The Two Paths of Life

**SUMMARY**

The choices we make today determine our tomorrows.

That’s why it’s so important to give careful thought to the consequences that result from our decisions. We’ve probably all made mistakes we wish we could reverse. If we’d only known what would result, we’d never have gone down that path. Christ has given us clear direction to help us find the best way to live and avoid the painful consequences of a wrong choice.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke about two paths of life and described the final destination of each. To emphasize His point, He contrasted small and wide gates, narrow and broad ways, good and bad trees and the resulting fruit, sincere and false professions of faith, wise and foolish builders, rock and sand foundations, and secure and unstable houses (Matt. 7:13-27). In each case, one way led to destruction and the other to life.

**SERMON POINTS**

Christ limits our choice to only two possible paths.

During our lifetimes, we must walk on either one or the other. Before we can choose wisely, we need to understand the characteristics and final destination of each.

- **The Broad Way**

  The most commonly traveled path has a wide gate and offers freedom to believe whatever one desires. All religions, philosophies, and opinions are welcomed and accepted.

  - **This is a crowded path.** Many people choose this route because it offers them the freedom to do what they want and go wherever they desire.

  - **The broad way is ungodly.** Those who travel it don’t want anyone telling them what to do. Satan walks this path convincing people that an undisciplined life is the way to freedom and happiness. What people on this “freeway” don’t see is the consequences which result from an ungodly lifestyle.

  - **It’s a path of darkness.** Proverbs 4:19 says, “The way of the wicked is like darkness.” Jesus confirmed this when He said that men love the dark because light exposes their deeds as evil (John 3:19-20). Many choose this road because the darkness makes them comfortable with their sin. They reject Jesus, who is the Light of the world, in order to avoid conviction and guilt.

  - **This road brings disappointment.** The travelers on this path try to convince themselves that following their own desires will make them happy and content, but it ultimately results in bondage to sin and disillusionment. Sin never delivers the rewards it promises.

- **The Narrow Way**

  Jesus calls people to take the narrow path. There is no mixture of religions here. Only those who believe in Jesus can enter the small gate.

  - **The path requires discipline.** Those who walk this road practice self-restraint and avoid sinful practices.
It’s the way of the few. Christians are in the minority compared to the world’s population. Even when Jesus ministered on earth, only a small number of people followed Him.

The narrow way is the path of wisdom. Those who walk it listen and accept instruction from the Lord, knowing it guides their way (Prov. 4:10-14). They are committed to living a holy, righteous life and experiencing the peace and joy that come with obedience.

It’s the path of following Jesus. This is not the glamorous highway of the world but the road of faith in Christ. Those who enter the small gate believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died for their sins. They trust Him as their personal Savior and surrender their lives to Him. This requires giving up their old way of life and walking as new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). His Spirit lives within them guiding their way and empowering them to live a godly lifestyle.

Judgment

At the end of both paths is judgment. After death, we will all stand before Christ (Heb. 9:27). Those who took the narrow path will come before Him washed in His blood, holy and righteous because of their faith in Him. But the people who rejected Christ and walked the broad path will stand in their sins. There will be no rationalizations or excuses in the presence of His radiant holiness and glory as His light reveals the darkness of their sin. At the end of the narrow road is the entrance into heaven, but the broad way leads to hell and eternal separation from God.

The Carnal Christian

Although it’s impossible to walk both paths simultaneously, some Christians try to go back to the lifestyle of the wide road. Each of us has the capacity to sin because we still have our flesh or naturalness which causes us to seek sinful desires. But God has promised that if we walk by His Spirit, we won’t carry out these desires (Gal. 5:16-17). He enables us to overcome temptation. Although we may sin occasionally, we should never let it become our habitual practice.

The Saved and Unsaved

Since this is the most important decision anyone will ever make, Jesus gives guidance for distinguishing whether someone is walking on the narrow or broad way. He says people are known by the fruit in their lives, not just their verbal profession that Jesus is Lord (Matt. 7:20-23). Believing in Christ is more than mere mental assent that He is the Son of God. In the New Testament, the word believe signifies action. Jesus says of those who are religious but whose lifestyle is characterized by sin, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (v. 23). His words reveal that they had not taken the narrow road of salvation because their faith wasn’t authentic since it didn’t result in a changed life. However, no one has to remain on the wide path headed for eternal destruction. Those who truly believe in Christ and are willing to repent of sin and surrender their lives to Him can enter the small gate and begin following Jesus on the narrow way.

RESPONSE

Bearing in mind that choices determine your life’s course, what decisions have you made which have led you to the place you are now? What blessings or negative consequences have resulted?

What guides your decision making? Have you contemplated where your choices will lead you? Do you usually consider what God desires for you?

Which path are you traveling today—the narrow road or the broad way? Have you tried to straddle both paths so you can have your way and still go to heaven? Why won’t this work? What evidence or fruit in your life proves that you have been transformed into a new creation?