

## THE TWO ROADS

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13-14.

There are just two roads -- the road to heaven and the road to hell. Nearly everybody will admit that there is a road to heaven and a road to hell, but somehow the average unsaved person tries to imagine that there is a third road and that he is on it. One purpose of this message is to help you to realize that there are just two roads, and that you are traveling on one or the other of them.

As we are walking along the highway of life, we suddenly see two gates confronting us. One is very wide and many are entering. The other is very narrow and takes only one person at a time. As we look through the wide gate we see that it leads to a broad road and that a great crowd is surging along it. We look through the narrow gate and see that it leads to a narrow way and that only comparatively a few are traveling it.

### I. The Broad Road.

Every man by nature is traveling the broad road. From the hour of birth each individual is on the broad road. With but one exception every individual who has ever lived in this world has traveled the broad road from birth. That one exception is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the nature of all others to travel the broad highway.

This broad road is attractive at first. However, it grows less and less attractive as one goes farther along. There is no sin in which one may participate but what offers its attraction. Sin offers its own pleasures. Even the Word of God tells us that there is pleasure in sin, although it also declares that those pleasures are only transient and temporary. "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25). There is not a sin but what offers more at the beginning than it does after it becomes a habit and a fixed part of the life of the individual.

It is rather interesting to observe the crowd that travels this broad road. All the infidels are on it. Nobody who denies that there is a God could be on any other road. Those who deny the virgin birth, the deity, the blood atonement and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are on this broad road. Nobody who has ever accepted Christ as a personal Saviour is traveling this broad road. All the hypocrites are on this road. A hypocrite is one who professes to be saved when he is not. All of the unsaved are on the broad road. The majority of the people who are in the world are traveling this road.

It is easy to enter the wide gate and to travel the broad road. At the same time, it is exceedingly unprofitable to travel it. While it is easy to travel along the road which the majority are traveling, it is not easy to leave this road.

### II. The Narrow Road.

One must be born again before he can enter the strait gate or travel

on this narrow road. One may travel the broad road as the result of his natural or physical birth, but nobody can ever travel on the narrow road without experiencing the new or spiritual birth. God's Word is most emphatic in this respect. Our blessed Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

"Enter ye in at the strait gate." Our Lord wants us to travel on the narrow road. The Christian life on the narrow road has certain characteristics, which merit our consideration.

1. It has a narrow entrance.

The Christian life is not one which at first is fairly broad, and which as you go on becomes more narrow. The gate by which one enters upon this life is a narrow one. From the standpoint of sane and sound evangelism this fact is extremely important. When worldly wisdom and carnal motives enter into evangelism, you will not find any strait gate. Instead the impression is given that to become a Christian is after all very little different from not being a Christian, that you must not think of Christianity as a narrow way of life, but as something most attractive, wonderful and exciting, and that you become Christians in crowds. According to our Lord, that is not true at all. The gospel of Christ does not invite us in that way. It tells us very frankly that it is by a strait gate we must enter. It does not try to persuade us that it is something very easy, and it is only later on that we shall begin to discover that it is hard. The gospel of Christ announces itself as being something which starts with a narrow gate. Let us realize that.

Before we start on this road certain things must be left behind us. We have to start through a narrow gate. I like to think of it as a turnstile that admits one person at a time and no more. We have to leave the world behind. By becoming a Christian you are making a break with the world, and with the vast majority of people. That is quite inevitable, and it is important that we understand it. The Christian way of life is not popular. It has never been popular, and it is not popular today. It is different. You cannot take the crowd with you into the Christian life; it inevitable involves a break. It is something that is always intensely personal. It is true to say of the vast majority of us that there is not much that we hate more than being exceptional, different or unusual. We all instinctively like to conform to the pattern in custom, habit and behavior; we all tend to do what everybody else is doing. We tend to conform to pattern, with the result that one of the most difficult things that many people have to face when they become Christians is this, that it is going to involve their being unusual and exceptional. You cannot get a crowd through that turnstile all together, because it only takes one person at a time.

