



The “Straight and Narrow” Way Pt 2: The Way of Life!  
Exploring the Kingdom of God through Matthew  
June 10, 2018

HOLY TEXT:

*Mat 7:13-14 (KJV) Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

*Mat 7:13-14 (ESV) "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

Last week our goal was to “come to terms” with our LORD’s teaching that “broad is the way that leadeth to destruction but narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.” We said that because of religious syncretism, or mixing the sacred with the secular, our tendencies towards relativism, and our dislike of authority, this text rubs many the wrong way.

We looked at the words Jesus uses and we found little help in easing our cultural fears and lessening our mental discomfort:

- The word for “strait” in the KJV in Greek is *stenos*. It means “narrow, not crooked; rigorous.”
- Narrow is from the Greek *thlibo* and it means “to press (like grapes), press hard upon, a compressed way, narrow straitened, contracted; metaphorically to trouble, afflict, distress.”
- Christ teaches very clearly that the “wide gate” or the “broad (wide or spacious) way” will be the one that “many” enter.
- Those who would follow Christ MUST be willing to walk through the strait gate and embrace the narrow, less-traveled, but glorious road!

***Friends, let us state and believe today this truth: The Narrow Way is the Way of Life!***

THE GOSPEL IS NARROW, AND YET IT ALONE IS THE WAY OF LIFE!

For any soul to enter the gate, he or she must enter through Christ, and Christ alone. This is a Narrow but life-giving truth!

*Joh 10:7-10 (KJV) Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

*Joh 14:6 (KJV) Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

*Act 4:12 (KJV) Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

*Gal 1:7-10 (KJV) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. 10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*

*1Ti 2:5-6 (KJV) For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

*Joh 3:36 (KJV) He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

*Rom 10:9-10 (KJV) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

#### THE WAY OF LIFE IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Once one has entered into life, he sets his heart to walk after the ways of Jesus. The precepts of the King begin to burn within his heart because of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. He begins to long for His statutes, and see them as life-giving to all around him.

- *Psa 119:97 (KJV) O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*
- *Psa 119:127 (KJV) Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.*
- *Psa 119:40 (KJV) Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.*

This is what the Sermon on the Mount is about! The King is commanding Kingdom subjects how to live and be life-giving!

For example our LORD declares:

1. **“Blessed are the meek.”** (5:5) Often the start to the “strait and narrow” way, when Christ saves a man or women, He first humbles them. This new and living way of humility begins to permeate their living. People aren’t used to the strength of meekness. It opens doors and touches hearts. How might humility and meekness not only model Christlikeness, but bless those around you?
2. **“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.”** (5:6) Again, who actually thirsts after righteousness? Consider how your example of holiness might impact and give life to your children, friends, and church? The world is hurting and so confused. What might happen if millions of believers passionately pursued purity and justice?
3. **“Blessed are the merciful.”** (5:7) One of the most difficult things for many is to show mercy...to compassionately NOT give others what they deserve. This requires lots of Spirit-empowered and very tangible love and forgiveness, holding no record of wrongs. (1 Cor 13:5, NLT) How much life could you give to others through true forgiveness? The King commanded, *“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”* (5:44)
4. **“Ye are the salt of the earth.”** (5:13) If our beliefs about the salt metaphor are true, that salt 1) is a preservative, 2) adds flavor, and 3) produces thirst...how might this sort of life bring joy and strength to others? In other words, what situations need YOU to intervene to maintain them? How does your life diffuse (spread) the aroma and “taste” of Christ? (Ps 34:8) Are you walking out the precepts of Jesus in such a way as to make others “thirsty” or desirous of that sort of life?
5. **“Ye are the light of the world.”** (5:14) Christ commanded, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”* (5:16) This sort of living shines brightly in the midst of the cultural chaotic darkness and gives hope! This kind of church, this kind of singleness, this kind of parenting, this kind of stewardship is filled with zeal and joy and demonstrates to others the power of God!
6. **“Whosoever shall do and teach”** the least of His commandments shall be called great in the Kingdom of God.” (5:19) We also find this heart in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19), which is the life-giving, life-affirming, life-altering command to make disciples of all nations. The Narrow Way is to lovingly hold to every jot and tittle of God’s Word. Why? Because God’s Word brings life! *Joh 6:63 (KJV) It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* How might those around you be blessed by such devotion to our LORD?

7. **“First be reconciled to thy brother...”** (5:24). Jesus wants His subjects to be peacemakers (5:9). When possible, Christians are to live peaceably with all men. (Rom 12:18) Whenever possible, we leave things better than they were before we arrived. This is life-giving! Sometimes, this is not possible, but it should be a constant goal of the Kingdom Citizen.
8. **“Pluck it out, cast it off, cast it from thee.”** (5:29-30) Narrow? Yes! What could possibly be life-giving about a radical, flesh-destroying view of holiness and purity....about conquering day-to-day temptations to lust to a large degree? Look around! Look at how many abuses, hurts, pains, media instruments, and cultural and spiritual damage is done because when our “members offended us” we took a less-than-effective actions?
9. **“Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”** (5:32) What affect would less divorce have on our communities? In that vein, what life-giving affect would more biblical marriages have? How about the impact of such joyful homes? Perhaps biblical heart and renewed culture of life towards children? What about all the social-economic realities that such marriages produce? Yes, the Narrow Way is to marry and stay faithfully married. I submit this is life-giving!
10. **“After this manner therefore pray ye...”** (6:9) Everything about the LORD’s prayer is both narrow and life-giving. Imagine many more believers who reverence the LORD’s name more consistently (this would include being faithful on the LORD’s Day), want and work for His Kingdom to come, desire His will in all things, and are content with daily bread as examples. Although not common, these kinds of Christ-centered, peaceful believers could shake hell’s foundations as they lift up the pleasant paths of peace. (Prov 3:17)
11. **“But thou, when thou fastest...”** (6:17) Might the power of God flow more freely through congregations of secret fasters? This is life through the strait gate! The promise of Isaiah might be more manifest if we chose the VERY narrow way of consistent fasting:

*Isa 58:6-12 (ESV) "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? 8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. 11 And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. 12 And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.*

12. **"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"** (6:25) Oh friends, how much of our lives are lost to anxiety and worry? Anxiety is both physically and mentally toxic (Prov 12:25). Like insecurity, it seeps into everything. Through Paul, our LORD commands, *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done."* Php 4:6 (NLT) The Way of Life would be the worry-free way, knowing that our LORD is totally sovereign and in full control of His creation. He loves you and commands you to cast your cares and burdens upon Him because He cares for you. Who lives like this? Few!

*Psa 55:22 (KJV) Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

*1Pe 5:6-7 (ESV) Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

Yes, friends, The Sermon on the Mount (and indeed all of God's Word) describes for us the Way of Life, which is the Straight and Narrow Way. May our hearts burn for our LORD and His Way more and more...

*Luk 24:32 (KJV) And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

Amen!

#### APPLICATIONS FOR EDIFICATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Discuss how living according to God's Word can and should bring life.

1. Our enemy uses his devilish influence to promote the opposite: that God's precepts are the paths of destruction. Can you think of areas where this falsehood has impacted you or your family? Are you bold enough to discuss it?
2. What are some ways you can promote the Way of Life in your sphere of influence, starting today?