

Enter through the Narrow gate



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“How hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! But not with God; for all things are possible with God.”

Mark 10:24, 27

Enter through the narrow gate

“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.”

Matt 7:13-14

‘Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.”

John 10:7-9 NIV

The narrow gate Jesus spoke of was probably the one called the Sheep Gate which passed through Jerusalem’s city wall. It was called this because it led out to the sheep markets where lambs were bought to be taken into the Temple to be sacrificed by the High Priest for each man’s sins. Now we know Jesus was the “*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29) This narrow gate is also likely to be the one through which Jesus went out to Golgotha to be crucified for the sins of the whole world. Therefore Jesus is both our Lamb and our great High Priest who

offered Himself up as God's holy sacrifice, and now intercedes for us with God.

The narrow gate is difficult to enter

Now it is our turn to enter the narrow gate and offer our bodies as *a living sacrifice*. Rom 12:1

The narrow gate comes at the end of a narrow pathway which leads to eternal life. The narrow way is different from the broad way of the world which allows its travellers to take anything they fancy along with them. The narrow way is naturally so because it is a way of separation from the world and the things of the world; it causes its travellers to rid themselves of anything that is inconsistent with the life of Christ in the will of God our Father. The narrow way therefore requires the pilgrim to divest themselves of any excess baggage of the world which has no place in the kingdom of God. The narrow way requires removing any clutter of the world from the mind so that no other opinion is carried about life but that which is consistent with the will of God.

The narrow way is not meant to be an easy passage, for it is for training in holiness as the way of transforming a natural man into a holy child of God. The narrow way is therefore always difficult to walk unless there is an ongoing trust in God to

provide His power to assist in a successful journey. The narrow way naturally requires obedience, determination and perseverance, for its goal is the life of Christ made alive in the life of the pilgrim.

The narrow way is a refining fire which burns away the dross of the world and the sinful ways of natural man so that the pilgrim will gleam like pure gold. The narrow way can only be walked with eyes on the light of Christ in the heart, so that there is a gradual purging of any darkness hidden in the soul.

For this purpose the narrow way passes through many distractions to test for faithfulness and to improve character. While walking on the narrow path the pilgrim will see many beautiful flowers beside the path; so beautiful and enticing that they are hard to resist, so close by but also just out of reach from the path of righteousness.

The beauty of flowers appearing so close but just off the solid ground encourages the over confident to leave the path just for a moment to reach for and grasp this object of desire. But the beautiful thing desired of the heart is just a little further than first imagined, and soon the narrow path is further away than safety allows. Having left the safety of the path to reach the object of beauty, the ground

becomes a perilous bog which then falls away to a dreadful slope of despair.

The only solid ground of eternal security is on the narrow path, and must be walked in the light of Christ according to the power of His Spirit working in us as we rely on nothing else but the work of Christ for us and in us to make us to be just like Him.

The beautiful flowers on the side are the product of the world's garden. They look like a bigger house, a bigger car, a bigger boat, another holiday, another degree, another opinion, a different plan, a higher mountain, a delicious meal, a religious experience, a sensual pleasure, a bigger endowment, a beautiful woman, a handsome man, a beneficial foundation, and all types of glamorous apparel.

All that is in the world may look beautiful but it is all but dust. All the flowers will wither and dry and be blown away as if they never existed. Nothing in the world is ultimately satisfying or promises real security in the hereafter for those who seek eternal life. It is the Father's plan for our good that when we are dissatisfied enough to be desperate enough to die to self enough to the world and its beautiful flowers, God will hear our plea for help and help with a solution of His own.

Our cross is our key to the narrow gate

The narrow way is joined by taking up the key of the cross of self sacrifice in an attitude of absolute surrender to God in denying the world and the things of the world as having any purpose or meaning in our life with God. The narrow way is the way of Christ and His Church which must be walked in the same manner as He walked. The narrow way is able to be walked with Him by His cleansing of sin, by a new birth according to His divine nature, and the empowering of His indwelling Spirit.

The narrow way cannot be walked by a natural man according to natural abilities, for this way of the cross is foolishness to him. A natural man may only pretend to walk on the defining path when he wants to gain the acceptance of men by putting on a religious outer garment. Those who are on the narrow way will trust in the promise of God that we may be like His Son. But on the broad way Satan whispers that you have to take things into your own hand and work it out for yourself.

The narrow path God calls us to walk by His power is His plan for our deliverance. It is one of surrender to the cross of Christ, for without surrender there is no repentance. It is one of obedience for without obedience there is no faith.

It is one on service, for without service we are just hearers of the word and do nothing to really please God in overcoming the work of Satan's garden. The narrow gate permits none but the servant heart of obedience that has given up all to gain all of Christ to the glory of God.

The narrow gate comes at the end of the narrow path that Jesus walked. He calls us to follow Him and walk as He walked. When we surrender in obedience to serve Him we will find that God will do in us what is impossible for a man of the flesh to achieve. The narrow way is the way home into the living presence of God in His Kingdom, where the faithful who follow Christ in obedience will receive their crown of Glory.

Jesus has said to those who follow Him *"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 8:12) Those who follow Jesus on the way to the narrow gate will not be deceived by the darkness of the world. Those who follow Him are to go into the world of men *"to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."*

Acts 26:18

The narrow way has many obstacles

From Satan's perspective, the beautiful flowers and the exquisite fruit growing in the garden of the world on the side of the road are there to hold men in his power so that they ignore God who is the giver of life in the Spirit. They are there to entice everyone to satisfy the flesh of their fallen human nature. But the world and the things of the world cannot be taken into eternity. Eternity holds either eternal death and darkness and the gnashing of teeth for those who walk the broad way, or eternal life bathed in the light of the Spirit giving glory to God in His Kingdom for those who enter through the narrow gate.

Some may think that a little excursion from the narrow way is not such a big problem if you intent to get back on track. However according to the Lord there are only the two options available to man. *"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."* We are either going through the narrow gate or we are on the broad way that leads to destruction.

A little excursion not only dishonours the pilgrim but also dishonours Jesus who gives the gift of His

life in exchange for our death. A little excursion is saying we desire the darkness more than the light.

The narrow gate requires perseverance

Therefore to remain steadfastly on the narrow path requires our single minded faithfulness if we are ever going to enter into our heavenly home to live with God. The beautiful flowers along the way are the forbidden fruit of Satan's garden that deceives the soul, and blinds it into choosing a life of being separated from God to eternal destruction.

Therefore the narrow gate is not for those who haven't counted the cost. The narrow way is not for those who do not seek God's Kingdom with all their hearts and strength.

The narrow way is for all those who hate their life in the world, who are convicted of their sin and are willing to lay down their life and take up their cross so that they can be blessed with all the promises of God. The narrow way is for those who would walk with God so that one day they will be like Christ. Do not look to the right or to the left but look to Christ who is our gate to eternal life.

The Lord Jesus said, *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish."*

John 10:27-28