

The Road Less Traveled

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon delves into the concept of life as a journey, focusing on the importance of entering through the narrow gate that leads to life, contrasting it with the wide gate that leads to destruction. The message emphasizes the significance of the cross of Christ as the key to redemption and abundant life, highlighting the necessity of surrendering to God and pursuing holiness in a world filled with distractions and opposition. The sermon encourages believers to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and experience the joy and everlasting gladness promised to the ransomed of the Lord.

Scripture: Matthew 7:13, John 10:9, Hebrews 12:14, Isaiah 35:8, Ephesians 6:12, 1 Peter 1:15, Romans 7:21, John 3:3

Topics: "Narrow Gate", "Surrender to God"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of life as a journey, focusing on the importance of entering through the narrow gate that leads to life, contrasting it with the wide gate that leads to destruction. The message emphasizes the significance of the cross of Christ as the key to redemption and abundant life, highlighting the necessity of surrendering to God and pursuing holiness in a world filled with distractions and opposition. The sermon encourages believers to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and experience the joy and everlasting gladness promised to the ransomed of the Lord.

Transcript

Bibles with me to Matthew's gospel and to chapter 7, Matthew chapter 7. We all know that it's very common to speak in terms of life as being a journey. It's an experience of course which is shared universally by all mankind and it has of course a starting point and it has a finishing point and all that's very, very familiar to us, all too familiar sometimes as has been mentioned earlier this morning. But Jesus himself referred to life as a journey and when he did it on this particular occasion that we're going to look at briefly here this morning, he took this concept of life's journey and he elevated it to a towering new height and shared as the result a message which I believe was not only very important for the people to hear who were standing in front of him at that time but I believe it's a message that is so needed today.

And the application of his teaching was really centered around two words. We'll find them as we look down into chapter 7 and I'm just reading two verses and they are verses 13 and 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. Gates and paths. A superficial reading of these verses could perhaps leave us with the idea and the image of us travelling through or men and women travelling through the journey of life or travelling along the journey of life and then at some particular moment we come round some kind of corner or circumstance or whatever it is and lo and behold we're faced with these two gates that Jesus is referring to.

But of course that would be entirely wrong and that would be to misunderstand what Jesus is saying here. The issue isn't that we just face two gates that are right in front of us and the idea is well you take your pick which one you want to go through and which route you want to follow. That's not the idea at all.

But I believe that when Jesus is speaking here and he is speaking about these two gates and these two paths it really is a big issue. You know as I use that phrase, I'm sorry about this perhaps, but my mind immediately goes to the scene in Liverpool, England which probably is repeated in various cities around the country. I'll just digress for a moment to say it's a concept involved which someone's come up with to help the homeless people and they put together and they regularly put together a document and supplies of these documents are given to the homeless people to distribute to anyone who will take them and any money they get for them they can keep for themselves.

And so as you're traveling around the city you'll see these people, men and women, and you know you'd pass one and lo and behold here's another one and they're shouting out the top of their voices, big issue, big issue advertising the pamphlet or document and so on. But I want to tell you that what Jesus is talking about here is a big issue, in fact it's a very big issue, it's the biggest issue that we can even have any understanding of at all. He's talking about two gates and one of these gates leads men and women to destruction.

That's a big issue, eternal destruction. And there's another gate he's talking about and this gate leads to life. And as my uncle used to say when I hear him preaching, it's life with a capital L. Jesus said I am come to that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly, abundant life, eternal life.

So these two alternatives couldn't be greater, they're staggeringly great and this is what Jesus is talking about. But as we think then about these two very very significant gates we need to think about this because I believe it would be true to say that no one, and I mean no one, no one deliberately chooses to go through the wide gate. This is my understanding, I hope I'll make that clear in case you're doubting me at the moment.

I refuse to believe that anyone personally, unilaterally decides well I'm going to walk down the Broadway. There may be people saying that that we can think of but just look at it from the point of view that I'm looking at it. I believe the issue is that no one chooses that gate or chooses that path because by virtue of being born into this world a human being they've gone through the broad gate, they're on the broad path.

