

THE NARROW ROAD TO LIFE

(No. 1220 – 5/16/22 – Sermon Online Zoom)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **Mat. 7:13-14:** ¹³*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and **broad is the road that leads to destruction**, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and **narrow the road that leads to life**, and only a **few** find it.*
- B. There are **only two roads** (there is no middle road or third option!); there are often only **two choices**: right or wrong, good or evil, life or death, heaven or hell.
- C. A “road” [Gk. *hados* = “progress, (high-) way, route, journey or distance”] involves a journey to a specific destination
- D. Key words about each road
 - 1. Broad road – “many, destruction”
 - 2. Narrow road – “few, life”
- E. The most important question: **WHICH ROAD ARE YOU ON?**
- F. God lets us choose:
 - 1. **Deut. 30:19-20:** ¹⁹*This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you **life and death, blessings and curses**. Now **CHOOSE life**, so that you and your children may live ²⁰and that you may love the **LORD your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him.***
 - 2. Why would anyone choose death or cursing? It seems crazy, but many do!

II. ENTRANCE

- A. Each road has a gate or entrance—a starting point:
 - 1. “Wide” gate [Gk. *platus* = “spread out ‘flat,’ broad, wide”]
 - 2. “Narrow” gate [Gk. *stenos* = “narrow (from **obstacles** standing close about)”]
- B. Entrance onto the broad road is easy and automatic—**EVERYONE** enters this road **by birth**:
 - 1. **Ps. 58:3 (NLT):** *These wicked people are **born sinners**; even **from birth** they have lied and gone their own way.*

2. **Rom. 3:9-12, 23:** ⁹*What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are **all under sin**.* ¹⁰*As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹²**All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.**”* ²³*for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God.*
3. **Rom. 5:12:** *Therefore, just as **sin entered the world through one man**, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because **all sinned**.*

C. Entrance onto the narrow road is so difficult it takes a supernatural miracle called **New Birth**:

1. **John 3:3-8:** ³*In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is **born again** [lit. “from above”].”* ⁴*“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”* ⁵*Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is **born of water and the Spirit**.* ⁶*Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷You should not be surprised at My saying, ‘**You must be born again.**’* ⁸*The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”*
2. New birth involves **repentance** from sin (the old way) and **faith in Jesus Christ** (newness of life)—we actually become new creations (**2 Cor. 5:17**):

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come!*
3. Only a FEW truly find this way (**Luke 13:23-30**):

²³*Someone asked Him, “Lord, are only a **few** people going to be saved?” He said to them, ²⁴*“**Make every effort** [Gk. *agōnizomai* = “to struggle, compete for a prize, contend with an adversary; fight, labor fervently, strive”] to enter through the narrow door, because **many**, I tell you, **will try to enter and will not be able to**.* ²⁵*Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ “But he**

will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.'²⁶ "Then you will say, '**We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.**'"²⁷ "But he will reply, '**I don't know you or where you come from.** Away from me, all you evildoers!'"²⁸ "There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out."²⁹ "People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God."³⁰ "Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

4. Entrance is humanly impossible (**Mark 10:23-27**):

²³Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "**How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!**"²⁴ **The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!**²⁵ **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."**²⁶ **The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"**²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "**With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.**"

5. Peter realized that the New Birth was a gift of **God's mercy and grace (1 Pet. 1:3-5)**:

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! **In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**⁴ **and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you,**⁵ **who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.**

III. SEVEN ASPECTS OF OUR JOURNEY ON THE NARROW ROAD

- A. **(#1) We are following Jesus—He is the Way!**

1. Jesus' call: "Follow Me."
2. Not mere rules, methods, or principles—a PERSON (**John 14:1-6**):

¹"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many rooms; if it

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were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you **to be with Me that you also may be where I am.** ⁴**You know the way to the place where I am going.**” ⁵Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we don’t know where You are going, so how can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus answered, “**I AM THE WAY** and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

- B. **(#2)** We need to know the destination—this is the road to the Celestial City, the Heavenly Jerusalem [*Pilgrim’s Progress*]
 1. The narrow road leads to life—life eternal in the Kingdom of God
 2. **Heb. 12:22-24:** ²²*But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, ²⁴to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*
 3. We need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, setting our affection on eternal things above, looking for the city whose builder and architect is God:
 - a) **Heb. 11:8-10:** ⁸*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was **looking forward to the city with foundations**, whose architect and builder is God.*
 - b) **2 Cor. 4:18:** *So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*
 - c) **Col. 3:1-4:** ¹*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts on things above**, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.** ³For you died,*

and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

C. (#3) We walk by faith, not by sight

1. **2 Cor. 5:7** (KJV): *For **we walk by faith**, not by sight.*
2. **Prov. 3:5**: *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding [“don’t try to figure out everything on your own” (MSG)].*
3. We constantly war against thoughts, reasonings, opinions, doubts, or anything that is contrary to the Word of God [see Rom. 4:12-25; 2 Cor. 10:3-5].

