

"THE STRAIGHT GATE"

Matt. 7:13-14

INTRODUCTION

To every man there openeth
 A way and ways and a way,
 And the high soul takes the high way,
 And the low soul gropes the low
 And in between on the misty ~~fx~~ flats,
 The rest drift ~~xxx~~ to and fro.

But to every man there openeth
 A high way and a low
 And every man decideth
 The way his soul shall go.

Jesus said, "There are two ways before men." Two paths. Enter ye
 in ~~k~~ at the straight gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth
 to destruction. Jesus says there is a choice. There is a straight gate which has
 a narrow way and few ~~xxxxx~~ people enter or find it. Then there is the broad way
 which many travel and continue on to destruction.

This is a very striking statement. In V. 13, 14. It is very crucial.

Here we can safely say that Jesus is rounding off the Sermon on the Mount. He is
 making indeed a great application of the theme of judgment. And he is going to ~~xx~~ say

*Mail answered the phone
 Hello, that's right & hung up -
 3 times -
 Judge said main - strange
 conversation - tell me what
 about -
 when I say hello - (person says
 its long distance to atlanta
 you -)
 I say sure is & long by -
 Judge, any fool knows its
 long distance from here to
 atlanta -*

three different things as I see it to every person. First, he is going to talk to you about the entrance. It is very narrow. Second, he is going to talk to you about the road way. It ~~is~~ continues narrow. And third he is going to speak to you about the end of the road. Its conclusion is narrow.

I. The entrance is narrow

Now there are fanatics who would say that there are lots of highways which they can open up. ~~There~~ They are religious trail-blazers we might call them. They chart new courses, new ways, like a pioneer going across the ocean or across the mountains.

But here is a decision that a man must make. I think somehow Jesus must have had in mind some scripture.

Duet. 30:15 - 19. "See I have set before thee this day light and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God to walk in his ways." And he goes on to say that I ~~can~~ call heaven and earth to record this this day.

In Jer. 21:8, the prophet said, "Thus saith the Lord, behold I have set before you the way of life, and the way of death."

Psalm 1 - "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the way of the ungodly."

The entrance to life and to this road, ~~is~~ this narrow road, is very

It's very straight. When a man comes to the age of accountability two gates swing open. The gate that leads to salvation and the gate that leads to destruction. ~~disruption~~. You are to choose your own entrance which will lead to a place of good or a place of bad.

Jesus called upon men to enter at the narrow gate.

This narrow gate we might simply say is that verse of scripture in John's gospel in which Jesus pointed to Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again." This is the narrow gate and this is the question that people are always asking. How can I be saved? And Jesus says, "Strive." This is a very small door and the pathway is not crowded. Jesus said that we were to strive and to agonize to enter into this door. And everything in life it takes discipline. For example surgery takes six or eight years of preparation for a lifetime of work. It is very strange that people are unwilling to pay for Christlikeness, even part of the price they pay to become athletes, scientists, or physicians. They must forego many roads in order to walk one narrow way. And to enter into Christlikeness one must surrender the unChristlike things. A discipline is required to enter into the kingdom, and the road is very narrow.

Jesus said that there were few that be saved, and another time he said Many will say unto me Lord, Lord, and will not enter, will not be able to enter.

So your first business is to see that you are saved.

Jesus had a way of focusing the attention of men upon the things that were immediate and personal and were real. He did not make any speculation here, about this.

You remember when Peter asked the Lord, "What shall this man do?" Jesus said unto him, "If I will that he tarry until I come, what is that to thee?" Follow thou me." So the main concern of Peter was not what John was going to do, but the main concern was for himself.

You remember another occasion, the disciples asked Jesus, Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? And he told them, It is ~~xxx~~ not for you to know the times and the seasons, but you are to be interested in doing your part, the present duties. All the way through history, man has been interested and speculating ~~xxx~~ on questions such as the date ~~x~~ of the second coming of Christ, the fate of the heathen, will we know ~~w~~ each other in heaven, and many other questions. But Jesus always would point a man's mind ~~xx~~ not to speculation, but upon that which is real. Here is a door that lies before you, here is a straight gate, and Jesus said there are few people that are going to be saved and will enter this.

Now the word "strive" is a root word from agonize. You will have to agonize if you pass through the narrow gate that leads to your heavenly home.

