



TEEN TREE OF LIFE

THE NARROW OR THE WIDE GATE

Part 10

May 19, 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 [name] 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."*

We're at the point in our study in which Our Lord and Savior is warning his disciples and followers to beware of false teachers. We've learned that some false teachers deceive themselves so much that they think they're actually serving Him, when they really don't even know Him. And knowing Him is the most important thing in our Christian Walk. We've been put on earth for one reason only: to glorify God. Doing this is dependent on doing His Will, not on doing good works. But false teachers teach that good works please God and this is completely wrong. It's what Satan wants us to believe. The people who teach and believe this are wandering around on that wide path that leads out from the wide gate.

Let's look at a Greek word **agathos**. **Agathos** is defined as excelling in any respect; distinguished; and good. It can be predicated of persons, things, conditions, qualities and affections of the soul, deeds, times and seasons. With respect to our Christian Walk, it refers to Christian service or deeds performed by the believer who is

filled with The Holy Spirit. A believer has to be directed by God's Word, and motivated by his or her love for God, when performing Christian service or deeds. Only these deeds are accepted by God and rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. ANYTHING accomplished apart from the Filling of the Spirit and God's Word is human good performed under human power and is evil and worthless to God. This is taught in **ISA 64:6 (New International Version): All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts [human good] are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.**

The opposite of Divine Good (**agathos**) is human good. Human good is what a believer produces when he or she is not filled with The Holy Spirit. Human good is essentially the production of evil. It's often a reaction to a situation. Let's look at a good example of this. Imagine there are a couple of kids in your English Class at school and one of them isn't good at writing and everyone in the class has an important writing assignment coming up. Imagine further, that one of the two kids has offered to help the other one with the assignment. Imagine further, that you really don't like the one who has offered to help the kid who can't write, because he has been dragging his feet, and not really helping the kid who can't write. So you offer to help the one who can't write because you want to spite the one you don't like. Your helping is human good, not Divine Good - **agathos**.

If instead, you helped the kid who has trouble writing because you were motivated by what you learned in Bible study and you were Filled with The Holy Spirit, you would have produced Divine Good. People often give or do so-called "good things" with the wrong motivation – like giving someone something because they think it will please God. It won't, because it's human good and all human good will be burned up at the Judgment Seat of Christ! Look at what the apostle Paul wrote in **1CO 3:5-15 (The Message Bible): Who do you think Paul is, anyway? Or Apollos, for that matter? Servants, both of us—servants who waited on you as you gradually learned to entrust your lives to our mutual Master. We each carried out our servant assignment. I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plants, but God made you grow. It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process but God, who makes things grow. Planting and watering are menial servant jobs at minimum wages. What makes them worth doing is the God we are serving. You happen to be God's field in which we are working. Or, to put it another way, you are God's house. Using the gift God gave me as a good architect, I designed blueprints; Apollos is putting up the walls. Let each carpenter who comes on the job take care to build on the foundation! Remember, there is only one foundation, the one already laid: Jesus Christ. Take particular care in picking out your building materials. Eventually there is going to be an inspection [The Judgment Seat of Christ]. If you use cheap or inferior materials, you'll be found out. The inspection will be thorough and rigorous. You won't get by with a thing. If your work passes inspection, fine; if it doesn't, your part of the building will be torn out and started over. But you won't be torn out; you'll survive—but just barely.**

Another important lesson Our Lord wants us to learn is that just because a person does good things, it doesn't mean he or she is righteous. Let's look at what righteousness means in the Christian way of life. First and foremost, righteousness is an attribute of God. It describes the absolute perfection of His Character and Person.

Mankind's righteousness is adequate only in comparison to other humans and it's totally inadequate when compared to God's total, complete, ultimate and perfect righteousness! We are taught this in **JOH 15:5-8 The Message Bible**: ***"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 disciples."***

At the moment of Salvation God credits His Righteousness to every believer and declares him or her righteous or justified. Because of this, all believers possess His Own Righteousness: ***But in our time something new has been added. What Moses and the prophets witnessed to all those years has happened. The God-setting-things-right that we read about [in the past] has become Jesus-setting-things-right for us. And not only for us, but for everyone who believes in him. For there is no difference between us and them in this. Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners (both us and them) and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ. God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public—to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured. This is not only clear, but it's now—this is current history! God sets things right. He also makes it possible for us to live in his rightness [His Righteousness]. So where does that leave our proud Jewish insider claims and counterclaims? Canceled? Yes, canceled. What we've learned is this: God does not respond to what we do; we respond to what God does. We've finally figured it out. Our lives get in step with God and all others by letting him set the pace, not by proudly or anxiously trying to run the parade. (ROM 3:21-28 The Message Bible)***

If God excluded anyone who possesses His Own Righteousness because he or she made the choice to believe in His Son, He would be denying Himself. Once we are saved, we are always saved. Our Salvation is as strong as the essence of God Himself!

In our ten weeks of study on The Sermon on the Mount, we have seen our Lord and Savior contrast the nature of true righteousness to the self-righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. This Sermon is His Call for us, as Christians, to respond to Him! He has given His Command, but it is up to us to choose between The Narrow or The Wide Gate.

What you build the foundation of your life on, will either be God and His Word or something created by man. You can choose to be clothed with His Righteousness or you can wear your own self-righteousness and live in arrogance, on the wide path in the cosmic system.

Throughout His Sermon on the Mount, Our Lord makes a contrast between His Father's Grace and mankind's good works. The Scribes and Pharisees did many good things, but they trusted in their own works, not God's. That's why they only listened to what He taught, but they refused to obey His Commands or follow His Teaching.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ gives a command in **MATT 7:13** to ***“Enter through the narrow gate.”*** This is not a suggestion! Those who love Him will obey it: ***“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”*** (JOH 14:21) The gate is narrow but keep going through it. Learn God's Word. Throughout your day, stop and remember to name your sins to God so you are filled with The Holy Spirit.

Pay attention to the choices you make and keep asking yourself this important question: Are you choosing God or are you choosing Satan?