

Glad To Be A Narrow Minded Christian

Introduction:

I. Read Matt. 7:13, 14.

One thing that we find as we travel the road of life is that there are many choices set before us. Jesus, in this most familiar text, sets forth a series of contrasts that leaves us with a clear impression that we all must make a choice. There are, according to Jesus, two gates, two ways and two destinations. There is a wide gate and a strait gate. There is a broad way and a narrow way. *There is a destination at which many will arrive (hell), and there is a destination at which few will arrive (heaven).* Now, the question is, which gate, which way, and which destination will you and I choose for ourselves. We generally view this passage from a negative standpoint; and I must admit that this passage is one of the saddest in all of the Word of God. The very idea that the majority of people in the world today are going to be lost because the road most traveled is the way that leads to destruction is indeed disheartening. But there are some positive things that we can glean from these words of Christ. First, we do have a choice. Nothing is predestinated. If God had made us as a bunch of robots with no free will, Jesus would not have even use this kind of language. Second, while the gate that leads to heaven is strait, i.e., it is small and narrow, or we might say it is a tight squeeze, it is at least an open gate that we can enter if we choose to.

II. In our lesson this morning, I want us to focus on the word narrow. As members of the church of Christ, we have often been called a narrow-minded people. We must come to recognize that this is something that is not going to change as long we will stand for the truth. It is sad that there are many brethren in different places who have decided that they are tired of being viewed as being narrow-minded and so they have adapted their practices and their doctrine to be more in line with mainstream denominationalism. Thus, they have removed themselves from the narrow way that leads unto life are now traveling the broad way that leads to destruction. And the point that I want to make this morning is that we should never grow tired of being in the narrow way and even of being called narrow-minded. It is good sometimes to have an open mind. But sometimes it's not so good. Sometimes we need to be very narrow in our thinking and we ought no to be ashamed of it. This morning I want to say to you that I am a narrow minded preacher and I'm not ashamed of it. I am not ashamed of being a narrow-minded Christian; in fact, I am glad to be a narrow-minded Christian and I want to tell you five reasons why we should all feel that way.

Lesson:

I. We Have A Narrow Minded Father!

Now listen: God is broad in some ways. He is certainly broad in His knowledge in that He knows all things. When it comes to things such as love and long-suffering, when it comes to grace and compassion and those sort of things, we acknowledge the fact that we serve a broad God. We also acknowledge, of course, that God is broad in power. The angel Gabriel once declared that *“with God nothing shall be impossible.”*

But there is a sense in which our Father is very narrow (**Ex. 20:3-5**). It sounds to me that God is very narrow minded when it comes down to worshipping and serving Him. God wants to be served and He wants to be served exclusively. Too many in body of Christ have a tendency to serve God on Sunday, but not during the week. God is served by some on the Lord’s day, but on Monday through Saturday self is the only thing that is served. During the week we have a tendency to bow down to things like the television and entertainment and recreation and bodily exercise, while God is temporarily expunged from our life until the next Lord’s day. On Sunday we worship God with all our hearts, but on Monday we begin to pay homage to things like pride, selfishness and materialism. The Bible, ladies and gentlemen, has a name for this. It’s called idolatry; and God won’t tolerate it! Why? Because when it come down to being an object of worship, we serve a narrow minded Father. A God that is very easily made jealous. Jesus once told the Devil, *“Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 4:10)*. In another place Jesus said, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* Sounds to me like Jesus understood the narrowness of our Father, and so should we.

Let me tell you another way in which our Father is narrow. When it comes down to worshipping God, we must worship God His way. Paul said, *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Col. 3:17)*. We must sing the way God has commanded us to sing, i.e., with the fruit of our lips, making melody in our heart to the Lord, and not with instruments of music. Why? Because we serve a narrow minded Father. When it comes to surrounding the table of our Lord and remembering the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we must do it the way that God has commanded it to be done, i.e., we must observe the Lord’s supper upon the first day of the week using the right elements and having the right frame of mind. Why? Because we serve a narrow minded Father. We must pray the way God has commanded us to pray, i.e., in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must give the way God has commanded us to give, i.e., with a cheerful

heart laying by in store upon the first day of the week, and not grudgingly or of necessity. We must teach and preach the God has commanded us to do so, i.e., not adding or taking away from the Word of God. Why? Because that's the way God wants it, and when it comes to worshipping and serving God, we serve a narrow minded Father. Someone says, *"Oh, you ought to be more open minded in the way that you serve and worship God."* *"You ought to get with the program and add more contemporary music to your worship services and insert some timely plays and productions that are going to attract the masses."* *"You ought to be willing to change with the times."* Well my response to that is that God is unwilling to change. In **Mal. 3:6**, God said, *"For I am the Lord, I change not..."* Yes, we serve a narrow minded Father. And if my Father in heaven is narrow, I want you to know right now that I am glad to narrow minded myself.