And it's not a matter of personal choice that's something that's been determined outside of the realm of our own human abilities and activities. I'm remembering scriptures which define it like this, behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. Or Jesus when he said I say to you that you shall die in your sins if you believe not that I am he you shall die in your sins.

And the Apostle John says, he puts it this way, if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. In other words we're faced with a universal reality and that is every man and woman born into this world is born within, looking at it from the point of view of what Jesus is talking about here as

being born in sin and there's a consequence as the result of that and that is very, very serious. Now obviously these two gates that Jesus is referring to based on what I've attempted to put before you already reminds us that these gates are not just physical gates in the ordinary way of thinking of things.

When we read words like destruction and life we can see immediately that what Jesus is doing here he's using the concept of gates and pathways symbolically in order to communicate truth and reality to those who are so privileged as to be able to hear what he's saying whether it was the people around him at the time on that mountainside or whether it's you and me here this morning. We're privileged we're highly privileged when we are brought under the influence and under the sound of the Christian message and we know that in thinking of the gate that leads to life and we're now looking at it with a symbolic significance and meaning we can't help it but our mind immediately goes to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and to me this is this is so patently clear that what Jesus is talking about although it was prior to Calvary at this point in time as he puts this very heavy message before his hearers looking back from our perspective and from the perspective of having the benefit of the scriptures before us here we can see how that gate that narrow gate that leads to life is symbolically speaking to us of the cross. It was in 1974 that I first came to Canada I came just for three weeks time and a colleague had arranged meetings for me in Ontario in several locations but they were in some churches which were related to one another around the city and I was given a theme to speak on in each of these churches and it was the theme was simply this the cross the key to victory which is true entirely true but I think what we could do we could actually broaden that statement and it would be quite in order to say that the cross meaning the cross of Christ is the key to everything everything that is of genuine significance and meaning both in terms of time and for eternity there is nothing that is more important there is no gate that is more significant than the cross of Christ and we know that it was at the cross where Jesus died where Jesus gave his life as an offering for us all and we know that without the cross and without his death at the cross there would be no redemption at all redemption would be totally unknown and unavailable for men and women the consequence of that is very obvious but there at the cross and upon the cross the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished something on our behalf for us that we could not possibly have done for ourselves we were totally ignorant of our need and totally incapable of changing our status or our relationship with God and he came and did something about that situation and we believe that as the Lord Jesus hung upon the cross and I think particularly in those hours of darkness when the sun itself hid its face from him he the Lord Jesus he actually drank the cup of the Father's fury as the Prophet refers to it in Isaiah he drank of the cup of the Father's fury his judgment and he drank it to the dregs he exhausted it completely on our behalf and as the result he provided for men and women redemption he provided a way as I say that I'm thinking of the song we sang when I was a teenager there's a way back to God from the dark paths of sin there's a door that is opened and all may go in at Calvary's cross is where you begin when you come as a sinner to Jesus Amen he provided by the cross a way of escape from the judgment which was due us on the basis of us finding ourselves in life having passed through the broad gate and on the narrow way at the broad way I forgive me that leads to destruction in a very very real way and in a very very real sense when Jesus hung upon the cross and accomplished what I've just sought to describe though so briefly was that he actually transformed the cross and he transformed it into a gate he made it a gate he opened the way through the cross to heaven for believing men and women there's a reference later in the which remind us that he has provided for us a new and living way a new way that's active that's what the word living means and a new way that is active a new way that works that accomplishes what it was intended and is still intended to accomplish for men and women and he inaugurated or he made possible this way into the very holiest by the cross in the context of the statement I'm quoting it was through the veil says the Apostle and then he qualifies even that he says which is his flesh in other words it was by the opening of his flesh it was by the shedding of

