #1, door #2 or door #3 on “The Price Is Right.” Jesus only gives 2 choices.
5. **Those on the wide way still have a choice.** Those truly on the narrow way cannot turn back, but no so for the wide way. Gladly, through this life God leaves the call open to enter the narrow gate and get on the right way to heaven.

In one sincere moment of faith each must choose the “narrow gate” of Jesus, or enter the “wide gate” of atheism, agnosticism, spiritualism, humanism, religiosity or all the other non-Jesus options of life. **CHOOSE JESUS!** Today is the day of salvation! Repent of your sin, die to self, accept Jesus as the Savior of your soul who died on the cross for you and rose from the dead victorious over death. Know that as you enter this narrow but God-provided gate, you will never turn back. God will not allow it. It is all or nothing.

There is no “trying out” God, like trying on a pair of shoes. It is total commitment. It’s like stepping off a cliff in faith, but into the loving arms of God. It is being “born again” of the Spirit. It is being regenerated from spiritual death to spiritual life. It is becoming a brand new person with the old things going out and all new things coming in. And you will never be the same again – for you have seen Jesus for who He is – Savior, Anointed One, Son of God, Divine and the Lord of the universe and of your life. Welcome into the “narrow gate” of eternal life!