

11-19-2023, COTR Texarkana

Title: The Narrow Path

Purpose: Provoke people to live for what really matters by walking on the narrow path of life.

Truth for Today: Believing in Jesus is easy but following Him on the narrow path can be hard...but it's worth it.

Text: Matthew 7:13-14

Topic: Holiness, Obedience, Fear of God, Will of God, Mission

Series Title: "Your Best Life Now" ...is found by following God's ways!

Series purpose: Provoke people to embrace the path of Biblical truth to have a blessed life now and rewards in eternity.

The Narrow Path

- I. Introduction (gift, box, 'The Bible Simplified' give away; Amazon)
 - A. Pic Review Series: "Your Best Life Now". (Notes on app, 'Church on the Rock Texarkana'). Everybody wants to have a good life in our family, job, finances, happiness, and peace...but there's a right and a wrong way to experience your best life. Pic 2 paths We've been learning how following the Biblical path of God's ways will lead us to a blessed life now and rewards in eternity.
 - B. Text [Mt. 7:13-14 (NLT) "You can **enter God's Kingdom only** through the **narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide** for the **many** who **choose** that way. ¹⁴ But **the gateway to life** is very **narrow** and the **road is difficult**, (*ESV hard*) and only a **few** ever find it.] (gate and a road/ heaven and hell) Jesus is the narrow gate. [John 10:9 (NLT) **I am the gate**. Those who come in through me will be **saved**.] (*John 14:6*). Becoming a Christian is easy. All that is required to go through that gate is to turn to God (repent), believe in Jesus and follow Him. Believing in Jesus is easy but following Him on the narrow path can be hard...but it's worth it.
 - C. Today we'll talk about (1) What motivates a Christian to walk on the narrow path, (2) How we follow Jesus on the narrow path and (3) The reward for doing it. Pic 2 guys: couch & chips vs. serious athlete gym. // Christian life. The big question we need to ask ourselves is, if I believe in Jesus, am I willing to walk on the narrow path?
 - D. Title: The Narrow Path
- II. Why would we want to walk on the hard, narrow path? Pic Co path motivation..

A. [Phil. 1:10 (NLT) For I want you to **understand what really matters**, so that you may live **pure and blameless lives** until the day of **Christ's return**. Phil. 1:27 (NLT) **Above all**, you must **live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy (NCV brings honor) of the Good News about Christ.**] We choose the narrow path because we understand what really matters and live to honor Jesus.

B. We walk on the narrow path because we love God and fear Him. [1 John 4:19 (NKJV) **We love Him because He first loved us.**] Our love for God motivates us to follow Him but love alone is not enough to keep us on the narrow path. We also need to fear/ respect God because we fear the consequences of sin. [Phil. 2:12–13 (NLT)...**Work hard** to show the results of your salvation, **obeying God with deep reverence and fear.**] What do we fear? We should fear the consequences/ judgment of the wide path of sin. e.g., drinking and driving. A police officer has power to give you a ticket or throw you in jail. The judge has the power to keep you in jail.

III. How do we follow Jesus on the narrow path?

A. 1 Pet. 1:14–16 (NLT) So you must live as God's **obedient children**. Don't slip back into your **old ways of living** to **satisfy your own desires**. You didn't know any better then. ¹⁵ But now **you must be holy in everything you do**, just as God who chose you is holy. ¹⁶ For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy." Lev. 11:44

B. [Vs. 14 So you must live as God's **obedient children.**] People on the narrow path obey God's commands, His will, and His Spirit.

1. People on the narrow path obey God's commands, Jesus [John 14:15 (NLT) "**If you love me, obey my commandments.**] Why? (1) Following God's commands pleases God. // because I love LaNell, I do things that please her and avoid things that hurt or make her mad, e.g., spearmint. (2) Our obedience saves us from heartache, Pic Co path e.g., [1 Thes. 4:3 (NLT) God's will is for you to **be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin.**] Why should we obey a command like this? Sex outside marriage can cause divorce, std, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, etc.