A mother can testify that suffering takes place when the little one is born. There is always suffering and agony when a man is born into this world, and the same is true when one is born again, when one becomes a Christian. There is a certain amount of agony in the breaking away from Satan and from sin.

I remember a visit in Rock City, Chattanooga, Tenn. They had what they called "fat man's squeeze". Two huge rocks with a very narrow opening. And it took a little turning and twisting to make your way through. That's what Jesus has in mind. The broad way you do not have to do this.

First Samuel 14:4 *Jonathan sought a passage sharp rock on both sides* tells us something about this narrow way. And it demands effort because the gate is straight. There is no third road in between. Now this is very distasteful to us ~~today~~ today because ~~we~~ in this invitation Jesus narrows it down. Men are divided into two classes. Men are ~~not~~ traveling two roads. One is narrow, one is broad. And we classify ourselves.

And this straight gate is not the easiest one to travel. It is going to involve some doing on our part. We must renounce some things. Your wrong attitude. You are going to become a bearer of burdens. You are going to become your brother's keeper. And certain limitations are going to take place. There are some things you are going to say I ought to do and there are some things you are going to say I must do.

You are going to renounce the privilege of walking with the ~~majority~~ majority. People love to walk with the crowd. And traveling the narrow way you may walk with a

few. Quite often in a community, in a town, in a village, in the country, those who are trying to travel and enter the straight gate may be very few and seem very small.

Jesus has a good reason for urging this choice because it is a worthy goal and you are going to be traveling in the right direction.

Have you ever ~~xx~~ traveled on a train? The train runs down a very narrow track and a very narrow passage. It's confined to one road bed at a time. Enter into the straight gate. It's worthwhile to travel this way, and you are going to find life if you travel this way.

The gate is too narrow for entrance for you and your sins. You will have to lay down the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ heavy laden of sins and repent of those sins and depend on the lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world.

There is only this one straight gate that leads to the heavenly home. Jesus said I am the door, and you enter this way. And so it is very plain here that they are going to pull away from the world and the character of the kingdom man will prove that he has withstood the test. All circumstances, whatever may happen, the hurricanes of life may come upon him, but he is going to enter the straight gate because it ~~x~~ has to do with the character of life. And this illustration is a very ~~practical~~ practical one. It is as though we walk along and we find two gates confronting us. One is very ~~wide~~ wide and broad, and there are a great crowd of people

entering that way. On the other hand, there is a very narrow gate and it takes in one person at a time, and it leads to a very narrow road ~~it~~ as it opens, and there are ~~xxxx~~ very few ~~people~~ people that you see walking along this way.

If we might illustrate it, it may be something like the turn-style or some of these revolving doors. There is room for one person to go in, to enter into the straight gate. And it is very narrow in its beginning, and it is important for us to stress this, because Christians after all should be different from non-Christians. And the gospel of Jesus Christ is honest. It invites ~~it~~ people, it tries to persuade people, but the gospel is uncompromising in what ~~it~~ it announces here. That there is no room for a man to walk in through this ~~xxx~~ turn-style with his packages of sin with him. One person at a time, and no more. It is so ~~xx~~ narrow.

You glance over at the broad way. In becoming a Christian you become very unusual in that you break with the world. And the Christian way of life may not be popular. It is not popular today. It is an unusual, exceptional, strange, and different way of life. The world is full of traditions and full of habits and customs which people tend to conform to. But there are exceptions. Children are like that. They want to be like their parents. And they want their parents to be like other children's parents. They do not want anything unusual. The pattern, the custom of behaviour, the amusements, all of these things. Now the Christian is going to be involved with something that ~~is different~~ is Different. One of the first things

that happens to a person who becomes alive to the message of the gospel is to say to himself, Whatever happens to the majority, I myself am a living soul, and I have a responsibility to my life. When a man becomes a Christian, he becomes a separate unit in this world. Formerly he was lost with the crowd of people rushing on toward that broad way. Well he has to leave the crowd and he has to leave the world, and the world is left outside. He really must segregate himself from the world. We must leave all of those things on the outside as we enter the straight gate. There is a danger to think that this is easy. The gospel is a very humbling experience as it deals with our problems, namely that it is difficult.