his blood that God in the person of the Lord Jesus opened up the impossible made a way of escape for men and women from the very judgment of God and a way in which we could enter into fellowship with God that we may enter into the holiest of all amen now this gate this gate that leads to life is an invisible gate that is it's invisible until it is divinely revealed to us we don't see this gate on the basis of our searching we seek we seek the Lord and find scriptures to support that but the fact is there's a flip side to that story you know because remember if you seek that with all your heart you'll find me we read in the Old Testament but the Apostle Paul rising just to sort of throw a balance to that he actually says rising to the church in Rome he said there's no one that seeks the Lord and I'll qualify that if I can in just a moment but let me leave it here that we we see the cross like it's if I say do you see this this is what we're talking about no one sees the cross it's invisible and it's never we it's never true that we see it because when we were looking for it well I was looking for it and I found this no we don't find the cross on the basis of our studying and all of our efforts to read and gather and put together information about it and so on we may have a head full of information about the cross and still not see it we don't we don't arrive at a point in our life's journey and we just think about these things and read and study about it and then we come to the conclusion okay yeah this is it it does not work that way the fact is and I think Peter alluded to this earlier indirectly but but God is pursuing those and I quote from John 17 who his father has given to him but the Holy Spirit of God is pursuing such people he's pursuing us in his grace he's been pursuing everyone that I'm talking to here I believe who's paying attention he's been pursuing you can I put it that way very personally and at some stage along the journey of our lives he intersects with us it's it's a moment of destiny this could be that moment of destiny for you this morning he intersects us on our journey well he's not just found us good that is he to suggest he didn't know us before he's been pursuing us those who are his he's been pursuing us all the way through the journey of our lives through all of the labyrinth of time and circumstance he's been pursuing us but there comes that moment that is not engineered by man's thinking or his cleverness or his searching or anything it's when God divinely intercepts us and brings light to us and we could find some illustrations of that happening in the Bible and top of my list somewhere would be Saul of Tarsus who became the Apostle Paul he was intersected he was known of God God was pursuing him but there's that moment of destiny when a light shone round about him and he fell to the earth and he had a meeting with Jesus that changed everything for him that's what we're talking about that's that's always how truth becomes known to us not by our study not by listening to the great messages of great people and I'm not underestimating the benefit of that but that's not how we see truth we see that is do you understand what I'm saying yeah you see it you you grasp it now I see it or as we used to say in England the penny drops we don't deal with pennies and that's another story but the fact is the light goes on the true light goes on and truth is illuminated now I see we might say and that that that's that's how all truth becomes personal I can read it and read it and read it and read it but there comes that moment where perhaps we could say as with one of old once I was blind but now I can see I see it glory to God it was Jesus himself who said you cannot see the kingdom of God remember this is John chapter 3 he said you you cannot see it if you want to read John chapter 3 verse 3 and verse 5 it's all just in that little section of Scripture but basically what Jesus is saying is you can't see and you certainly can't enter the kingdom of God until you're born again what he's talking about is we need this supernatural divine meeting that is entirely of his doing that wakes us up and we see and having seen then and having faith quickened in our hearts we are able to enter in to believe to enter in to what he is really revealing to us so there's a very important principle there I think that we're touching on that is that we cannot enter anything that God has provided for us or experience anything that God has provided until we see it and the only way we see it is when God supernaturally opens the eyes of our understanding amen I believe that we can say with certainty this morning that the first great ministry of God the Holy Spirit to each one of us is that moment