II. We Have A Narrow Minded Savior!

Listen to Jesus in John 14:6.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

You see, when it comes down to salvation and entering into a right relationship with God, Jesus was and is very narrow minded. I am it Jesus said. I am the only chance you have to procure for yourself eternal life. I am your only hope for salvation. I am the way, the truth, and I am the life. Peter got the message and related it to others in his preaching. In Acts 4:12 we find these famous words of the apostle.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

That's narrow minded, ladies and gentlemen, but it's true. We do not have a choice in this thing. If you want to be saved, there is only one place to turn and that's to Jesus. I know that in this society of pluralism today, that the message of there being one of anything, especially something with religious connotations to it, is viewed as being deplorable. One writer suggested: *"About the only thing not tolerated in the religious world is the idea that one system could be right and all others wrong."* But like it or not there is only one way to be saved and Jesus Christ is that way. Peter makes it clear that the significance of Christ is global. Jesus is the author of all life and the Lord over all the universe. *"Neither is there salvation in any other"* he said, and it is vital that we all get the message this morning. Where did Peter first learn this great truth? He learned it from Jesus Himself. Jesus didn't tell Peter and the other apostle that He was one of many ways. He told them He was THE way.

Now, what way is Jesus talking about? He is not talking about the way to peace and prosperity from a physical standpoint, though we might find those things in Him. He is not talking about the way to a trouble free existence here on earth, though He can without question help us with our troubles. Jesus is not talking about a way to power and popularity; He is not talking about a way that leads to absolute comfort; He is not about a way that leads to total satisfaction in every walk of life. Jesus is talking about a way that is far more important than all those things combined. Jesus is talking about a way that leads to God, the Father. *"I am the way"* Jesus said, *"And no man cometh to the Father, but by me."*

Jesus never offered a plurality of ways to come to God. Jesus did not say that truth is subjective and so whatever you want to believe is okay. Jesus never affirmed that life, that is eternal life, can be found by following many different great leaders of our day. Jesus, in very narrow terms, tells us, You have but one chance, and that chance is me. Now, why does man need a way to God. The answer is because of sin. When you are born, you are innocent in the eyes of God, and you remain such until you transgress God's law. Once you sin there is separation.

Isa. 59:1, 2 - "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

God just does not tolerate sin and He will not dwell in its presence. When For example, when God condescended to dwell among the children of Israel, he dwelt in what was called the "Most Holy Place" which was the innermost compartment of the Jewish tabernacle. But this Most Holy Place was separated from the holy place by a curtain or veil, and through that veil no man was allowed to pass, lest he should die, except the High Priest, who entered in, once in the year, not without blood. Now, no picture could express more plainly that the way into the holiest was not made manifest - no sinful man has any way of coming into the presence of God. Why because God cannot stand to be in the midst of sin. And so man needs a way to escape his sinfulness so that he can walk up that road that leads into a relationship with God, and Jesus is saying to his disciples in Jn. 14:6 I am that road that you need to travel; I am that path that can lead you out of sin and into the presence of the Father. And please be advised that there are no short cuts, there are no back doors, there are no secret pass ways, there is only one way into a relationship with the Father and that is through the Son (**Rom. 5:1-2, 18; Eph. 2:13; Heb. 7:23-25**).

III. We Have A Narrow Minded Plan Of Salvation

There is only one place where one can find salvation. That place is in Christ. Paul said, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ”* (Eph. 1:3). Now, as we have often pointed out, if all spiritual blessings are found in Christ, then no spiritual blessings can be found outside of Christ. Everyone in the world, no matter how honest, no matter how good, no matter how religious that person may be, is not in a relationship with God and is therefore lost. Now, someone says that is awful narrow. Yes, I agree it is. But that is God’s plan of salvation. You have to get into Christ in order to be saved. Now listen Christians: we can’t be ashamed of this. We can’t say, “I don’t want to offend anybody or make someone mad so I’m just not going to teach what the Bible teaches on this.” That doesn’t do anybody any good. Yes, I am a narrow minded person when it comes down to God’s plan of salvation, and I’m glad to be so. Why? Because God has a narrow minded plan of salvation. Remember now, it was Jesus who said, *“...strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

IV. We Have A Narrow Minded Book

The book that we follow, that is, the Bible, is not open to the doctrines of men. We can’t make things up as we go along. The Bible is a narrow book in that it contains the inspired Word of God and only the Word of God. Now, when we add to or take away from the contents of this book, we find ourselves in trouble with God (Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Pet. 4:12; 1 Cor. 4:6).

V. We Are Going To A Narrow Minded Place

The final place of rest for those who would enter the strait gate and walk the narrow way is heaven. And heaven’s greatness, beauty and bliss is, without doubt, beyond compare. But heaven is going to be a narrow place so far as its population is concerned. There is not going to be a whole lot of diversity in heaven. All social and ethnic distinctions that seem to be so important to us in our present world, will be insignificant in heaven. There won’t be rich and poor in heaven. Everybody will be rich. There won’t be the hungry and the full in heaven. Everybody will be full. There won’t be the happy and the sad in heaven. Everybody will be happy. And here is what is going to make heaven an extra special place. There won’t be the good and the bad in heaven. Everybody will be good. Heaven is going to be a morally narrow place (Rev. 21:27).

But there is a message here for us right now. We must be morally upright now if we want to make it to heaven after awhile. I’m not saying that we have to be perfect now, for such is not the case with any of us.

Moral perfection is something that we will experience in the life which is to come. But what we can't do now is live in sin (**1 Cor. 6:9, 10**). There is no room in heaven for those who willfully and regularly violate the will of God. If you are in sin, you must repent of that sin if you want to make heaven your home.

Conclusion:

With all these things in mind, don't be upset or angry next time someone says that you are narrow minded. I'm glad to be narrow minded, for I have a narrow minded Father, a narrow minded Savior, Who has set forth a narrow minded salvation, which we read about in a narrow minded book, which teaches us about a narrow minded place. Yes, I am glad to be narrow minded.