

Why Many Fail To Enter the Narrow Way

Matthew 7:13-14

Introduction:

- A. Concerning the narrow way leading to life, Jesus gives a command with reasons for doing so, and then makes a startling, and to some, an almost unbelievable, statement: “there are few who find it.” This, of necessity, implies that many will not find it. Which of course makes it difficult for many to accept. Few truly do believe it.
- B. Jesus obviously spoke the truth, and there must be reasons for it being true. This need and deserves study. Therefore, it is our purpose in this study to offer some reasons why few find and enter the narrow way.
- C. Many Fail To Enter the Narrow Way...

I. But It Is Not Because Most Have Been Predestined to Eternal Destruction

- A. Hyper-Calvinism and its theory explained:
 - 1. “That independent of the foreseen merits of the one, or the foreseen sin of the other but solely in fulfillment of His sovereign purpose or decree He elected some to salvation and predestinated others to destruction.”
 - 2. Note the system of Calvinism:
 - a. T – Total depravity
 - b. U – Unconditional election and reprobation
 - c. L – Limited atonement
 - d. I – Irresistible grace
 - e. P – Perseverance and preservation of the saints
 - 3. One man said: “He literally whipped me into line. I was literally black and blue all over before the Lord finished with me.”
 - 4. This has given rise to the following summation: If you don't have “it,” you can't get “it”. If you get “it,” you can't lose “it.” If you lose “it,” you never had “it.”
 - 5. Caution: Not all professed Calvinists are hyper-Calvinists; there are “shades” and “degrees” of Calvinism.
 - a. But they all have one thing in common—one thing that is peculiar to Calvinism: the doctrine of the imputation of Jesus Christ's personal righteousness to the believer.
 - b. They may disagree among themselves over the T–U–L–I–P doctrine, with some holding to all of it and others only a part of it. But they all hold to the doctrine of the imputation of Jesus' personal righteousness to the believer and say that without that no one could be saved.
 - c. Even some brethren deny the TULIP doctrine of Calvinism and yet teach a form of Calvinism by teaching a form of the imputation of Christ's personal righteousness to the believer.
- B. The following logical consequences of the Calvinistic TULIP doctrine will show how false and damnable such a doctrine is. If that doctrine be true:
 - 1. It casts a reflection on the mercy and goodness of God and makes God wholly responsible for the many not finding the way, hence responsible for their damnation.
 - a. The Calvinists deny this, but doctrine teaches it.
 - b. But, 1 Tim 2:3-6 and 2 Pet 3:9
 - 2. It makes the Lord's exhortation “enter through the narrow gate” pointless.

- a. For the “non-elect” couldn’t enter if they wanted to.
 - b. And the “elect” are already in the narrow way or will be when the Lord gets ready for them, with no possible way they can resist his call.
- 3. It makes the gospel and the preaching of it useless as far as saving men either here or hereafter - but Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 15:1-2; Mk 16:15-16; 1 Cor 1:21; 2 Thess 2:13-14; Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:18-25
- 4. This theory makes Godly living unnecessary to one’s salvation—for once saved, can’t be lost; sins do not damn the saved—Sam Morris’ statement—others say, “lost his reward,” but not his salvation - Tit 2:11-14; Heb 12:14-15; 1 Cor 9:27; 2 Pet 2:20-21; 3:17; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1
- 5. This theory logically places Christ’s work in opposition to God’s decree - Lk 19:10
- 6. This theory logically declares that man is in no way responsible for his final destiny - Acts 2:40; Phil 2:12; Rev 22:14, 18-19; 2 Cor 5:10, 20; Eccl 12:13-14
- C. Why preach the gospel at all if hyper-Calvinism be true? Fortunately, it is not true!
 - 1. Christ died for all - Heb 2:9
 - 2. The gospel is for all, not just for the few - Jn 3:16; Mk 16:15,16; Matt 28:19; Lk 24:46-47
 - 3. He invites all to come and be saved - Matt 11:28-30; Rev 22:17
 - 4. Each and all may either reject or accept His invitation - Jn 5:39-40

