

Only Two Roads, Only One Way

Matthew 7:13-14

Introduction – We have been commanded to proclaim the gospel to every creature, to make disciples of all the nations. There is only one problem. This message makes people mad. It insults the human heart that works so hard to justify itself and hide its natural lawlessness. The constant temptation, therefore, is to water-down the message in order to make it palatable.

Hard Words – Jesus follows the pattern of the prophets in declaring in stark contrasts that there are only two possible decisions. Moses had declared this (Deut 30:15-20), and Joshua repeated it (Josh 24:14-15). There are only two roads, and only one way leads to life. It is amazing how careful a man is to make sure that he is getting on the right airplane, and how carefree he is about making sure he is on the right road to life and not to destruction. “*Ponder the path of your feet and let all your ways be established.*”- Prov 4:26

Wide or Narrow – The outstanding characteristic of the life Christ calls us to is narrowness. The gate is narrow from the beginning. The decision requires immediate action. The entrance leaves room only for you and not for your sin.

Broad or Difficult – The broad way is open-minded (or so it declares). It has plenty of tangent excursions, leaving room for all kinds of expressions of ‘what is right’. It requires nothing to enter, and follows the desires of man all along the way, be they desires of licentiousness or legalism. The difficult way requires of you to constantly pursue holiness. There is never a time that you can relax your guard. “*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,*”- Eph 5:15.

Destruction or Life – Jesus isn’t talking about grades of improvement. Jesus is talking about Heaven and Hell. The word *apoleia* is connected to the Day of Judgment.

The Command to Enter – Jesus did not say to His disciples “Consider Me”, or “Admire Me”. He told them “Follow Me”. This is the test of action. The Sermon has been preached, now what are you going to do about it? This way of life must be entered. No man is born in this way of life. Everyone who would be saved must enter through this narrow gate and travel this difficult way.

Reconciling a Theology of Optimism – These verses, along with Luke 13:23-24 are often used to prove that ultimately a comparatively small number will be saved. But don’t we believe that the Bible speaks of a triumphant gospel, of the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth (Is 11:9), and of a multitude in heaven that no one could number (Rev 7:9)? How are we to reconcile these things?

Submit to Scripture – First, we must study the scripture as it presents itself, not as our theologies demand. Second, we must always let Scripture interpret Scripture, and not study passages in isolation.

Context – Luke 13:22-30 shows us that Jesus is speaking to those Jews of the first century, of whom we know only a remnant were saved. They were the ones who heard Him teach in their streets. And they are the ones who will be distressed when Gentiles are brought in from all over the world. We have a picture of a well-attended feast, and yet great underrepresentation of this generation of Jews. This faithful remnant was prophesied by Isaiah (Is 10:22-23), and quoted by Paul (Rom 9:27) to describe the state of affairs in his day. In addition, in Matt 8:11 Jesus describes those who will come from the east and the west as ‘many’. He has a particular group and time in mind in 7:13-14.

Exclusivity – The narrowness of the gate refers to the exclusivity of Jesus, as do other passages. “*I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*” – John 14:6. “*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*” – Acts 4:12.

Conclusion

No Neutrality – Jesus is making a command to enter - to *strive* to enter. That is not to say that man is in a neutral place where he decides autonomously whether he will believe God or not. Rom 3:11ff teaches us that we are already on the broad road. We were all placed there in Adam. You are born on the road to destruction. The problem is that man loves the broad road and hates the message to enter the narrow gate. We cannot save ourselves

The Work of the Spirit – And so, while the command remains – “Repent and believe”, we must remember the work of God’s Spirit is the only thing that can cause deaf ears to hear and dry bones to come to life. Repentance is something men do (Acts 26:20), but is a gift from God (2 Tim 2:25). And so we must faithfully proclaim that there are only two roads, and only one way to heaven. We must announce man’s love for the road to destruction. We must preach that men must be born again, knowing full well that the Spirit must grace the individual. We must imitate our Lord’s preaching. And the Spirit blows where it wishes.