2. People on the narrow path obey God's will. [Hebrews 13:20–21 (NIV) Now may the God of peace...²¹ equip you with everything good **for doing his will, and ...what is pleasing to him...**]

a. Gethsemane, [Matthew 26:39 (NCV) Jesus fell to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, do not give me this cup of

- suffering. But **do what you want, not what I want.**” (NLT) I want **your will** to be done, not mine.”]
- b. My problem...It’s sometimes hard to say yes to God because I don’t want to tell myself no. E.g., LaNell mission trip. If we’re going to stay on the narrow path we have to sometimes say no to self to say yes to God.
3. People on the narrow path obey God’s Spirit, [Acts 8:29–35 (NLT) **The Holy Spirit said to Philip**, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.”³⁰ **Philip ran** over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah...³⁵ So beginning with this same Scripture, **Philip told him the Good News about Jesus.**] The believer’s main mission in life is the Great Commission. We are try to get as many people as possible to walk through the narrow gate to eternal life. Tik Tok
- C. Vs. 14 **Don’t slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn’t know any better then.**
1. [2 Timothy 4:10 (ESV) For Demas, **in love with this present world**, has deserted me...] Paul was on the narrow path of life and Demas was drawn back onto the wide path of destruction. Temptation pulled him back into his old way of life.
2. What is the world? [1 John 2:15–17 (NLT) Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you.¹⁶ For the world offers only a **craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions....**¹⁷ And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.] e.g., lust, greed, test of success...
- D. Vs 15 But now **you must be holy in everything you do**, just as God who chose you is holy.¹⁶ For the Scriptures say, “**You must be holy** because I am holy.”]
1. Def. holy life: A life that is set apart to God and set apart from sin. Living a life that is consecrated or dedicated to God¹; following God and doing what He says; living with His priorities in mind. Contrast: a selfish, sinful life is someone who does whatever they want when they want. They’re controlled by their flesh/ sinful nature and live in rebellion to God.

2. Holy people find their best life on the narrow path of life. Worldly, self-absorbed find temporary happiness on the wide path but end up losing it all.

IV. Conclusion: Jesus will reward those who follow Him on the narrow path.

A. Context, the 2nd Coming and Judgment Day, [Mt. 25:14–30 (NLT) “Again, the **Kingdom of Heaven** can be illustrated by the **story of a man going on a long trip**. He called together **his servants** and **entrusted his money** to them while he was gone...¹⁶...“After a **long time** their **master returned** from his trip and called them to **give an account** of how they had used his money.²⁰ The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver...said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and **I have earned five more.**’²¹ “The **master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’**] (same 2 bags)...²⁴ “Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said...²⁵ I was afraid I would lose your money, so **I hid it** in the earth...²⁶ “But the master replied, ‘You **wicked and lazy servant!**...³⁰ Now throw this useless servant into **outer darkness**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

B. What will heaven be like? [1 Corinthians 2:9 (NLT)...“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”]

C. The narrow path may not be easy now, but it’s the path to our best life now and in eternity.

V. Response

A. Prayer: If you’re a Christian, RU willing to walk on the narrow path?

B. Souls: If you’re not a committed follower of Jesus, Do you want to enter the narrow gate through Jesus for the salvation of your soul? RU willing to turn to God (repent), believe in Jesus and follow Him?

C. Text # screen

VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Arndt...Greek- English lexicon.

VII. Supplemental material

A. Hebrews 12:14 (NLT)...**work at living a holy life**, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.

- B. Christians on the narrow path want to take as many people to heaven with them as possible.
1. 1 Corinthians 9:19–23 (NLT) Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people **to bring many to Christ.** ²⁰ When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew **to bring the Jews to Christ...** ²¹ When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law **so I can bring them to Christ...** ²² ...I try to find common ground with everyone, **doing everything I can to save some.** ²³ I do everything to spread the Good News...
 2. Our mission is the great commission.
 3. Bring as many with me as I can. Who am I bringing with me?
- C. Warning on turning away from God, [Hebrews 10:31 (ESV) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.] Christians enter the narrow gate because we respond to God’s love as our Savior. We stay on the narrow path because we fear and respect God as our Judge.
- D. The pull of temptation. The problem we all face is a tug of war between our flesh and God’s Spirit within us. Romans 7:19–25 (NLT) ...I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. ²⁰ But if I do what I don’t want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹ I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. ²² I love God’s law with all my heart. ²³ But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. ²⁴ Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? ²⁵ Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.] Through the power of the HS, it’s possible to obey the Lord and not give in to temptation.
- E. [1 Cor. 2:9 (NLT) That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”]
- F. Today’s message is the meat (solid food) of the Word, not milk, Heb. 5:12.
- G. Mark 8:34–36 (NLT) [he (*Jesus*) said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, (*ESV deny Himself*) take up your cross, and follow me. ³⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake...you will save it. ³⁶ And **what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?**