

# The Narrow Way

by Vincent G. Artese

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*The narrow way is the path that leads to eternal life, which requires repentance, faith, and obedience to God's word.*

**Duration:** 55:51

**Scripture:** Isaiah 29:13, Matthew 4:9, Luke 13:18, John 15:4, Ephesians 5:26, Hebrews 3:18-19, Hebrews 4:12

**Topics:** "Narrow Way"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being workers for God's kingdom. He questions where the workers are and if they have been enticed by worldly gain or fallen into Satan's trap. The preacher highlights the power of the word of God, describing it as living and powerful, able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. The sermon also discusses the concept of entering God's rest through obedience and faith, and the journey of a believer through trials and tests. The preacher warns about the dangers of following the wide and destructive path and encourages staying connected to Jesus, the vine, in order to bear fruit.

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## Transcript

We're going to be looking at point number one, enter through repentance. The narrow way. Twice in the Gospels, Jesus uses as a metaphor to describe for his listeners what would be ahead for all those who would desire to enter heaven.

Jesus made it clear to all those who would trust in him by faith that there would be a thin, fine, constricted and limited entry into heaven, but that all faithful believers would be able to enter through the opening that he had secured. Enter through repentance, point number one. Now the opening into heaven was made accessible by the merits of Christ's own blood that he shed on the cross.

Faith was the only criteria that God required in order for each person to be eligible to enter in. Ephesians 2.8 tells us, for by grace you have been saved through faith, in that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God. Now faith is defined as being the voluntary ascent that man gives to the revelation of God and the self-committal or the trust of the entire man to the control of such truth.

From the Hebrew, we get the word aman, which means to be firm, steadfast and trustworthy. Now the essential idea of faithfulness and truthfulness is all based in this word faith. The concept is that of holding firm in a time of testing because of a confidence in God.

In this, God is the faithful and unchanging one, loyal to his promises and covenant. In return, man must be obedient, steadfast and trustfully relying in God's promises. When the writer to the Hebrews mentioned the faith of the Israelites, those who had entered into the first covenant with him, he uses simple language to describe for the church in every generation what God had considered the type of faith that would be worthy of heaven.

In every instance, God is looking for obedience, steadfastness, even though it's an all out struggle. First, in Hebrews 10 verses 19 and 20, we are told, therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he consecrated for us through the veil that is his flesh. The saving faith that justifies us as sinners in the sight of a holy God is based solely on our faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

A person must first enter into a covenant relationship with God. Second, we are told that in keeping with correct doctrinal teaching, the writer uses the example Hebrews 4 10 to explain how entering into a covenant with God, a person's faith is not only in them fully trusting in God, but that they now become hard working with God. The belief and trust makes them industrious, conscientious and persistent.

Hebrews 4 10 for he who has entered his rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from his verse 11. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. Now the author in this verse clearly relates faith to diligence and sin to disobedience.

What God uses as the standard in which he judges by is his word. The Bible verse 12 for the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Third, the reason some enter in and some will not enter is given in Hebrews chapter three verses 18 through 19.

And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who did not obey. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Luke 13 18.

Now this is where Jesus began his discourse, explaining what the kingdom of God was like. Then he said, What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden, and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches. And again, he said to what shall I like in the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.

Now both times in his examples, Christ explains that the faith that enters heaven increases. It starts out small, but it increases. First, a small mustard seed becomes a large tree.

Then a small particle or small particles of yeast change the mass of the dough until it's all changed. Romans five one. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance and perseverance, character and character. Hope now hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. The apostle continues explaining how faith begins small but increases.

Ephesians chapter three in verse 11, according to the eternal purposes which he accomplished in Christ Jesus, our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in him. Now, God's purpose runs on through the ages, through the ages. One eternal purpose runs.

God's plan is eternal. He has no new schemes. He has no intentions, which he did not always have.

Everything he purposed is through our faith in Christ Jesus, through a person's ongoing faith in the gospel. God will continue to carry us through. That's his promise, his eternal promise to us.

As the apostle continues, the born again believer in Christ is filled with the Holy Spirit. Those that go on trusting and obeying God's word are strengthened to go on. They continue to make progress and grow towards maturity until they bear fruit.