when having led us we were being led but when he leads us to the point where he shows us the narrow gate or where he reveals to us the true cross of Christ and the truth of the cross of Christ which certainly will include the detail of what took place there physically and openly so that men and women could see it at that time but only the Spirit of God can reveal to us the kind of truth that we need to see and come to terms with and respond to in order to enter in to what God has made possible for us and no one no one has truly seen this until God opens their eyes amen but not only is this gate invisible until he reveals it but what is clear from what Jesus is saying here is that this gate is narrow this gate is very narrow this gate is very very narrow and we don't see that until the Holy Spirit reveals it to us and it's narrow I think primarily for one reason and that is because it's holy it's a holy gate that God has provided that he's talking about here the word holy we've talked about it here before it's it's a word which as we struggle to try and understand and comprehend its meaning the best that we can come to terms with is is this that it means and implies set apart from or it means other than it's it's other than anything ordinary and certainly other than anything secular or anything human even it's other God says I am holy amen you know culture as we know it despises narrow and it's a fatal interpretation to interpret anything that we find in the Bible on the basis of our culture cultural understanding of things we sometimes interpret things that we read in Scripture teaching that's here in the New Testament I'm meaning in particular now for us and and we we read it through the lens of our culture or we read it perhaps being more personal we read it through the lens of our own preferences and we we reach a conclusion that satisfies us but we may have completely missed what God is saying and what God is instructing us to do and I think another way of looking at this again is with the heading that this gate is narrow is that many people this is an issue perhaps in particular for people in fellow in church leadership but it's true enough for every one of us with the with the pressure to get people saved or with the pressure to get more members into our churches or whatever it is we may yield to temptations we may yield to a common temptation that we see today and that is to to to reinterpret the message of the cross and of the gospel because there's a the truth that is presented to us I'm thinking as I'm saying this of the Apostle Paul the truth that he is able to bring before us in the scriptures here is it's offensive Paul understood that the preaching of the cross is offensive it's in fact it was a word that he uses writings the Corinthians he says it's scandalous it's just scandalous it's outrageous and we could look at what he was saying why he said those things but it's true the natural to the natural man it's offensive but Paul goes on to say in that context of the Corinthians but to those who believe it is the power of God but the fact is that in our efforts to sort of make the message more palatable or more hearable or for people to come to terms with it we remodel the gospel to present a more a kinder gospel and in doing so tragically we we completely shred the gospel of its true identity and of its power we strip it of its power to produce what we want we may gather more people can say this is okay when it's not okay because the word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword and it penetrates deeply and it gets down into those areas of men and women's self-life and into their ego and it's greatly uncomfortable until we come prepared to come to terms with it and embrace what God is saying as being the truth and only then can he accomplish in our lives what he is intent upon doing with this sort of remodeled gospel we could think in terms of our response to it as giving us assurance which may be false assurance and somehow the gospel is trivialized the illustrations coming to my mind is you know we we go to Costco and of course now you have to queue up forever to even get to this point but you you've got a Costco card you have to show your card and you just hold your card no one really reads it okay you're in whatever you do don't think about the Christian gospel like that and so you know well I prayed this prayer on such and such an occasion in my life and I've gone to church more or less regularly or whatever however we want to respond to this it's as though we're just sort of flashing our card but that'll never satisfy God it's on a different basis altogether than that you can wave your card but no one enters the narrow path by just flashing a casual response to the gospel