The gate is narrow and I cannot emphasize too much that it is difficult, and the Christian life is not going to be one of ease. It is going to ~~wxhxxxxxind~~ be wonderful, but it is going to mean that you are going to live like Christ. Now this is not easy for you. Now, whatever the experts may say to you, walking in the company of a smaller group, being somebody that's different and unusual will not be easy for some of you to follow. Blessed are you when men shall revile you. Who likes to be persecuted? Who wants to be ~~xxxxxxx~~ criticized? Who wants to be dealt with in a harsh ~~max~~ manner? And who really wants to be misunderstood?

If I might illustrate this, when the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, they then had to travel and make a journey through the wilderness of temptation.

Now crossing the Red Sea was a narrow gate. There was only one way through.

But having crossed and been delivered, they still had to pass through that

desert journey. And the same we find true in the Christian life, and few find

it, and many will shun it.

II. The road continues narrow

Pearl Harbor - Japanese Planes came through a narrow Pass - under Radar - follow a narrow Passage way.

We not only have considered that it begins narrow, but it continues

that way. What I mean is, there is no such thing as you having a spiritual holiday

in the ~~spiritual~~ spiritual realm. It is always going to be a narrow road.

The ~~fight~~ of faith. The things that oppress you. Now this may be discouraging

to you. Now a lot of people may say, "Well, if it's like that, I'm going back."

I don't want to wrestle against principalities and powers, and against the darkness

of this world and the subtle temptations on this road." Paul says though you are

going to have to walk circumspectly is the way he puts it.

You are going to have to be very careful not to give the impression that you are ~~going~~ walking with the crowd. And you are going to have to count the cost before entering this.

For you see, this is going to (call for an action) a real definite decision and committal on your part. The beauties of that narrow way is that if we look on out to the distance, if I have committed my life to Jesus Christ, and I am under his

There was a time when our forefathers thought that it was a good thing for every Christian to make a covenant with God. They would sit down and solemnly write out on a piece of paper the covenant which they made with God, and then they would put their signature to it, and a date. It ~~is~~ was just like a business transaction. And henceforth, they were going to give themselves to God. It was like a contract. It was a covenant. Now there is something to be said for that practice, that when we come to enter the straight gate, ~~is~~ we make a contract, a covenant, and we are going to walk this way, and we are going to seek this way.

You remember Jesus put ~~is~~ a great deal of emphasis on seeking this because there were going to be few who would find it. I think if you study some of the great ~~is~~ saints of old, for example, George Whitfield, John Wesley, and other men, they were seeking this ~~is~~ straight gate. They did not know what they had to do, they were wrong in their ideas, but at ~~is~~ last by diligent seeking, they found it. And when they found it, they entered it, and they continued on this narrow road. They gave themselves to this sort of living.

We must constantly remind ourselves who we are, what we are ~~is~~ as we continue along this way. Every day we should remember that we are children of God. We are unique, and we belong to the family of God; that Christ ~~is~~ died for us, and we are not to walk in darkness.

Now the world's religions make it easy - do as you like. There are people who say, "Well, go to church once in a while, but just don't be very righteous." But Jesus said, now, it's going to be an upward path, it 's going to be a narrow road, and it's going to continue this way. And there is going to be a small flock on this road. Always, not many are called. There is going to be a few.

You remember when God called Abraham, there was but one man he called.

Now we ought to pay attention to continuing on this narrow way because of the travelers on this road and there are some good reasons as we think about the character. It may be difficult, but the worldly life which people live who are on the broad way, you can see that in the newspapers every day. And it fascinates many people, but this is to risk your eternal soul. Can you imagine anything so empty and so void when it is completed as a life that is lived in this way? Life is more than just getting your name in the society page or being fashionable. What is real value is not the praise of man. Men live for the ordinary things of this world, and here is a striking contrast of the character of those. Anybody who is called a Christian may be called narrow. But it's just like those people who say that they find Beethoven rather boring and that they prefer a jazz music. Now, what they are saying is that they do not really understand Beethoven. They do not hear it. They do not know anything about it. They

are ignorant musically. As someone has said, they really tell us nothing about Beethoven, but they tell us a great deal about themselves.) Now the same thing is true when we come to think about these two roads. That a person cannot pass along this road with all of his sins.