The apostle continues in Ephesians chapter three, picking it up in verse 16, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened through might, through his spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height. And in verse 19, to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge that you may be filled with the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us.

Now the text that we have just looked at have explained for us how God's work begins with his grace being extended to every person, enabling us to turn from our sin and putting our faith in Christ. The gift of the Holy Spirit enables us to be strengthened and firmly grounded in our faith, growing more and more in our love for God and gaining more and more knowledge. Then as we face the test to our faith and we hold firm without compromise, God will sanctify us and exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask and think according to his power, he will lead us through.

And we're going to talk about the narrow way in Luke 13 verse 3. Now we see Christ first begins describing this work by God first through repentance, both in Luke 13 verse 3 and in verse 5. Jesus says, I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Repentance, the word in the Greek is metanoel, is a verb. It means to change one's life based on complete change of attitude and thought concerning sin and righteousness based on continual feeling of remorse for sin.

Now, because it's a verb, it describes an action, a state of being or the production of a result. Repentance continues in the believer's life. It's not that you just do it once.

It's a continual work, just like faith. Now, repentance includes guilt, regret and sorrow. When a person initially enters the narrow gate, they begin a lifelong journey.

The journey brings us through many trials and tests, ups and downs. But if we have been truly born of God, his spirit will continually keep us penitent. We will continually sorrow over our sin against our Savior and renounce it.

We will continue to work hard. We will be conscientious and persistent in our faith. But we must first enter through repentance and then go on through faith the narrow way.

Point number two, the parable of the fig tree. When Matthew wrote Jesus's words describing the narrow way, he included Jesus saying in Matthew 7 verses 13 and 14, enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the

gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction.

And there are many who go in by it. Verse 14, because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to light. And there are few who find it.

Jesus used many different analogies to describe how narrow and how difficult the way which leads to eternal life is. Now, the Jews were very religious. And like many in the church today, they had their own erroneous thoughts on how a person goes to heaven.

All one has to do today is stop anybody and just ask them, how do you get to heaven? And they'll give you a whole variety of different answers. But how do you get to heaven? Many people have many answers, but do they match up with Christ's answer? In Matthew 19, when Jesus was asked by a young man how he could inherit eternal life, Jesus says to him in Matthew 19, beginning in verse 21, if you want to be perfect, go sell what you have and give to the you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me in Matthew 19, continuing on in verse 22. We're told that when the young man heard that saying he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again, I say to you, he goes on in verse 24, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Now, the eye of the needle we're told was a little hole in the wall down at its base in which if a camel would scrunch down and basically crawl down to the ground and you would take all of its packaging and all of its its volume of whatever it was carrying on its back and take the rider off, the camel could slip through this hole in the in the wall.

Now it was there for a reason so that people didn't automatically storm the fortress or storm the castle or whatever this wall was protecting. Big troops couldn't enter and mass amounts of people and and and riders on camels and so on would not be able to just come in like a big open gate. They actually had to get down and squeeze through this opening.

Now Jesus is using this as an example because he's telling us that we can't get into heaven carrying all this stuff. We would have to strip down to nothing more than just ourselves to be able to fit through the eye of the needle or this hole that was in the wall of the fortune. In verse 25, when his disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, who then can be saved? In verse 22 and 23, we are told that this man's possessions made his way harder.

That's what Jesus said. Now Jesus always taught that it would take self-sacrifice every step of the way. In order for that camel to pass through this restricted opening, it had to be stripped of all of its possessions, everything it was carrying.

Jesus' example is that we too must be stripped down of all of our worldly comforts. Now obviously we need houses and we need clothes, we need food. He's not talking about that.

He's talking about riches and pleasures and the possessions that prevent us from doing what he has called us to do. Now the false religious system of the day teaches that personal gain is a sign of success. Now this was no different than the way the Pharisees lived during Christ's earthly ministry.

But we must see that the fruit of God is looking for souls to be saved. God doesn't see things like we see them. To God, fruit is converted souls to Christ, regenerated souls.

The Jewish church had become fruitless professors, like the Christian church today that sits comfortable in their pews. The question Jesus is proposing to the church is, where is your fruit? Now the church may answer, I have a building, I have a ministry, I have education, I have reputation, I have wealth, I have beauty. But God says, but where are my disciples? Matthew 28 19.