D. (#4) The narrow road is the way of the cross—discipleship, obedience, self-denial, and suffering

1. **Luke 9:23-26**: ²³*Then He said to them all: “If anyone would come after Me, **he must deny himself and take up his cross daily** and follow Me. ²⁴For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life for Me** will save it. ²⁵What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? ²⁶If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*
2. **Luke 14:25-27, 33**: ²⁵*Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them He said: ²⁶“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he **cannot be My disciple**. ²⁷And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow Me **cannot be my disciple**... ³³In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has **cannot be My disciple**.*
3. **Mat. 7:21-27**: ²¹*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only he who does the will of My Father** who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ ²³Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!’ ²⁴“Therefore everyone **who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his*

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house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

4. The narrow road is characterized by affliction and suffering; [NOTE: Jesus used two different words to describe the narrow gate (Gk. *stenos*) and the narrow road (Gk. *thlibō* = “to crowd, afflict, suffer tribulation, trouble”)]—NO WONDER ONLY A FEW FIND THE NARROW ROAD!
 - a) **Acts 14:21-22:** ²¹They [Paul and Barnabas] *preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,* ²² *strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.*
 - b) **2 Cor. 4:16-17:** ¹⁶*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.* ¹⁷*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*
 - c) Here is Paul’s list of “light and momentary troubles”—how does it compare to yours and mine?
(2 Cor. 11:23-28):
²³*Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.* ²⁴*Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.* ²⁵*Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,* ²⁶*I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the*

city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

- d) **1 Pet. 1:6-7:** *⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

E. (#5) The highway of holiness

1. The narrow road is a highway separated from everything unclean (**Isa. 35:8**):

*And a **highway** will be there; it will be called the **Way of Holiness**. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it.*

2. Holiness means separation—those who walk on this road are set apart to God and separated from every defilement of sin, the flesh, and the world
3. **2 Cor. 6:14-7:1:** *¹⁴Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹⁷Therefore **come out from them and be separate**, says the Lord. **Touch no unclean thing**, and I will receive you. ¹⁸I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” ^{7:1}Since we have these promises, dear friends, **let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.***

4. The “high”-way of holiness is only for the lowly and humble:
 - a) **Micah 6:8:** *He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*
 - b) **1 Pet. 5:5-6:** *⁵Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.*
5. We are in the world, but not of the world (**John 17:14-19**):

*¹⁴I have given them Your word and the world has hated them, for they are **not of the world any more than I am of the world.** ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are **not of the world**, even as **I am not of it.** ¹⁷**Sanctify them by the truth;** Your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For them **I sanctify Myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.***
6. **Rom. 12:2:** ***Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.*
7. **Gal.: 6:14:** *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the **world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***
- F. (#6) We walk in the light and in the truth
 1. **John 8:12:** *When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will **never walk in darkness**, but will have the light of life.”*
 2. **1 John 1:5-7:** *⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: **God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.** ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷**But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.*

3. Those who choose to continue on the broad road hate the light (**John 3:16-21**):

*¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but **whoever does not believe stands condemned already** because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but **men loved darkness instead of light** because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil **hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.** ²¹But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.*

G. (#7) We walk in the Spirit, not after the flesh

1. The narrow road is for the spiritual, not the carnal—it is for those who are filled with, led by, and under the control of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Gal. 5:16-25** (NKJV): *¹⁶I say then: **Walk in the Spirit**, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the **works of the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also **walk in** ["keep in step with" (NIV)] **the Spirit.***

3. **Rom. 8:5-9,12-14:** ⁵*Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who **live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.*** ⁶*The mind of sinful man is death, but the **mind controlled by the Spirit** is life and peace;* ⁷*the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.* ⁸*Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.* ⁹*You, however, are **controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit,** if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ...* ¹²*Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.* ¹³*For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,* ¹⁴*because **those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.***
4. Whenever we are tempted to take a detour, turning to the right or left, the Holy Spirit will convict us and get us back on track (**Isa. 30:21**): *Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."*

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. There are two roads—a broad road and a narrow road; one leads to destruction, the other to eternal life
- B. We all started out on the broad road—we were born in sin and naturally followed the ways of the world and uncleanness.
- C. Entrance onto the narrow road requires repentance and faith—a miraculous supernatural transformation called the New Birth—it is something we must seek (**Mat. 7:14**): *But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and **only a few FIND it.***
- D. SEEK and CHOOSE the narrow road (7 key aspects):
 1. Follow Jesus (it gets lonely, but He is always with you!)
 2. Know the destination—the Celestial City
 3. Walk by faith, not by sight
 4. Discipleship—the way of the cross, self-denial, obedience, and suffering
 5. Continue on the way of holiness
 6. Walk in the light and truth
 7. Walk in the Spirit, not after the flesh