

# Narrow Is The Way

By

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*“Narrow is the way, and few are they that find it.” (Matt. 7:14)*

If a Christian ever stood out in contrast, by choosing the narrow way of Jesus Christ, it should be in this generation when the whole world, believer and unbeliever, agrees that man has reached a low point in wickedness.

Man thinks in terms of power, to overcome obstacles, wealth to obtain desires, and fame to make others respect him. All of this was denounced by Christ. Christians are to put away the sword and turn the other cheek. Treasures are to be laid up in heaven rather than on earth. Worldly fame, that which is exalted among men, is an abomination with God. The church seeks a compromise. It honors the wealthy; sticks the wealthy man's name on its buildings, windows and effects. It glories in power; see how it caters to the military and seeks to make a show of strength by boasting of its great buildings, the size of its crowds and the worldly importance of its leaders. It grasps for the crumbs from the famous by hiring the stars of movies and T.V. to be featured at its special meetings.

**THE WAY OPPOSED BY THE WORLD.** Jesus said, “He that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (John 12:25). The life Christ proposes is a way that is always opposed to the world. To walk His way is to walk against the grain, to be dishonored, and to be dishonored in the world is so contrary to our natural inclination, the desire to be accepted and recognized, that life in this world for a Christian is abnormal. Paul expressed it, “If we have only hope in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable” (1 Cor. 15:19). Peter addresses Christians as “sojourners and pilgrims” (1 Pet. 2:11). A Christian is a visitor in the world, not a permanent resident. Such tourists and pilgrims are in the minority, with little power, influence or fame, strangers in a foreign land.

What a contrast is this with the modern church which fears nothing so much as to be considered small or different from the community and without worldly affluence.

The opposition between the way of the world and the way of Christ is determined – one might say predestined – because of the ultimate ends to be gained. The Christian's goal is “unto life eternal.” It is other-worldly, the very expression which prompts sneers and jeers from the sophisticated worldling. Christ's purpose is a life that transcends all earth-bound dreams. The other-worldly life is distasteful to the world because modern man is grounded in Utopianism, the dream that if we work hard enough, get enough cooperation from others and put enough pressure on in the right places, we will bring about conditions in the world that will be ideal: we will create Utopia, the perfect nation or world where everyone is supplied with all the desires his nature demands. Even churches are falling

over each other in the effort to create new Utopian schemes such as Anglo-Israelism and Millennialism, based on some misinterpreted prophecy. Christians seem more concerned with national reformation than with spiritual regeneration, with the constitution than with the commands of Christ.

Such a way is broad. It is popular all over the world. Revolutionaries and patriots alike have been willing to die for Utopian dreams fashioned according to this world. But Peter and Paul died for the way of Christ, a way that knows no geographical boundaries and endures all human governments, because it is the way of another world, a world that begins where this one leaves off. To be loyal to it demands a certain detachment from this world. Its King has commands which must be obeyed even while we live in this foreign land. Look about you and you will see thousands of people going their own ways, and yet they do not seem to collide because they each choose their way from a variety of human courses. But Christ allows no variety. To follow Him is to go His way, the narrow way, toward the one purpose, eternal life in a new creation.

**THE WAY OPPOSES THE WORLD.** “Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4). God Himself pronounced the curse upon the world at the time of man’s first sin (Gen.3:17-18). It is doomed under this curse and ultimately is to be burned with fire (2 Peter 3:7-12). All the ways of men succeed only in polluting the world and demonstrating more and more the way sin corrupts that which God created perfect. Thus Christ declares that He will “destroy them that destroy the earth” (Rev. 11:18). Besides this, the scheme of every nation, including the ancient nation of Israel, has been to raise itself to a power independent of Christ the rightful King.

Thus the world proves to be no friend of God. Does this mean that we cannot show ourselves friendly to those in this world? Christ gives the answer by his example. He “gave himself...that he might deliver us out of this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4). “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). This is true friendship, not condoning nor partaking of the way of the world, but rather by delivering men from it. While Christ is the only one who can so deliver men, we who walk in the Way prove to be a friend when we show the means of escape from this world.