Where are the disciples I sent you to make? Where are they? In Luke 13 verse 6, we're told that he also spoke this parable. A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none.

Cut it down. Why does it use up the ground? But he answered and said to him, sir, let it alone this year also until I dig around it and fertilize. And if it bears fruit well, but if not, after that you can cut it down.

Now God planted his seed, the church for the propagation of holiness. Hebrews 12 14. Holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Where is the fruit? Where is the fruit? God sent his son so that he may establish our hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. Where is his bride? Christ came and gave himself for the church that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. Jesus said the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Where are my work? Where are my workers? He asked when the son of man returns, will he find faith on the earth? Where are my workers? Have we all been entrapped by worldly gain? Have we fallen into Satan's trap? The same one he tried to use on Jesus in Matthew chapter four verse nine, all these things I will give you if you will only fall down and worship me. Have we fallen to this trap? Why are we not putting Christ's commission first and putting Satan behind us? If we call ourselves Christians and we're followers of Jesus, Jesus says, I command you to go. I command you to go.

I command you go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy spirit. I command you, Jesus said, teach them, teach them to observe all the things I've commanded you. Jesus said to the Pharisees, you've made them twice as much a child of hell than yourself because they didn't go and do what he commanded them to do.

Are we making children for hell? Are we, or are we making disciples for heaven? I believe personally that what the church has fallen a trap to is not only worldly gain, but we're making disciples for ourselves and not after Jesus. Even our seminary students are graduating, thinking that ministry is a way to get rich, a way to not have to work physically. Jesus is saying we have taught the world, our doctrine, not his so-called Christian youth groups and Christian schools and colleges and missions.

It's all a joke. We're not making disciples for Christ. We're not teaching and we're not obeying the call of Christ.

We must serve him, not ourselves. It's not about us. You want to get a good look at what self-centered humanism has produced some statistics from Europe.

Some of you are familiar with this. Some of you are not. It's often said that Europe is about 20 to 30 years before America.

Remember, we came from Europe, most of us, even our, our faith is based in Europe. For the most part, less than 8% of the population attends church. Only 3% attend regularly.

By 2050, there will be no significant church presence in Europe. The Muslim population has tripled in the last 30 years. Europe is quickly becoming pre-Islamic.

It is not even considered post-Christian any longer. It's considered dead. Back to Luke 13 verse 6, he came seeking fruit on it and found none.

Verse 7, then he said to the keeper of the vineyard, look for three years, I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down. Why does it use up the ground? Is God getting ready to cut down the Christian tree because it's fruitless? Jesus warned us that it was going to be a narrow way.

It was going to be very, very difficult, but he told us that he was the way that leads to life. So why are we following the way that leads to death? The devil's highwaymen are orchestrating from the pulpit of false prosperity message. The signposts have been switched on us and we're being led astray.

Like the story in Matthew 8, 32, the church, like a blind herd of swine is rushing down the side of the cliff, heading right into the abyss where we will be drowned. And no one is asking where we are going. Proverbs 14, 12.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. Our Lord warned the church to watch out for Satan schemes in John chapter 15, beginning in verse four. I'm going to read it from the God's word.

Translation live in me. And I will live in you. A branch cannot produce any fruit by itself.

It has to stay attached to the vine in the same way. You cannot produce fruit unless you live in me. I am the vine.

Jesus said, you are the branches. Those who live in me while I live in them will produce a lot of fruit, but you can't produce anything without me. Whoever doesn't live in me is thrown away like a branch and dries up branches like this are gathered, thrown into a fire and burned in Luke eight verse 14.

He said the ones that fell among the thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life and bring no fruit to maturity. Jesus said, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me in Matthew 16, 24, the parable of the fig tree, the narrow way point number three, strive to bear fruit. Now, as we've already taken a look at to enter the narrow way is only the beginning.

When you enter a building, when you enter the door, that's only the beginning. God, through his son, not only bids us to come to him through repentance, but then also requires that we live in obedience to his word in order that we receive the benefits of the covenant that he has set forth. I'm amazed how many people do selective reading when they read the Bible along with selective reading.

Some even have selective hearing. Another error I find quite common today is people church hop some today, even sermon hop and so on. In all cases, the cause comes down to the same root.