II. ***But It Is Not Because They Could Not Know How to Enter***

- A. Can you imagine the Lord saying “enter,” and then making it so complicated man cannot know how to enter?
 - 1. Such would be a reflection on God’s character, His power or His intelligence, or on all three.
 - 2. There is no way God, who is all-powerful, all-wise, and full of mercy, would require entrance by a certain way, as He has done, and then make the way of entrance so complicated and mysterious that an accountable person could not know how to enter it, or how to follow it after entering it.
- B. There is not one thing that:
 - 1. Directs man into that way that he cannot understand, if he will try.
 - 2. Directs man how to live in that way that he cannot understand, if he will try.
 - 3. Man needs to know concerning salvation that he cannot understand and do, if he tries.
- C. Proof that “any man” can know and do God’s will - Jn 6:44-45; 7:17; 8:32; 13:17; Eph 5:17; 3:3-9; Matt 7:21; Lk 6:46; Rom 6:16-18

III. ***Some Fail to Enter Because We Failed to Show Them the Way***

- A. Some seem to think that only preachers, elders, deacons and Bible class teachers are obligated to teach others.
- B. The Bible obligates all who have the ability and the opportunity to do it.
 - 1. The gospel was to be carried to the world by the chosen apostles of Christ (Matthew 28:19; Mk 16:15; Rom 1:14-15; 1 Cor 9:16; 2 Cor 5:17-20; cf. Col 1:23)
 - a. They were special messengers.
 - b. They had a special mission.
 - c. They enjoyed special providence.
 - 2. While we are not special messengers on a special mission, and though we are not ambassadors of Christ, as were the apostles, we are obligated to teach the word to all—whenever and wherever we have the opportunity - 2 Tim 2:1-2; cf. Heb 5:10-14; 1 Tim 4:16; Acts 21:28; 8:4, 11-19; 18:24-28; Eph 6:4; Tit 2:3-4; 2 Tim 2:24; Jude 3; 1 Pet 3:15

3. What a power it would be if the whole church became involved in teaching the Word of God every time an opportunity presented itself!
- C. Do you not feel the divine compulsion to show them the way?
 1. Song: "You Never Mentioned Him to Me" (Sacred Selections #92).
 2. N.T. saints went forth to tell the story of Christ. Brethren, by thinking that baptisms must be associated with "church services," we are effectively practicing "spiritual birth control."
 3. If all Christians went forth to teach and baptize, we would soon face a "spiritual population explosion".
- D. Let us not use our text as an excuse for our own indifference!
 1. The one who needs to be taught the gospel has as much obligation to search for it, learn it, believe it, and obey it as we do to take it to them.
 2. God will hold them accountable for their unbelief, but He will charge their blood against us - Eze 33:6; Jer 6:17-19; Heb 13:17

IV. Some Fail to Enter Because of Prejudice

- A. Many have heard but their prejudice prevented their accepting and obeying it.
- B. Prejudice:
 1. Is "pre-judgment without due examination."
 2. It may be either in favor of or opposed to.
 3. "In religion prejudice amounts to an opinion usually unfavorable formed before a careful examination."
 4. It is a serious evil which:
 - a. Causes disrespect, anger and mockery - Acts 7:57; 17:32; 22:22
 - b. Closes ones' eyes against the truth - Matt 13:15
 - c. Makes men dishonest - Matt 28:11-15
 - d. Crucified Christ - Matt 27:19-25
 - e. Prevents people today from being saved.
- C. Note some present-day examples of prejudice:
 1. "What's good enough for my parents is good enough for me."
 - a. It should be: "What the Lord authorizes in his word is all I want."
 - b. The Jew who rejects Jesus could also say this about his parents.
 - c. The idolater who rejects the idea of one God could also say this about his parents.
 2. "If my parents didn't go to heaven then I don't want to go."
 - a. If lost, they must feel as did "the rich man" in Luke 16:27-31
 - b. You have a very low opinion of your parents if you think they want you to be in torment with them!
 - c. Why do you think being lost in hell with your parents testifies of your love or honors their parentage?
 3. "It makes no difference."
 - a. People who know and believe the Bible never say this.
 - b. Would you say this about the automobile you would buy?
 - c. How about the doctor you use to operate on your spouse or child.
 4. "Water salvation, water dogs, tadpoles, mosquito, water is not the savior, there is no power in the water."