thinking of the Spirit of God revealing the cross to us when he reveals to us he reveals the truth of the cross to us or I could put it this way he reveals the true cross to us and he focuses the attention of men and women he may be doing that for us this morning he focuses our attention and our understanding now enlightened by his aid to the the principle of the cross and the power of the cross the real cross the cross as we know was there as an instrument of death that's what it was all about people crucified their lives were taken from them on the cross with Christ he yielded his life of course but nevertheless he it was there at the cross where he gave his life as an offering for us all and so on in other words the true cross of Christ was and in reality physically and today in the spirit in principle is God's instrument of death it's God's means of execution that's what we're thinking about do you see there's a weight to the truth of the cross that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us it's not some you know card you can stick in your wallet now I'm a Christian because of the Holy Spirit brings us face to face with the true cross and the true cross is offensive to everything that is of our self lives to our flesh the flesh recoils from it because the cross is set now for the execution of our flesh it's to deal with ourselves so that ultimately we can say with Paul it's no longer I that live us but it's Christ who lives in me this is one in certain states below the border they call the the electric chair that's what we're talking about it's a place of execution that is what the Holy Spirit is wanting to impress upon your heart as he impresses it upon my heart freshly today that's what we're talking about we don't discover that by just reading information only God can make it real where we begin to see this is what the Christian gospel is really all about it was a W Tozer a long time ago who said very profound statement there's a lot of context to it but he said we want Jesus to do all of the dying then he went on to explain what he meant by that but we're okay with Jesus doing all the dying but at the cross at the place of execution but it's a whole different thing when the Holy Spirit shows us that is true he died to death none of us could die his death was redemptive but now the issue is my life and there's a principle that comes through plainly in Scripture and that is that we live we truly live by dying the narrow gate goes on to lead us to the narrow path in other words there's a point of entrance there's a beginning and then there's a journey and the journey on from that moment of embracing the reality and surrendering to the reality of the true cross there's a journey which we enter upon and just as the gate itself demanded of us our full and complete surrender equally the narrow path makes the same demand upon us in other words what we entered into at that point in time is to continue on through the entire journey and the cross the principle or the power of the cross is available and God has determined that it should continue its slaying power through the entire journey and through all of what I called before quoting someone used to be famous the labyrinth of circumstance through all of the issues of life and ultimately to that point when we leave this time it's the cross it's the power the principle and the power of the cross work working in us Charles Wesley refers to on one occasion he speaks about its slaying quickening power that's that's the wonder of the cross insofar as we embrace its slaying power we experience its quickening or its life-giving power and in direct relationship to the degree in which I embrace it I experience this life so it's the cross for the entry it's the cross for the journey some of you are familiar with these words but a young lady in Liverpool wrote these words many years ago Lord my disease was unto death and could not be improved so thou hast given thy cross to me with all its sting removed oh what release so long longed for my soul mounts up on wings here where all earthly hopes to cease the new creation springs and then she wrote Jesus my Lord I die in thee in thee I rise renewed amen I'm going to read a couple of verses from the book of Isaiah chapter 35 just two verses three verses actually I'm reading for 35 and verse 8 a highway will be there I'm reading from the New American Standard for those who need to know that a highway will be there a roadway and it shall be called the highway of holiness the unclean will not travel on it but it will be for him who walks that way and fools will not wander on it no lion will be there nor will any vicious beast go up on it these will not be found there but the redeemed will walk there and the ransomed of the Lord will