It's the evil root of pride that has never been fully removed. The prophet Isaiah spoke to the first church and he said to them, do you really think you as a blade of grass can hold the creator of the universe in

contempt? Do you really think that you can, you hear the sovereign voice of the transcendent omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent one, and you have the audacity to pick and choose what you will obey and what you will not with this little peanut filled brain that has about a pinhead full of knowledge and accumulated wisdom. I'm going to decide what I'm going to obey and what I'm going to ignore.

Isaiah 29 verse 13. Therefore the Lord said in as much as these people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from me and their fear towards me is taught by the commandment of men. Therefore behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.

Verse 15. Whoa, to those who seek deep to hide their council far from the Lord and their works are in the dark. They say who sees us and who knows us.

Verse 16. Surely you have things turned around. Shall the Potter be esteemed as the clay for shall the thing made say of him who made it, he did not make me or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it.

He has no understanding. Now the prophet continues with his charge against a foolish generation, a little farther down. Isaiah 29, 19.

The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy one of Israel. Verse 20. For the terrible one is brought to nothing.

The scornful one is consumed in all who watch for iniquity are cut off. Satan's hidden rooms of iniquity concealed within the minds of the impenitent. The areas where Christ's holy light has not been allowed to shine.

The stubbornness of human pride and refusal to bow before the king of King. Those who would dare to stand before the almighty creator and scorn his word. You disrespect his word.

You hold him and his faithful servant in contempt. Those who disrespect his holy Bible, ignore his commands and go on doing what you want to do. Isaiah 29, 15.

Whoa. To those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the Lord and their works are in the dark. They say, who sees us and who knows us? Does a person like this really think that you're hiding the darkness in your heart away from God? Those who try to hide their disrespect for God with a fake outward show.

Those who attempt to conceal the real intentions under exterior acceptable facades. Many act correctly in public, but inwardly they're deceptive. Isaiah is describing the character of the hypocrite who seeks to conceal his plans and purposes from the eyes of people in the eyes of God.

The hypocrite tries to deceive mankind, but the true prophet of God sees he sees because Isaiah 29, 19, he's humble, meaning he lacks the arrogance and the pride 29, 16. Shall the Potter be esteemed as the clay for shall the thing made say of him who made it. He did not make me or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it.

He has no understanding it's foolishness. It's vanity. And it's pride a person that tries to hold God in contempt.

Shall the Potter be esteemed as the clay. When God speaks to his church through the prophet, Isaiah, he uses this word, esteem, esteem in the Hebrew means when a person hears God's word and he determines its value. They consider through thinking in a detailed manner where they reason and consider various factors and focus on the formulation of an opinion to consider what God is saying to esteem it.

When we hear God's word, we always determine our course of action. Am I going to ignore it or am I going to obey it? The hypocrite tries to maneuver their way around constantly weaving and bobbing and deciding what they will accept and what they won't accept. Holding God in contempt every step of the way.

This was the same practice that Eve fell into. Eve was deceived by the same satanic thought process injected by the serpent. And she's still being deceived today through the same means.

What God is saying through the prophet, Isaiah is here written for us in the account in Genesis chapter three, verse one, where the clay is esteeming and considering what almighty God is saying. Am I going to obey it or am I not? Genesis three one. Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made.

And he said to the woman, has God indeed said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden. Has God indeed said Eve's answer should have been yes. Period.

Yes. Verse two, the woman says to the serpent, we may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden. God has said you shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it.

Lest you die. She did not even know the word of God. How many of us here are sitting and we don't even know the word of God yet.

We hold him in contempt. When he says something to us, we're the clay and we're questioning God just like Eve did. And she didn't even know the word.

Think of it. Then verse four, then the serpent says to the woman, you will surely not die. This answer satisfied her devilish pride.

That's what she wanted to hear. That's just what she wanted to hear that she could have what she wanted. The serpent gave Eve his reason to consider.

And every time you and I consider what we are going to esteem, this is just what we do. We give the serpent the consideration. We go the same way instead of obeying like we're commanded to do.

We reason these things in our head. What will I obey? And what won't I obey? I don't know Eve it's up to you what you will obey and what you won't obey. But as for me in my house, we're going to serve the Lord.