- a. The Baptist preacher who said to Curtis Porter: “Only two things are born of water—tadpoles and mosquitoes.” Porter said, “Since you can’t be a Baptist without being born of water, which one are you: tadpole or mosquito?”
 - b. No, water is not the Savior, Jesus is.
 - c. Neither is faith the Savior, Jesus is.
 - d. But both are necessary to salvation by the Savior who stated both as conditions of salvation by His blood.
- 5. “Anyone who says you must be baptized to be saved is a liar or is preaching a lie.”
 - a. To make such a statement one assumes the burden of proof to demonstrate the lie.
 - b. Furthermore, you must endure the rebuttal. You cannot make the charge and refuse to allow a man any defense.
- 6. “Church isn’t essential to salvation—Church is not the Savior.”
 - a. The church is the saved—the ones the Savior saves - Eph 5:26
 - b. If the church is nonessential to salvation, Jesus’ death wasn’t necessary since it purchased the church - Acts 20:28
- D. Examples of prejudice among members of the church:
 - 1. “Brother So and So” teaches...
 - 2. “I had rather go to hell for doing it the wrong way, than to go to hell for doing nothing.”
 - 3. “We have been doing it this way for all these years.”
 - 4. “Well, the pioneer preachers didn’t preach it that way.”
 - 5. “You know he writes for...”
 - 6. “Well, I’ve heard that he believes...”

V. *Because They Follow a Preacher, Their Parents or the Majority*

- A. There are many false prophets gone out into the world disguised as gospel preachers - 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2:17; 4:1-4; 2 Pet 2:1-2
- B. We are to “try the spirits” - 1 Jn 4:1
- C. We dare not love parents more than the Lord - Matt 10:37
- D. The Bereans were commended for investigating - Acts 17:11-12
- E. If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch - Matt 15:14
- F. If you follow the majority:
 - 1. You are seeking the most popular way, not the Lord’s, and might be anything—depending on where you are.
 - 2. You are traveling the broad way to destruction.
 - 3. Had you followed the majority:
 - a. You would have perished in the flood.
 - b. You would have been destroyed in the calamity of Sodom.
 - c. Your body would have perished in the wilderness.
 - 4. The truth is that few will be saved - Lk 13:23-27

VI. *Others Fail Trying to Enter With the World on Their Backs*

- A. They have a divided interest; they try to love the world and the Lord at the same time - 1 Jn 2:15-17; Jas 4:4; 2 Tim 4:10; cf. Matt 6:24, 33
- B. The gate is too narrow to enter carrying the world, or any part thereof, on our back—all of it must be left outside.
- C. This was the tragedy of the “rich young ruler” - Matt 19:22

- D. We must escape the corruption of the world (2 Pet 1:4; 2:18-20) in order to enter the eternal kingdom - 2 Pet 1:11

Conclusion:

A. Why Do Many Not Enter the Narrow Way?

1. Not:
 - a. Because they were predestined to destruction.
 - b. Because they could not understand.
2. But:
 - a. Because they are blinded by prejudice.
 - b. Because they were not shown the way.
 - c. Because they blindly follow others.
 - d. Because they try to enter with the world on their backs.

B. How Shall They Enter?

1. By doing the will of God (Matthew 7:21).
2. Jesus is the Savior of all that obey Him (Matthew 5:8-9).
 - a. Believe (Romans 10:9-10)
 - b. Repent (Acts 11:18)
 - c. Confess (Romans 10:9-10)
 - d. Be baptized (Acts 2:38)