



TEEN TREE OF LIFE THE NARROW OR THE WIDE GATE

Part 2

March 24, 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."*

As we studied last week, without a doubt, throughout our Christian life, we're going to meet and have to deal with people who are following Satan instead of Our Lord and Savior. The plain fact is that, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are in the minority.

Now let's look more closely at The Sermon on the Mount. Right off the bat, Jesus gives the twelve apostles their first taste of His Teaching Ministry. LUK 6:17 tells us: **Jesus came down with them** [the twelve apostles] **and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of His disciples** [students], **and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon...** (LUK 6:17) In addition to the twelve apostles, there was a huge group of His students who were following Him to learn what He was teaching. There was also an even larger group of people which included men and women, sitting around ready to learn and hanging on His every word. People from all over the nation had flocked to this place and according to LUK 6:19: **were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.** And then He turned and looked at His apostles and when everyone was quiet, He delivered His **greatest** Sermon. The theme of His Sermon is found in MATT 5:20 (New International Version): **For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.**

Toward the end of His Sermon, He speaks these words: **"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are**

many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (MATT 7:13-14) Let's stop here and look at the definition of the word gate. You might envision a gate to be on hinges and closing an opening in a fence. But here, Our Lord is using this definition: "an opening permitting passage through an enclosure." The idea here is that these gates aren't shut – each of them is open.

Jesus Christ begins **MATT 7:13-14** with a command to "**enter through the narrow gate.**" He's commanding the apostles, the disciples and the great crowd of people who have gathered to enter the narrow gate!! He first describes the gate as "**narrow**" and then as "**small**" and then He describes the "**way**" or path through it, as narrow. And notice that He tells us the narrow path "**leads to life.**" He also contrasts this narrow gate and path with a wide gate that opens up to an extremely wide path that "**leads to destruction.**"

Now, remember that He's teaching to a huge crowd! Look at **The Living Bible** translation of **MATT 7:13-14**: "**Heaven can be entered only through the narrow gate! The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide enough for all the multitudes who choose its easy way. But the Gateway to Life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it.**" The choices He's describing are the gate to Heaven or the gate to hell. And the very sad truth is that only a few people will choose to go through the narrow gate and multitudes of people will go through the wide one. God has given every person on earth free will to make the choice between the two.

The word righteousness is defined as the quality of being morally right. A person's righteousness is adequate only when compared to another person's righteousness; but it's totally inadequate when compared to God's Perfect Righteousness: "**I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciple.**" (**JOH (15:5-8 The Message Bible)**) Our Lord compared God's Perfect Righteousness to the self-righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees throughout His Sermon and in **MATT 7:13-14**, He is calling for everyone in the crowd to respond!! He has everyone a command, but each of us had to choose between the two gates. Each gate opens to a different way of life. Both gates ultimately lead to two very different final destinations. We either obey His command or by default we choose to go through the wide gate. Mankind has only been given two choices.

Look at the two choices this way. Imagine you're standing before two gates. One gate is very narrow – so narrow that only one person at a time can get through it. The other gate is very wide. It's so wide that you're not even sure where it ends. The narrow gate has a few people around it but the wide gate is filled with them.

At the narrow gate is a Man Who looks very battered by life. He has scars on His Head, Hands, and Feet and a prominent one on His Side. He stands in front of the gate

and stops each person who walks past, talking with each of them, individually. Some turn and walk away while others bow to Him, embrace Him and then enter. The sign above His gate reads: ***"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*** (JOH 14:6 New International Version)

The wide gate or opening is very, very large. There is a big sign at the top of the gate which reads: "this is the way of life, enter as you please." And at different places along this opening, there are different entry points – each with a smaller sign. Under each smaller sign, there's a person or a group of people. Each individual or group is calling out to the crowds of people to enter his or her gate. They're competing against each other. Each group is saying different things, but their goals are basically the same: to get more people through their smaller entry gate.

Imagine, too, that you see the people under each sign being loud-mouthed and argumentative toward those under the other signs. And you also see that their greatest animosity is toward The Man at the narrow gate.

Now, let's imagine who the people under each sign are and what their signs say. Under one, there's a college professor, wearing a robe like you wear when you graduate school. His sign reads: "the intelligent should enter here." Another man is wearing a saffron-colored robe and his sign reads: "this way to nirvana."

There are some people wearing very expensive clothing and jewelry, standing under a sign that reads: "this way to god's blessings." At a different entry point, there are beautiful women and handsome men who have no scars or blemishes. Their sign reads: "this way to self-improvement." At another entry point is a man wearing a turban. His sign reads: "Allah says go this way."

Now you become really confused because you've just noticed a bunch of signs that read: "this is the way Jesus went." But the group under each of those signs is saying something different about Him. One of those groups added the words: "this is the gate to heaven" to their sign. Some of the signs are simple, some are complex, and some are huge ones, made with neon lights! One of the really weird signs reads: "this is all there is" and the group of people under it are wearing white lab coats.

{to be continued}