As Joshua tells, she looked and she thought about the various factors. She reasoned and considered as the clay, she esteemed what the Potter was saying based on what the serpent saying she focused on informed her personal opinion based on her sensual feelings. Go ahead, Eve, keep using your sensual feelings to decide what you will and what you won't obey.

As far as what God has said, she sinned and she damned her husband and her children to follow. You realize that don't you? Her heart was drawn away in her husband and her offspring were dragged to hell. That's what happened as the clay decided what parts of God's holy word it would obey and what it would not.

The clay stood before the Potter and said, I won't do it. I won't listen. I heard this other voice of the serpent that sounds so much better to me.

It gives me what I feel, what I like. And Jesus said, no, if you want to follow me, it's going to be a narrow and difficult way. And few, there will be that.

Find it. You decide Eve, which way you're going to go. Eve halfheartedly honored God with her lips, but her heart was far away.

Isaiah 29, 13. Jesus said, God is a spirit and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth as the prophet Isaiah continues in Isaiah 29, 13. Therefore, the Lord said as much as these people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from me.

And their fear toward me is taught by the commandment of men. Jesus repeated the same phrase in Matthew 15 and Luke seven criticizing outward devotions. That does not bring the fruit of love and fear and obedience, which God requires empty worship without fruit, mere personally devised intentions based on devices or plans or strategies and schemes.

God said it's better to obey than sacrifice ritualistic religion and traditions where a person uses their own thinking and that of others that pleases them. Placing these methods before God's institutions. Jesus said, it's all vanity.

Matthew 15, nine in vain. They worship me teaching as doctrines, the commandments of men. You cannot pick and choose what portions of God's word you'll obey and what you will not.

Many hear a sermon like this and do nothing about it. They stay in the same dead church and in vain. They worship God.

A person needs to get up and follow after Jesus, no matter what the cost, Jesus said, strive to produce fruit. Strive means agonize. Luke 13, 24 strive to enter through the narrow gate, agonize, put everything you have into it.

That's what strive means. He says, many will seek to enter and will not be able to. You must be diligent.

You must be active. You must be earnest. It should be your first and chief business to overcome every sinful partiality.

We have in order for us to get to heaven. We must drive in John 15, verse six. Jesus said, if you desire to enter heaven, you must do everything within your power to keep on the narrow way.

You must continue moving or striving in obedience to him. If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch in his withered and they shall gather them and throw them into the fire and they are burned the narrow way. We're going to go on to point number four in this series of messages, the narrow way and point number four is entitled model Christ, his pattern in all things.

Jesus made it very clear both times that he mentions the narrow way in Matthew 7, 13 and in Luke 13, 24, that there will be many that are deceived by false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing. In Matthew's narrative, he states Christ's words, Matthew 7, 15. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

I want to take a look at these three points contained in verse 15 because Jesus uses three descriptive examples that he wants us to pay attention to. First false prophets, those that come as teachers, but they're unauthorized expounders of the mind and the word of God. They teach falsely.

The way to heaven is broad. It's wide. A false prophet is anyone who teaches any other way than that which our Lord has marked out.

Second, who come to you in sheep's clothing, anyone pretending to be Christ's follower. They use their mouth. They even might use their actions, but they've never been changed on the inside.

They come to you in sheep's clothing. We must heed this warning. There's many who enter the church wanting to know God.

They come in unsuspecting souls. They come in and they're vulnerable to the carefully planned out charlatan schemes of Satan's ministers and those who just hang around the church halls. They teach erroneous doctrines, meaning things not supported by the holy scriptures, but they also come professing a commission from God, but their aim is not to bring the heavenly treasure to the people, but rather to rob them of the good.

They're so-called pastors and evangelists and musicians and teachers who preach for hire. Jesus called them hirelings in John 10. They don't care about the sheep.

Their motive is to enter into ministry to get a living, get a church. It's commonly referred to. They have the degrees and the titles and the personality and the clothes, but they don't have the heart.

Thirdly, Jesus spoke of inwardly their ravenous wolves. The Greek adverb for inwardly is *esos* then. It's an adverb stressing their heart as the place where their motives and purposes come from.

Jesus tells us their heart is not right. Their heart has not been given over to me. Jesus told his disciples, when you see Jesus, you see the Father.