A tribal king was approached by two missionaries. They wanted to witness to him of their faith. One was a Christian, the other was a Mohammed. Each appealed and the old king had a ~~difficult~~ dilemma. He gave serious consideration to their religion. He asked them to ~~return~~ return on a certain day and he would give his answer. When the time was appointed, they were there. He said he had made up his mind to become a Mohammed. And when pressed by the Christian missionary for an explanation, he said, "I can be a Mohammedan without having to give up anything. But if I become a Christian, I will have to give up my old life and try to live like Christ." When you united your life with Christ and with the church, then at that time you decided to enter the straight gate and to follow the road that continues narrow. Now these travelers on this road Jesus saw them that a few true loyal souls would go on and follow this road and the others would go down the broad road and hurry on their way to death.

After a year of hard work, Jesus only had a few men who were willing to forsake all they had to follow him. At the close of his earthly ministry, he saw only a few, 120, who were willing to meet the test in life. Before leaving the world and

of talking with his followers about his return, he described the conditions ~~in~~ the world

just before his return as the days of (Noah). Men are going to be ~~walk~~ eating, drinking, merrying, just like they were when Noah entered the ark. After telling them of the conditions of the world, he asked them a question, "Nevertheless when the son of Man cometh shall he find ~~far~~ faith on the earth?"

This road is very narrow. (Sodom and Gemorrah) were destroyed when Abraham could not find 10 righteous souls in those wicked cities.

Somebody has said that (Germany) went down in defeat because God could not find enough ~~righteous~~ people within the whole of Germany to save them.

You might say the same thing about (Japan) ~~They~~. I wonder what we might say about ~~Amerikax~~ (America). Will we be weighed in the balances and found wanting?

into hell
The wicked shall be turned ~~into hell~~, and all the nations that forget God.
~~The~~

Now ~~Isaiah~~ (Isaiah) tells us that God's people went into captivity because they had no knowledge and therefore hell hath enlarged herself without measure.

I wonder (how) many souls we have in our city who really are out and out on this narrow road traveling as Jesus would have them to travel. Jesus said there are but a few. On his return he said ~~you~~ he would find but a few. I know some who perhaps will be in that number. But (what) sort of church members do we have in America anyway?

One speaker recently said go to the night clubs and you will find them there.

Go to the liquor stores and you will find them there. Go to the wild parties

and you will find them there. Go to the gambling places and you will find

them there. Go to the race track and you will find them there. Go down to hell

and you will find them there.

You remember Paul says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

What fellowship hath righteousness with darkness?"

Somebody may say, "But why is the road of life so narrow?" And the way to death so wide? and so broad?

Now you think about the arithmetic and two times two is what? Four.

I wonder why that is so narrow that you can't say two times two may equal six.

It's just a fact of life. It's the nature of things.

Did you ever go (bird) hunting? I guarantee that probably the first ~~ex~~ experience or so you found out that when the covey of quail are flushed up by a dog, somebody picked out a single bird and killed him, but ~~somebody~~ ^{you} shot at the whole bunch and killed nothing. Now, you don't shoot at twenty of fifteen birds.

You shoot at one. That means it's a very narrow way of hunting. There are ten thousand ~~wasy~~ ways of missing the mark as a hunter. But there is only one way to hit the mark. It is very narrow.

You take all these buildings in our city. The architect in planning these buildings did not use a slipshod method, but he found himself in a very narrow plan that he followed exactly, and this was the plan he followed until he had a building arranged with all the ~~xxxx~~ needs. The same thing is true with a scientist. Edison found a very narrow way in all of his discoveries. He missed the mark a lot of times. A painter must follow the narrow pattern. A musician must follow a narrow way as he sticks to the right notes.

The same thing is true in marriage. A couple must follow a very narrow way. They can't be married to four or five people. There is only one way to succeed. Now we ought not to be surprised when Jesus is telling us about the way that leads to life. The way is narrow as we follow the cross.

And at the same time we ought to recognize that some day it is going to be (too late) for you to get on this road. The five foolish virgins tried to get in, they tried hard to get in, and knocked, and said, "lord, open to us." But the striving time was over, and the door was shut, and the opportunity was gone. And they were too late.

If one would enter he must try at the right place, and he tries to get in at the right door. He doesn't try to make an opening ~~ix~~ himself. People who busy themselves like the people who built the tower in the Old Testament, will discover

that they were unable to rise even though they started early in the morning and they built and they worked, their tower was just too short.

Now, what is meant by this straight gate? Simply I think we can use the language, the figure, our Saviour says, "I am the door. Whosoever seeks to enter in" - not through Christ, not through atonement, is a man who is going to be lost. God gives us upon this earth opportunity, and he expects us to seek.