Still more difficult is the realization that one has to leave the ways of the world outside. It is one thing to leave the crowd, but it is a very different thing to leave the ways of the crowd. In other words, we must leave outside the things that please the world, and the things that please us by instinct and by nature. We cannot get away from this. For example, we must check the spirit that demands "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." "Ye have heard that it hath been said thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemies; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that

curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Now that is not instinctive. In fact, it is something that we do not like. The instinctive thing is to hit back, to defend our rights and so on. Our Lord tells us that if we are to be real Christians we must leave outside the instinctive and the things that we do by nature. There is no room for such things on the narrow road. That is a kind of luggage we carry with us that cannot be admitted, therefore, it has to be left outside.

But still more narrow, if you really want to come into this way of life, you have to leave "self" outside. Self is the Adamic man, the fallen nature, and Christ says that must be left outside the gate. The New Testament is very humbling to self and to pride. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." No natural man likes to be poor in spirit. We are by nature the exact opposite of that; we are all born with a proud nature, and the world does its utmost to encourage our pride by praising us. To become poor in spirit is humbling to pride. To enter the narrow gate and travel the narrow road will demand self--abasement. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

2. It is difficult to travel.

The Christian way of life is not easy. It is too wonderful and too glorious to be easy. It means acting like Christ acted, and that is not easy. The standard is high, and thank God it is. It is a poor kind of person who only wants the easy and avoids the difficult. Because it is difficult comparatively few travel the narrow road.

There are never as many experts as there are ordinary people. It does not matter what walk or realm or department of life you may consider, you will always find that the real experts are few in number. When you come to the topmost level in any profession in life you will find that the rivals are few in number. Anybody can follow the ordinary, but the moment you want to do something unusual, the moment you want to reach the heights, you always find that there are not many trying to do that. It is exactly the same with respect to the Christian life; it is such an exalted life, such a wonderful life, there are but few who really go in for it, and simply because it is difficult.

The Christian life involves suffering. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12). The world has always persecuted the man who follows Christ. Our Lord was rejected by the world and hated by men and women because He was Who and What He was. Paul, the matchless apostle, declared that "All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If you follow Christ, you will be misunderstood and criticized.

3. It calls for action.

Notice the words, "Enter ye." That is not an invitation to come and view a wonderful prospect, to sit as it were in the gallery and look at the arena. We are called upon to be participators in

this. It is a call to decision and to committal. As Christ was walking along He came across a man like Matthew, and He said to him, "Follow me," and Matthew got up and followed Him. Now the gospel of Christ does something like that; it always calls for a decision and a committal. It is no use to describe the glories and wonders and beauties of that narrow way if we are still going to look at it from a distance. It is a road that is to be trodden. One of the greatest dangers is that of listening to the truth, or reading the truth, and nodding the head in agreement with it and saying, "Yes, that is right, I am going to do that," and then never doing anything at all about it.

One reason Christ gives us for entering the narrow gate is the character of the two types of life that are open to us and possible for us. The man who does not consider whither that sort of life leads is foolish. The broad road is more attractive at the beginning and grows less and less attractive as one proceeds, whereas the narrow road is not too attractive at the beginning, but grows exceedingly more precious and bright as the days pass by. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). The broad road leads to destruction, but the narrow road leads to life more abundant and eventually to heaven.

There are not nearly so many on the narrow road as there are on the broad road, but they are a very choice people. But, above all, look at the One Who is treading that road ahead of all, the One Who said, "Follow me." That is enough inducement for entering the strait gate. To enter this way means to follow in the footsteps of Christ. You will gain everything worthwhile by following Him. It is only Christian people who are to be found on the narrow road, and you do not make yourself a Christian by entering the strait gate. You enter the strait gate and travel the narrow road because you are saved.

In closing, let me ask you this simple question: On which road are you traveling? You are either on the broad road or on the narrow road. If you are not now on the narrow road, walking in fellowship with Christ, then put your trust in Him now and then journey on the narrow road with the Lord.