When you see Jesus in a Christian, you see the Father. John 14.9 said to Philip, he who has seen me has seen the Father. The main reason we're not seeing fruit in the professed church is because Christ is not the pattern for what we're doing.

Paul the apostle tells us in first Thessalonians four and three, for this is the will of God, your sanctification. It's the command of God that we be holy, set aside and separated for him. Two things are stated here.

God commands that we stop doing evil and we learn to do good. Sanctification requires striving to overcome our sinful tendencies, the things that constantly rebel against God in our hearts, the things that belong to our old nature. They must be checked and subdued.

All these unholy habits that were formed within us before we were Christians. We must cultivate what God's word says in our hearts until it leads to holiness of heart, mind, soul and everything within us only by seeing Christ's pattern or by conforming ourselves after we are born again into his likeness. Can we both

enter the narrow gate and continue on this journey? The only way for a born again believer to legitimately enter the church of God is to see Christ and follow his pattern in everything that we do.

If you look at Matthew 7 verse 16, Jesus once again gives us instruction. Matthew 7 16. He says, you will know them.

You'll know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Those who enter the narrow gate know who is in the church through Jesus. You know, it's a simple mandate.

Look at verse 24 of Matthew 7. Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, that's who's entered the narrow gate and is continuing on the journey. That's the difference between the false prophets and the true pattern of Christ. Look at verse 21 of Matthew 7. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father in heaven.

Hearing God's word and not doing it is an untrue pattern. James 1 22. Be doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves.

The fruit of those who know Jesus Christ as Lord is holiness. The fruit of those who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord is worldliness. Jesus Christ is the pattern for all those desiring to enter life, not the corrupt pastors and priests.

They're false prophets, not the false brethren that come to church, but they're not with us. Not the nonbelieving seminary professors who teach lies, not the false ministers advocating homosexuality, not the false clergy who married divorced people, not the fake minister who loves this world's goods while they fleece the flock of God. Think of it.

How many churches today are using God's money, the people's tithe to fund lawyers and pay legal fees for the pedophiles that have been preying on innocent children? When will the professed church wake up and see how many false prophets have slipped into their sheep suits and they're destroying the sheep from inside? The church must realize that Christ is our pattern and his word is our guiding light. Everything that does not love the father like Christ, live God's word like Christ, speak God's word like Christ, obey Christ's word is not Christian and it does not belong in the church. The apostle John saw these antichrist deceivers creeping into the church even as early as the latter part of the first century.

He says they'll come right in. They'll come right into the midst. He said a little by little the pattern of Christ will be replaced with the pattern of the devil.

Each generation of watchmen were charged to be sober and be vigilant. Watchmen must wake up. But as Bunyan so clearly laid out in his novel, Holy War, Beelzebub suggests it is best to come to them in a form that is familiar to them.

When Satan came against man's soul, he came with lies and flattery and misleading words. The people will believe what we promise if we pretend to have great love for them. Satan came and he spoke like a lamb, but once inside he devoured with the teeth of lions.

The church was warned not to open the door to them until they bring fruit worthy of repentance. But the church in the city of Mansoul did not listen, and we're not listening today. Our Savior El Shaddai warned us by the fruits, you will know them by the fruits.

You'll know them. First John 2 15. Do not love the world or the things that are in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. Many have snuck into the church both and in front of the pews. They are anti-Christ because they have not entered through Christ the narrow way.

Maybe they had once been professors of Christianity, but through their apostasy showed that they were never of true piety. They never were truly converted, never belong really to the spiritual church of Christ. First John 2 18.

Little children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard that the anti-Christ is coming, even now, many anti-Christ have come by which we know that it is the last hour. First John 2 19.

They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out that they might be manifest that none of them were of us.

The apostle Paul warned us just like Jesus. His master warned him before when he wrote to Timothy. Paul said, be careful, be careful, Timothy, because they're sneaky.

They're lovers of themselves. They love their money. They love their possessions more than God.

They will be selfish. They'll be puffed up with pride. They will hold to an outward form of religion, but they will not surrender their lives to the Lord.

Second Timothy three. Stay away from such people. Even though they came into the church, they will not enter the Lord's heaven.

Matthew 7 19. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Both in Matthew 7 23 and in Luke 13 27, Jesus says to them, I never knew you.

