

3. There is need for compassion, but there is no room in the way of life for compromise with Satan or his ways.

**V. ALTHOUGH PLAINLY RESTRICTED, THE WAY OF LIFE IS BROAD ENOUGH FOR OUR NEEDS.**

- A. It is broad enough for every sinner who will repent and obey Christ. (Acts 2:36-38.) It is the way of submission to God. (Hebrews 5:9.)
- B. It is broad enough for all who walk *"in his steps."*
  1. It is a path all can walk--beside or with Christ.
  2. Those in the broad way cannot do this; neither can they take with them God, faith, righteousness, and many of the finer things of life.
- C. "It is broad enough for us to realize our highest possibilities." Because the way is restricted does not mean that those who walk therein are themselves to be narrow in every respect. Indeed, we must be broad in:
  1. Our **compassion for all mankind:** The sinful, negligent, young, aged, weak, fainthearted, etc. The way of service to God.
  2. Our **purpose, spiritual ambitions.** (Mark 16:15.)
  3. Our **hopes.**
    - a. The hopes of those in the broad way are very limited--they do not reach beyond the grave.
    - b. Ours reach into eternity. (Hebrews 6:19,20; 1 John 3:1-3.)

CONCLUSION —

- I. Every person must travel in the broad way or in the straitened way.
- II. Which destination will it be for you, friend: Life? or Death?
- III. We earnestly exhort all who have entered the way of life, to *"Be thou faithful unto death."*

-- Charles E. Crouch

## *"The Way of Life"*

*Matthew 7:13,14; John 14:6*

INTRODUCTION —

- I. This passage begins the third major part of the sermon on the mount.
  - A. It is one of the four concluding exhortations concerning the kingdom.
  - B. It has to do with choosing the right way of life.
- II. According to the Lord's view of humanity, there is a certain inevitable movement of all people.
  - A. As Jesus sees them, no one is ever at a standstill.
  - B. Moral progress is pictured as continuous--a journey in a restricted way.
  - C. The imagery is drawn from ancient cities, surrounded by walls and entered by gates--one representing life, the other destruction.
- III. There are two ways, only two, and each is very costly.
  - A. The toll for traveling the broad way is paid mainly at the end: Proverbs 16:25; 14:12; Romans 6:23.
  - B. The toll for the narrow way is paid at the beginning, and while we travel it. (Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:23.)

DISCUSSION —

- I. **THE LORD'S EXHORTATION AND WARNING.** (7:13.)
  - A. *"Enter ye in by the narrow gate."* (13a.)
    1. The gate is mentioned before the way.
    2. The way of life is entered by a narrow gate.
    3. In this way Jesus expresses the difficulty of the first step in religion, involving, as it does, a victory over our natural inclinations.
    4. In Luke 13:24 he uses the stronger expression: *"Strive (agonize) to enter in."*
    5. All must enter by one of these gates. Jesus bids us enter through the narrow gate into the straitened way where one may find life--not mere existence, but fellowship and joy with God.

- B. **The wide gate:** *"For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby."* (13b.)
1. In this manner Jesus makes plain the relative number of the lost and the redeemed.
  2. The broad way is entered by the gate which is wide enough to allow every sin, hatred, vice, and degrading influence.
  3. It is the easy way: Easy to enter (because no thought, faith, repentance, or preparation is required), and easy to travel (because no restraint, restriction, sacrifice, or limitation is imposed upon its travelers). Every man may become his own law (Judges 17:6).
  4. The broad way appeals to the many because of the abundance of liberty or license allowed to engage in every pleasure, and because of the abundance of company in following the multitude.

## II. WHY THE WAY TO LIFE IS ENTERED BY THE NARROW GATE. (7:14.)

- A. **Leadeth unto life:** *"For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it."* (14)
1. The door of entrance is Christ. (John 10:9.)
  2. This is the gate of humble obedience to God's will. (Luke 13:3; Matthew 7:21; Acts 2:37,38; Hebrews 5:8,9.)
  3. The gate **must be entered**. (John 3:5; 1 John 2:4; Revelation 22:14; 7:14.)
- B. The way to life is a restricted road and an exacting journey, and no one will be deceived by entering it through a wide gate.
- C. The narrow gate, therefore, suggests and forecasts the nature of the way into which it leads.
1. "Easy street and the strait way never intersect."
  2. Jesus evidently wanted this fact clearly known. (Luke 9:57-62.)

## III. SOME THINGS REQUIRED OF THOSE WHO TRAVEL THE WAY OF LIFE.

- A. A willingness to forsake the pleasure and popularity and convenience of the majority, and to walk with the unpopular few.

- B. They must "*deny ungodliness*," every worldly lust (Titus 2:11,12; 1 Thessalonians 5:22), every wrong attitude (Matthew 5:27,28), even themselves (Matthew 16:24). It is not enough, however, merely to deny ourselves these things. We must be willing to identify ourselves with others and become burden bearers (Romans 14:17; 15:1; Galatians 6:2).
- C. They must also set their faces toward their goal (Colossians 3:1,2; Proverbs 23:7). One is willing to travel almost any road, if it leads to where he really wants to go--i.e., home. "The first concern of every traveler is destination." **This way leads unto life abundant and everlasting.**

## IV. WHY IS THE ROAD OF LIFE NARROW AND STRAITENED?

- A. Certainly not because God arbitrarily decreed that it should be.
1. But since it is true, Jesus in mercy has revealed that fact to us--he has merely described it "as it is."
  2. This is an act of divine favor, grace, blessings. (Titus 2:11-14.)
- B. It is "The Upward Way," leading to God, and for that reason it could not be otherwise than different, difficult, and narrow, when seen through the eyes of a sinful, unbelieving world.
1. John 14:6; Isaiah 55:8,9; Revelation 21:27.
  2. It is the way of holiness. (Isaiah 35:8; Ephesians 5:27; Hebrews 12:14; 2 Corinthians 7:1.
  3. It is the safe, homeward way--the way of complete happiness and of final, eternal glory.
- C. This, however, should not be surprising, because the way to success even in the world is a restricted one.
1. If anyone succeeds in business, he must stick to the restricted way.
  2. And if he is a successful hunter, he must aim at one object; in marriage, to one person; etc. There are 10,000 ways to **miss**.
- D. The way of life is fenced in by divine truth, commands, etc.
1. And **truth on any point is narrow**. (I. File, "Narrow.")
  2. To deny this is to be ridiculous and to bring our Lord's religion into disrepute, expose us to absurdity and ridicule, and to cause the honest and intelligent to shun Christ himself. (See Baxter, **Great Preachers of Today** series, p. 80.)