



TEEN TREE OF LIFE THE NARROW OR THE WIDE GATE

Part 1

March 17, 2019

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1JOHN 1:9: *If we confess our sins* [directly to God], *He* [God] *is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”*

The Mount of Beatitudes, on the Galilean hillside, is where Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ made what we have come to know as His Sermon on the Mount. The Mount of Beatitudes is thought to have actually been a hill, which is located between Capernaum and Tabgha. This spacious hillside provides much room for crowds to gather. In **MATT 4:12**, Our Lord and Savior begins His Ministry and gathers His first disciples: ***Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, “Follow* [make me known or announce] *Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. (MATT 4:18-22)*** This is a GREAT verse because the apostles Peter and Andrew were obviously fishermen. That was how they made their living; it was their identity. They weren't ever going to be anything other than fishermen. Fishing wasn't just their identity - it was their entire family's identity.

As you might expect, Jesus Christ sees something different in these young fishermen. He knows they know how to catch fish, but He sees that they are more capable than that. He sees that they have more to offer the world than just catching fish for the rest of their lives. To their friends and family, Peter and Andrew were only good for one thing: fishing. The brothers, no doubt, thought the same thing. But, Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ saw the potential in them to become world changers. That's HUGE! If you look at His invitation in **MATT 4:18-22**, it's very clever, isn't it?

Neither of these young men would have believed Our Lord if he'd said something like, “Follow me, and I'll use you to bring about God's ultimate rule and reign

here on earth." So, what does He do? He talks to them about what they know – fishing – and uses it to give them a vision of what God can do **through** them.

Think about your life for a minute. Imagine, Jesus Christ walking the earth today and finding you. Where would He find you? Let's say you work after school in a supermarket, bagging groceries for a few nights a week and that you only get paid minimum wage plus tips. Of course, you **really** need to use your imagination, because you need to pretend that we're not in the Church-Age – but rather in the Dispensation (time period) of the Hypostatic Union which refers to the time in which Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ walked the earth.

So, imagine that He walks into where you're working and sees you bagging groceries and says: "Follow Me, make Me known, announce Me, and I will make you baggers of men." Don't laugh! Think of it. Peter and Andrew were called to be "**fishers of men**" – as baggers of men – you'd be doing the same thing: bringing people to Christ – if you followed Him.

All the Books of the Bible work together as one amazing Book so we need to look at the apostle Luke's account of what happened with Peter and Andrew to understand what happened prior to them following Our Lord: **Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, [Peter's] and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the [crowds of] people from the boat. (LUK 5:1-3)** Picture that: Our Lord and Savior was standing in the boat and teaching to the crowds of people who had followed Him to hear Him teach! **When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but [upon Your Word] I will do as You say and let down the nets." When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. (LUK 5:4-7)**

(LUK 5:1-3 substantiates the spacious hillside between Capernaum and Tabgha.)

So, now imagine that when Our Lord walked into where you were bagging groceries, it had been an extremely slow afternoon with no one shopping and no tips. Would you follow Him if He had filled your bags with dollar bills? The point isn't that He's giving you money. Even with Peter and Andrew, it wasn't the fact that He miraculously produced all the fish because look at what happened next: **But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him. (LUK 5:8-11)**

Ask yourself now, would you then walk away from the bag of money to follow Him and become His disciple?

Dallas Willard spent his life encouraging people to use their own lives to demonstrate Jesus Christ's message. He wrote: "Discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be if He were you." Our Lord and Savior wants to use you in whatever it is you spend your time doing and this includes going to school, hanging out with your friends and staying at home with your family. That's discipleship and as we live our Christian Walk, following Him, we gradually become more like Him. That's why we study and apply His Word – to be like Him. Metabolized doctrine will give you permanent values.

Look at what Peter (who had been a simple fisherman) eventually wrote in **2PE 3:11 (New International Version): *Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives...*** Peter is telling us that we need to have a lifestyle dedicated to God. We must be alert and constantly aware that Satan is out there trying to get us off track. He uses work, friends, and money or materialistic things to get us off track. Before we can have good relationships with people, we must have a good relationship with God. And as we have learned, you cannot handle the problems in life unless you have metabolized doctrine resident in your soul. Throughout our lives, we are going to come up against cosmic believers – those who are following Satan instead of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ: ***The one [anyone] who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1JOH 3:8 New International Version)***

You must know by now that as followers of Jesus Christ, we are in the minority and we obviously shouldn't choose to follow the majority like cosmic believers who follow Satan! Look at what God The Father said to Moses in **EXO 23:2 *"You shall not follow the majority in doing evil..."***

{to be continued}