

The Great Divide

April 9, 2006

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Matthew 7:13-14

Have you ever wondered what caused such a dramatic reversal of fortune for Jesus and his followers?

Lord, Lord.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Matthew 7:21

Jesus is unveiling his identity as the divine Son of God. This too, like other things he says here, will not be popular with some and will bring him nothing but trouble as he makes his way toward Jerusalem.

The Less-Traveled Road - "Enter through the narrow gate."

inherent – having to do with something's essential character or nature. It is the inherent way because it the way we were always meant to live. The broad way is the way that is imposed upon us. It's why so many that live on Broadway are so empty, so disillusioned, so without hope.

"I am persuaded that this narrow way is the way for which we were made. It is the Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. It is not an afterthought imposed on life. Rather it is written in the very constitution of things - in the very makeup of our universe and of our being. The man who announced the Sermon on the Mount had something to do with the makeup of our being. Instead of being foreign laws they are the very laws of our inmost being. When we discover them we discover the natural way to live."

E. Stanley Jones

Get a hold of this fact and the narrow way becomes the only realistic way to live. Any other way is suicide. Darrell Johnson

What is this narrow way? The answer lies in this word "do."

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Matthew 7:21

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24

But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. Matthew 7:26

Peter on the Narrow Way

Peter's Calling

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." Mark 1:16-17

"Here is the story of your life" says John Ortberg. "You are on a mission from God. Either that is true or you have no purpose, no mission at all.... Others have come before you. Others will come after you. But this is your day. If God's kingdom is to manifest itself right now, it will have to be through you."

Peter's Need for Grace

"Among the Apostles, the one absolutely stunning success was Judas, and the one thoroughly groveling failure was Peter. Judas was a success in the ways that most impress us: he was successful both financially and politically.... Peter was a failure in ways that we most dread: he was important in a crisis and socially inept. At the arrest of Jesus he collapsed, a hapless, blustering coward; in the most critical situations of his life with Jesus... he said the most embarrassingly inappropriate things.... Time, of course, has reversed our judgments on the two men. Judas is now a byword for betrayal, and Peter is one of the most honored names in church and world." Eugene Peterson

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:3

Peter's Opportunity of a Lifetime

Resources:

"Living in Sync" (Regent College Seminary Class) by Darrell Johnson

"Sermon on the Mount" by John R.W. Stott

"The Cost of Discipleship" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"Traveling Light" by Eugene Peterson

"The Divine Conspiracy" by Dallas Willard