return and come with joyful shouting to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads they will find gladness and joy and sorrow and sighing shall flee away amen this narrow path which is entered through the narrow gate is not only invisible and narrow but it's holy it's a holy path a highway of holiness was the prophetic statement I've just read to you there because holiness just doesn't synchronize with today's culture and I think if I'm not mistaken even within Christian circles I think the concept and reality of holiness has fallen out of favor particularly in the sort of church growth wing which is all about growing the church or increasing it and as I've mentioned already on all too many occasions that's done at the expense of the of the stark but wonderful and transformational truth of the gospel so often the concept of holiness is is ignored as as our own works or rejected as legalism and once upon a time it was preached it was preached with passion and power holy men and holy women preach this message people like Madame Guillaume or another woman Francis Ridley Havagel they preach this message or George Whitfield or the Wesley Brothers or AB Simpson more recently AW Tozer I've quoted and so many others certainly but still a narrow company but a diminishing company I fear today because the truth of holiness has such a challenging effect upon us and it creates for those who are not prepared to come to terms with it a decided discomfort and we move it to one side to a backburner or however you want to think about this and so on I believe that this holiness is something we experienced first and initially at the holy gate in our first beginnings but it's certainly a truth that must continue to be part of our lives at our first meeting our first response our true response to the true gospel and to the true cross of Christ is when we when we in our lives we experience that great body of truth that Paul opens up to us later in the New Testament of justification I experience justification I am reconciled to a holy God and the Apostle teaches us in so many clear ways that at that time holiness that that is the holiness of God is is imputed to us at that point what that means is quite literally is it's credited if we're talking in terms of finance and an account this is something credited to my account I didn't do anything for it someone was incredibly gracious to me and they just credit this enormous amount of money to my account that's what Paul has in mind as an illustration he says that this is what happened at the cross and it became your experience when you placed your trust now in this illuminated real cross of Christ in the truth of the gospel and God at that time he credited that to my account and that's wonderful that's what imputed means and and and we'd be lost without that that's not based on me doing anything but believing him but the scripture has more to say on the issue I read in Hebrews 12 and verse 14 it says pursue holiness so that's something we need to do pursue holiness without which no man shall see the Lord now this this is as they say where the rubber hits the road it's one to say well this is wonderful this is what Jesus did for me accomplished all of this and I'm home and free now yes without that we're lost totally that means that I'm now I'm through the gate if I'm truly believing that but now I've entered upon not a no man's land where I can do what I want and live as I please I'm brought as the result onto the narrow path and along as I travel along the narrow path I hear the Spirit of God saying pursue holiness right without which no man shall see the Lord you know in the authorized translation in first Peter 1 there's this statement just listen to the words carefully he says that we're to be like the Holy One he starts this is an authorized translation I best go to first as he which has called you is holy so be ye holy in all manner of conversation that's the authorized translation I'm gonna read it again as he which has called you is holy so be ye holy in all manner of conversation the New American Standard that I've got here it says like the Holy One who called you be holy yourselves also in all your behavior and that to me that's a better and clearer translation certainly more up-to-date in many ways in terms of the language but but going back to the authorized translation version of this there's something that is at least noteworthy and I know I've commented on this at least some years ago there are three two-letter words and that come in the authorized translation and they're these as he is and then there's another three so be ye and somehow those simple little words they emphasize the truth as he

is holy be so so be ye holy and that's the message you may feel by God's grace you've come through that narrow gate you've come to terms with you've seen it you've come to terms with its narrowness you've come through alone you've let go of everything that was the clutter that you were sort of dragging through life so far you got through the narrow gate but now this is what the Holy Spirit is saying to you he's saying that's wonderful but now you're on the narrow way and for the remainder of the journey in this life you're to walk on this way in holiness because this way is a highway of holiness it's a narrow highway but it's a holy way and so in other words what we're reading here is that holiness is the nature of the path it's the essence of the path we're walking along but it's got to be true in your life and in mine also we're to live our lives the way we entered narrow gate narrow path now that brings huge problems I'll mention I think just two this morning there's a lot more that can be said than what I am saying here I'm conscious of that here but the fact is that this this holiness or this holy life that the Spirit of God is speaking about in these passages here has only ever been lived and can only ever be lived by one man and his name was Jesus this this holy life is impossible for you my brother my sister as impossible it is for me in and of ourselves so I'm hearing the Spirit of God say pursue holiness and as I am holy you be holy and we and we want to with every fiber in our being we say yes Lord yes Lord but we find within ourselves a conflict Paul talks about it does he not in chapter 7 of Romans in ourselves we have no ability to do this and that's the serious thing to have it to have his holiness imputed me to impute it to me rather is one thing but to live it is a different thing altogether and there's opposition I could take more time with this but there's opposition that we find within ourselves but you know there's opposition that surrounds us as we live our lives now just spend a few moments on that I'm thinking of this highway of holiness that I'm reading about in Isaiah chapter 35 but it's a highway that is going through a hostile environment and that is indeed how we're to live our lives I was given a title to speak on in a fellowship in England to young people a long time ago and it was basically that you know how can we walk in purity in a dirty world and this is this is the issue before us here we're living in a hostile environment we're living in a dirty world we're living in an unrighteous vile world how do we live this life which in and of ourselves is totally impossible to live the whole terrain around us is crazed with entertainment is the big issue that's around us it's it's this consumerist society it's all about us it's all about ourselves and I think our whole culture around us is strewn with faith killers anti holiness issues Jesus on another occasion told a parable do you remember it I'm sure where he said here's the issue he said he's talking about seeds being so and he said the seed is choked the seed is choked this is true as true today as it was then the seed of holy truth and the truth of holiness is choked in us our ability to live the holy life is choked in us because of Jesus said the curse of this world well he knew what he was talking about he said the curse of this world will choke this holy life and then he went on he spoke of the deceitfulness of riches and it's not only for those who have it it's those who are clamoring for it it's just the deceitfulness of riches they'll choke this holy life and he also spoke about something else that we know a lot about and that is desires for other things my Jesus was getting really close to the bone as we say with these statements and he's saying these three things he said they'll all choke the seed and stop it from growing these same issues will choke our pursuit of holiness and that's something we're facing and having to deal with the Apostle Paul talking to Timothy he said that he should be cautious and not allow himself to be entangled with with civilian pursuits he was talking about the good soldiers remember he says not a good soldier if he allows himself to get entangled in human pursuits like he's got a job to do on the battlefield and that's what Paul was saying and the fact is that the things that we're looking at here just briefly they're designed to distract us and to demolish our pursuit of holiness and corrupt our hearts from truly following him and then behind all of this we've got what Paul talks about in Ephesians he says we're in conflict here as we set our sights on this narrow holy path the conflict is against master spirits this is the amplified translation master spirits who are the rulers of this present darkness the seductive spirit