The broad way you will have abundance of liberty. It's wide open. You walk according to your heart's desire. It's a crowded way. It's easy going. It's downhill all the way.

III. The end is very narrow.

Now keep in mind we have said that the beginning is narrow, and we have said that the continuing road is narrow, and how the end of the road is very narrow. Because it's going to end in heaven, if you enter the straight gate.

We know that as the tree falls so it lies. As a man dies, so he is. If he dies unjust, he is raised unjust. And he proceeds to the final judgment. It is not based on what we do after death, but on what we do in this life.

We may rise up early in the morning, sit up late at night, not by day and night, and we may weep as Esau wept. They found no time for repentance. You know what God said about Jezebel. "I gave her space to repent, and she repented not."

You know what Jesus said about Jerusalem. He wept over the city, and he said, "If they'd only known the day and the things that belong to them, but the visitation was coming ~~up~~ upon them and they would never be saved." Here on earth men try to be neutral, but there is neutrality in God. You are either for God or you are against God. You are either ~~is~~ traveling upward or you are traveling downward. You are either going to spend eternity in heaven or in hell. Which shall it be?

Now this is the plain teaching of the Word of God. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death. Sin blinds ~~the~~ people, causes them to think that they are going in the direction of heaven, when perhaps they may be on this broad road. Is the road upon which you are traveling ~~the~~ broad? Is it filled with men, women, boys and girls who have refused to repent of their sins and to follow the meekness of Jesus? Broad is that way that leadeth to destruction. Many people follow men who are modernists like Judge Rutherford and others who try to rule hell out of the Bible and try to believe that it is not literal and eternal.

Ask the rich man ~~is~~ who died and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment, if he believes in hell and hear him say, "Yes, and it is an awful place." Send a message to my father's house to warn my five brothers not to come to this place. Yes, it is an awful place.

But let us remember that the end of the narrow road is narrow. It's a wonderful destination. Now if your traveling is inconsistent, then you will understand that the wages of sin is death, spiritual death, separation from God. Now, if you feel that the Christian way of life is rather tiresome just remind yourself of the destiny to which it leads. Then look at the world and the apparent happiness of the people who love pleasure and who enjoy the things of this world. Look at them when they come to old age and ~~when~~ when the last enemy is creeping up on them, and suddenly they are taken. They can ~~x~~ go on in their sins and do the things which they like to do. But what have they? Nothing. Nothing to look forward to but the horrors and the torments of destruction.

Now the other life leads to abundance. It starts out by giving new life. And then you travel this narrow road with a new outlook, with desires, with new everything. And it really becomes greater and more wonderful as you think about the inheritance that you will have. To me this is one of the most powerful arguments against the indecision that people have. It's fatal when men refuse to get on the right road. There is really no other road for you to travel but in the footsteps of your lord. You can't be neutral, and you can't just stand there and observe all the time. And Jesus tells us that we are going to be justified by faith. And we must decide what we are going to do with life. This wide road can accomodate all

who are willing to travel on it. When the prodigal son came back he had no good word for himself, and when he came to that straight gate which was so narrow, he was willing to give up everything and confess his sins, and the same is true in your life. You must be willing to walk hand in hand, heart in heart with Christ. It's a very narrow walk. As you go home from this service tonight, you will travel a certain street, a certain road. It is perhaps a narrow way to get home. But the road you travel will determine your destination. And it is absolutely ~~gx~~ glorious in Jesus Christ. Heaven is a ~~wonderful~~ wonderful beautiful place. As John says, "I have seen the new Heaven and the new earth." I would seek if I were you to get on this straight gate, the end of which leads to a very narrow destination.

I remember a story that Dr. Fuller told of a man in Atlanta, Georgia. He was conducting a funeral for three people at once, a wife and two boys. And he told how this family had been on the highway traveling, and in the funeral parlor, they had scripture and prayer, and the father rose right in the middle of it with his arms in the air. He came over and put his hands on his wife's coffin. "Why did I drive so wreckless?" Lord, have mercy on me." He went ~~on~~ over to the oldest boy. "My boy? Can it be so? Why did I drive so wreckless?" Then he went to the baby and said, "This is mother's baby. Why did I drive so

wreckless?" In tears, he was so distraught that the undertaker went out to

see the picture. Dr. Fuller said, "Why do parents drive their lives so

Why do people live with no thought of the destination.
Why not enter the straight gate tonight?