Modern churchdom has sought to ingratiate itself with the world and be a friend to it, while upholding Christ as its champion. Man wants a way which satisfies the worldly desires, with Christ as a travel guide to show where the pleasure spots are - as long as He doesn’t get in the way. But Christ is really not available as such a companion. He does not suggest that we “invite Him into our hearts” as we so often hear today; rather He invites us to enter into the narrow way, the way He has already made. All other ways are opposed by Christ. Christ’s way is not something to add to the already overloaded life of modern man. It is to take the place of the worldly life.

**THE WAY OF THE INDIVIDUAL.** The way of the world is full of company. “Many are they that enter in thereby.” This is the broad way with the wide gates (Matt. 7:13). It

is the collective way, the way that is approved, that is socially acceptable and “for the good society.” It is the way of the majority vote, denominational approval and the popular format of “public worship” where the public goes to witness the performance of its paid entertainers. Under most circumstances a person can “go to church” and not even lose step with the world by giving a solemn thought to his personal condition. He is one with the crowd, with the whole world, and many are they that form his company. True worship is not public; it is the most intimate and personal experience for the devout whether alone or in the company of a band of believers.

Christ deals with individuals. He never gave a committed but that had to be done by a person, an individual. He Himself stood alone, prayed alone, and obeyed alone. No one could do His work for Him. Christian faith cannot be delegated, divided into parts and shared by a committee. A man must undertake it, the whole thing, for himself, like Abraham: On Mount Mariah he stood alone, Isaac bound to the altar, not a soul watching; only God. This was the narrow way, and Abraham is the one given in the New Testament as the example of Christian faith.

Man thinks to solve every problem by making things bigger, by increasing the size of the crowd. Everything is better and more successful when done by a multitude. So have we made the narrow way a broad way by eliminating the individual Abrahamic experience. Man dares not be alone, to make the inward examination, to ponder his own heart before God and make the commitment for which there is no earthly reward in the form of approval, applause or acceptance. Whatever he does must be related to the multitude. He makes his “decision” in the crowded auditorium with 500 people cheering him on to the strains of an invitational hymn. What will he do when he finds himself alone on the narrow way, where, like Abraham, he must work out his salvation with fear and trembling with only God to see? When, like Jesus, he must choose the will of God in private and be put to shame in public? This is the narrow way; so narrow there is room for only one.

**THE GLORY OF THE WAY.** The narrow way is obscured to the vision of the populace who are blinded by the world’s promise of glory and honor. Jesus asked, “How can you believe, who receive glory one of another and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not” (John 5:44). The honor men seek is from crowds, millions, from organizations and institutions. How men look in awe at the person whose name is a household word, the star, the general, the athlete! The church advertises the celebrity, the one who is honored by the world, and the preachers throng to be seen in his presence. But Jesus promises, “If any man will serve me, him will the Father honor” (John 12:26). Not the honor of multitudes, but honor from one, God. This is the narrow way. It is self-denial, to set out on the course that will be unsung by men, where your sacrifice will be unseen and your name forgotten, where you will receive nothing from man but indifference, where if he takes note of you at all it will be to persecute you, Blessed are you! Such was the way of Christ. “What? Could you not watch with me one hour? Not my will be done, but thine. My God, why hast thou forsaken me? Into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

Honor from God! This is the glory for the narrow way. It is the way of the peace of God that passes understanding. Those who seek for such honor will receive it in glorious immortality for eternity, while the world which seeks glory among men will get only that and nothing more. It is a lonely way, but in the end will arrive at the reunion of all divine honored saints of the ages, while those who travel in the large company of the world will travel alone, and to nothing.

Christ's way is narrow, but it is the only way He offers, therefore it must be the way of joy. It is sheer joy to be able to look upon this world from the heights of the narrow way, to be detached from the world's false values, its blind alleys, its dead-end streets, its sullied sensualist, its satanic conspiracies for destruction, and its vain knowledge and arrogant sophistication. What joy to know that there is nothing that can be lost in the narrow way, for all on the road are Christ's, and He "will lose nothing" (John 6:39). What peace to be in the way with Him who created all things, and who will as easily, by the same word" bring all things to naught, all except that which is the way.

Therefore, "enter you in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads unto life, and few are they that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

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