Jesus said, Heaven is only for everyone who hears what I say and obeys me. My question is, are you using Christ's pattern to be sure you are on the narrow way, the narrow way? Point number five. Will you remain willing? Question Mark.

When Jesus described the work that the Holy Spirit begins in us by faith, he described it as a building process. Matthew 7 24. Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock and the rain descended.

The floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house and it did not fall for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand and the rain descended. The floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house and it fell and great was its fall.

Now, for many of us who have been brought up under false teaching or those who are lazy and enjoy the free handout systems of life, this may come as a shocker to you. But Christianity is not like cruise control. It's not like watching television with a remote.

Jesus said, if you hear his sayings and you want to go to heaven, then get up and start building your life on being a doer of his words. Life does not just happen. You need to work for anything that's good.

Matthew seven, verse 24. Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock. Jesus Christ is the rock.

You do not build the rock. You build upon the rock. He is the foundation of everything.

Matthew seven, 26. But everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. Now, skipping over again to Luke, chapter 13, verse 24.

I want to look again at what Jesus said about entering the narrow gate. Luke 13, verse 24. Strive to enter through the narrow gate.

For many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able to strive. The word signifies to contend like someone who is in a boxing ring with an opponent. Contend as for the mastery to struggle excessive difficulty.

Will there be in order to be saved? You will have to force your way in. That's how it's described entering the narrow gate. Quite a difference than what most of us probably thought previous.

Strive literally means agonize, agonize. Now, I have painfully come to realize that not all people will be saved solely because they do not desire to be and will not put the efforts towards salvation. Now, the make believe Calvinists who only use John Calvin for their own self-centered goals have for the past 120 years been peddling their own concocted brand of religion that is neither Calvinistic or Christian.

They have gotten so many good Christians confused. They're actually doing a good job for Satan. John Calvin said this.

The doctrine of perseverance of the saints does not maintain that all who profess the Christian faith are certain of heaven. It is saints, those who are set apart by the spirit, who persevered to the end. It is believers, those who are given true living faith in Christ, who are secure and safe in him.

John Calvin never taught easy chair Christianity. Those who think you can just sit back in the passenger seat and enjoy the ride on automatic pilot are not abiding in the doctrine of Christ. He who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me, Jesus said.

He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Matthew 10 verses 38 and 39 and Matthew 16 verse 24.

Now the cross that Jesus spoke about was a place of crucifixion. It was a place of death. Galatians 2 20.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me in the life which I now live in the flesh. I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Who lives in you? Who lives in you? I'm convinced that the reason we do not see full and absolute new creations in Christ Jesus is because there are so few of them. They're rare. Western Christianity has falsely taught us that you can have your cake and eat it too.

That's not the Christianity that it's found or taught. It's not. Just like Eve from this point on, you'll hear these words and you will decide what you will do from this point.

This is the word of God. I believe this is the absolute truth inerrant in every way. You'll make your own choice of who you are going to serve and who you believe, just like Eve did.

Romans 6 2. How shall we who die to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we were buried with him through baptism into death that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father. Even so, we also should walk in newness of life. Verse 5. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over him for the death that he died.

He died to sin once for all, but the life that he lives, he lives to God. If you have not died, you cannot live. We're living in a time where everyone wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.

Romans 6, 4. Therefore, we were buried with him through baptism into death that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father. Even so, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, if, if we've been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection.

Verse 10, and he lives to God. Show me a professed Christian today united together in the likeness of his death, and I'll show you someone who walks in newness of life. Most have not died to sin.

They live for themselves, their own purposes, their own wants, and their own desires. They will not live for God. There is no heaven for a person who lives for themselves.

Jesus said he would no longer return to a people who were not willing. He would depart and not return. Today, if you have heard his voice and you have ignored it, or maybe you walked in obedience for a while, but you've turned back, this might be your last opportunity.

You must be willing or you'll be left alone and you will suffer in hell. Jesus said this to the first church. He wept while he said this.

He wept. He told them, you must be willing or you will be left alone and you will suffer in hell. Luke 13 verse 34 and 35.

Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing. See, your house is left to you desolate, and assuredly I say to you, you shall not see me until the time comes when you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Are you willing today to enter the narrow gate? Only then you will see Christ. Our Savior pleads one last time before he shuts the door of eternity. Will you enter the narrow way?

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