forces of wickedness and they are clearly intent upon seizing from us our hearts desire and our passions to live holy lives before God and so on this world is the domain of darkness it's the domain of demons and Wesley called it a howling wilderness that's where we live that's the terrain through which we're traveling and any of these factors that I've alluded to and others that we haven't alluded to are all designed to rip from us our testimony and take from us our pursuit of the things of God and of our pursuit of holiness and when we read through scripture and reading through the New Testament the scriptures never never underestimate these challenges that we're facing doesn't say don't worry about that there's none of that at all God knows that for us to live the way he wants us to live in and of ourselves is an impossible task he knows that he knows it very well and yes we have this wonderful little prophecy I've read to you from Isaiah 35 and if we had time I'd like to look like to have looked at in more detail but the truth that comes shining through that is that for the men and women who are walking along this highway of holiness through this hostile environment they are immune to everything that is going on around them it's interesting that God chose to call this pathway here in this passage a highway and in the early word it actually carries through that very fact it's a highway it's an elevated way that's the truth that comes through here it's not just a highway just like the 401 or number one or whatever it is and so on no no it's a pathway called holiness and it's elevated it's above the the wasteland and it's above all of the activities of demonic spirits and wild beasts we read that the wild beasts will never get onto this highway it's too high for them these enemies they'll never be able to encroach upon us because this is a highway and for as long as I am walking in and on this highway I am immune not because of my own ability but because of the power and life of God within my own heart and and I believe the issue and I'm closing with this is that each one of us must discover for ourselves now based on all that we've been sharing and thinking about already we must discover this the secret of consistently walking in the power of the Holy Spirit that can be just a cliché if we're not careful but there's a reality behind those words to discover the secret of consistently it's a hallmark of the true man and woman of God they walk consistently they're not fickle consistently walking in the power of the Holy Spirit of God am I are you enjoying the full blessings of this higher life that is put before us here or in the light of a different text are we enjoying something of the blessing of our days being like the days of heaven upon earth God said that he would do that for Israel of old if they would obey him in all the masses I believe the Holy Spirit is saying that again to me and to you today if we will obey him fully and completely if we will surrender to him fully and completely if we will let the gate shred us of all the stuff and the clutter and the worry and the fretting and everything and lay it all aside and come to terms with the cross this holy narrow gate and begin to walk along this holy narrow pathway that he's ordained for us that he promises to keep us as we travel along it then we shall know the joy and we shall know something that relates to what was the last verse I read to you from Isaiah 50 forgive me 35 and the ransomed of the Lord these are they who are traveling along this holy highway highway and the ransomed of the Lord will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads they will find gladness and joy and sorrow and sighing shall flee away let's pray

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