

The Narrow gate- Sunday April 22nd 2012

²³ ***And someone said to Him, “Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?” And He said to them,*** ²⁴ ***“Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Luke 13:23-24***

Beloved in the Lord,

There is a very popular but false idea that up beyond the stars, in the next life, all who have died will meet again in paradise. For some reason, many people live under the illusion that in some mystical way, everything will just sort itself out after death, and in the final wash up all will be well, all will be together no matter what we have believed.

This idea is popularised through many different channels. One example is the Japanese Martial Arts instructor the late Morihei Veshiba who said: “there are many paths leading to the top of Mount Fuji but only one summit - love”. This has infiltrated many people’s thoughts and deceived them into believing that all roads lead to God. Another saying is all roads lead to Rome. Over and over, albeit in different forms we come across this erroneous teaching. This philosophy is not based on truth.

It may be true that many paths lead to the top of Mount Fuji, but God can only be reached by one path and that path is The Lord Jesus Christ.

If there were many paths, or even another path then Easter which we just celebrated completely loses its meaning. If there are many paths to God, then Jesus died on Golgotha hill for nothing. If there are many paths to God, or indeed even another path to God, then Jesus made a terrible and costly mistake. His death would have been in vain.

Jesus made no mistake and His death was not in vain, for there never has been, neither will there ever be another path to God. Jesus Himself clearly stated:

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
John 14:6

Please underline the words “no one”. No one comes to the Father but through Jesus! Only Jesus blood could pay the price of our sin debt and it is only through His blood that we can draw near to God who is holy. There is no other way. There is no other solution for the sin problem. People can philosophise to their hearts content but the truth is, always has been, and always will be that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father.

In our text today Jesus speaks of the narrow door. He is that door. He said: ***“Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. “***

In Matthew’s gospel we read:

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matthew 7:13-14

It is interesting to note the next verse: ***“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”***

Herein is a warning to beware of the false prophets. False prophets deny Jesus, they deny and reject the narrow way and the narrow gate, and they teach that there are many ways.

In John’s Gospel Jesus places a strong emphasis on Himself:

“So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” John 10:7-9

Clearly Jesus tells us that He is the door. Over and over we find this truth emphasised in God’s Word. God wants us to understand, because only when we are really clear on this truth that Jesus is the only way to God, will we be serious about evangelism.

While we buy into the lie that all roads lead up to Mount Fuji, that all roads lead to God, and do not accept the truth that Jesus is the only way, we are not going to have any sense of urgency in our mission. We will be lukewarm at best concerning evangelism.

Only when we clearly understand that all who are not on the narrow way, are on a way that leads to eternal death – hell, will we be properly motivated to try to save the lost. Think about it this way: A serious virus breaks out that is deadly. It is highly contagious and spreading rapidly. You have the power to stop it. You have the drugs to knock it on the head and you have enough for all. Would you keep it to yourself?

If you are a Christian, a child of the living God, then in your hand you have the medicine against eternal death. You know the answer. You have the Gospel, the Good News that saves.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Jesus died a substitutionary death. He took upon Himself all the punishment for sin and with His own blood He paid the price in full. He paid off the debt of sin.

With His resurrection on Easter morning, Jesus had broken the power of sin, death and the devil for all eternity. In His name – In Jesus name, through faith in Him is salvation for all people. We read in the Book of Acts about the jailer who cried out asking how to be saved:

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

**³¹ They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."
Acts 16:30-31**

It is that simple. In order for you to be saved, in order for you to live eternally in paradise, all you have to do is believe in the Lord Jesus. To believe in Him means to trust Him with your salvation. To understand that His blood paid your sin debt in full. He died in your place. Jesus took your punishment. When you confess that you are a sinner, repent (turn away from your sin) and you trust in Jesus you are saved. It is that simple.

Unfortunately there are not many who do trust in Jesus. Many stay on the wide path. A person's ego, his self righteousness does not want to bow at the cross of Jesus. It is hard for a man to humble himself and admit that he is not good. But that is the road to blessing. The path upwards is firstly a path downwards. We must humble ourselves in order to be lifted up. That is the order of things in God's Kingdom.

It is of vital importance that we understand this, and when we do, then with the help of God, we try to spread this truth further afield.

It is so true when I think of our Latvian society and our people that Jesus' words ring clear: **"there are few who find it."** So few that truly follow Jesus, who seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness. So few who find their way to Church, yet they seem to make it to Latvian House for secular functions. This is not a criticism but a sad observation. It illustrates to us the great need for mission here in our own society, and our own families. Our joint mission is to proclaim the Gospel. Jesus said:

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

This is not only my job, but it is all of our responsibility. May we see that many are lost, may we in Jesus love and power be a light that shines in the darkness and draw men to Him.

May God help us to strive for Him.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.