# THE STRAIT GATE AND NARROW WAY

Teaching about **the strait gate and the narrow way** is Profound and so simple.

Mt 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Isa 60:18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

The illustration Jesus used is easily understood and filled with meaning, but revelation, teaching and guidance by the Holy Ghost is needed.

Psalm 118:27 God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar

* Ps 118:27 God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light:

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

* Ps 118:27 …bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar Must be examined by the priest first

Le 1:3 ¶ If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. 3:2 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. Ex 29:10 And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. 11 And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Heb 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Mt 3:7 ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Lu 3:7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Some 700 years before Christ, Isaiah prophesied about this way, saying,

Isa 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

To the one with a humble mind and heart the significance of a gate and path is comprehended. On the other hand, His teaching about the dimension of the road to heaven entails divine truths that must be revealed by the Spirit to be understood. They are not meaningful to the natural mind.

Jesus said that the strait gate and narrow way lead to life. This life is the abundant life (John 10:10) There is only one way that leads right to heaven. The strait gate and narrow road of holiness. the strait gate and narrow way faithfully reflect the true dimension of heaven's door.

The strait gate and narrow way are the dimensions of what God’s plan is. The councils of Heaven did not just decide to make the way of salvation hard; God is not mean-spirited. The narrow way is God’s holiness. It is God's righteousness.

The first attribute of God is holiness 1Th 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. Le 11:44 For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 45 For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. 1Pe 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 1Jo 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 1Jo 1:5 ¶ This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. Joh 3:33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These attributes of the Almighty do not conflict but rather compliment each other. Because God loves mankind He did not withhold from man the measurement of the way that leads to His holy presence. God wants man to be with Him in eternity and share in His glory. That is why the way has the dimension it does.

There is no hint in Jesus' words that the strait gate and the narrow road may vary slightly from one another in their width. Jesus said, "I am the door" (John 10:7), and He also said, "I am the way" (John 14:6). There is no variance between Christ the Door and Christ the Way. The passage through the door, or gate, is so strait that there is no room for the flesh to pass through. Once having entered through the strait gate, the road beyond retains the same dimension. Having come in through the strait gate, it will not be grievous to walk the narrow way.

As Christ laid down His life, so must the seekers and knockers at the gate forfeit their lives (Matt. 16:25) to enter the kingdom. As one stands before the strait gate he surrenders everything to the Lord that he might gain entrance. Having become penitent and broken by Holy-Ghost conviction, there is no plea bargaining and no reservations stipulated. With a broken heart and contrite spirit (Ps. 34:18) one divests himself of his fleshly baggage on the world side of the strait gate. He does this willingly because his heart is being made new. He now knows that there is no other way unto salvation. He resolves to forsake the world and all its lusts, deny self, take up his cross, and follow the Lord Jesus. This he promises to do until his dying breath. This latter promise pertains to walking the narrow way.

It is imperative that one does not begin to think that the way is broader than the gate. The Scriptures give no other thought but that the door of heaven is the same dimension as the strait gate and narrow way. Some today would like to make the way just a little broader than the strait gate, but this was not their confession of faith when they entered through the gate. Somewhere along the way they began to chafe at the flesh-restricting dimension of the way They listened to the cries of the crucified old man and had sympathy on him. It is at this point that the narrow way begins to appear as bondage, rather than providing liberty *from* the flesh.

How many Christian professors will travel a broader way According to Jesus, the number will be more than a few (Matt. 7:22,23). The strait gate and narrow way alone lead directly into everlasting life.

While the way is not wider than the gate, neither will it be any narrower Having come in through the strait gate by repentance and faith, one can know he will find no place in the way that will be impossible if he keeps that same spirit.

That "there be few that find it" tells us that this gate is hidden. We understand from these words that many "seek" to find it, but only a few are successful. The failures are due to not seeking with the whole heart. People do not just happen upon the narrow way casually "though fools, shall not err therein:' Those who are presumptuous or less than sincere about the things of God will not stumble onto this way. The strait gate is hidden to human wisdom and thinking, but it is revealed to the honest, searching heart.

God has not hidden the strait gate and narrow way to exclude anyone--except the fleshly minded.

1Co 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

When Adam and Eve transgressed in the garden of Eden, God "placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24). This was done so that man would not eat of the tree of life in his fallen state and thereby be confined to a "living" death. Likewise, He has "hidden" the entrance to the narrow way so that only the truly penitent and humble find it. This is a safeguard against deception.

a gate is a controlled entrance

Some today might feel that the ministry is denying them entrance. As a result they come into trials, and some turn away. But the church's task is to prove whether one's spirit and life is such that indicate one has truly found the strait gate. Speak the truth. We must not do any less, lest men be given a false hope.

What is the essence of the straitness of this gate and narrow way?

denying oneself of many "things," with a right heart that matters? The answer is neither if considered separately and alone, but both when one's motivation is examined. The cause, or root, of sinning must receive the focus here. James writes that "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14, 15). This lust, which is strong selfish desire, is going to bear evil fruit unless it is continually mortifled (Rom. 8:13). There is not room on the narrow way for the manifestations of self. The narrow way will not accommodate "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16).

The two greatest commandments are to love God supremely and to love one's neighbor as himself. Jesus said that everything else derives from these

Mt 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Ro 13:9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

To love God and our fellowmen as Jesus taught means we will seek their highest well-being and happiness above our own pleasure. If one chooses his own satisfaction ahead of God's honor and glory, or at the expense of someone's grief or disappointment, he deems himself more worthy of satisfaction than God or his fellowman. Such a person manifests gross pride. This deference to selfishness because of pride is the essence of all sin. It is this old man of self that is excluded from the strait and narrow way.

Most want to come as they are and stay as they are, they want to bring that old nature with them with their habits

As the flesh is crucified in order to walk the narrow way, the spirit is set free to commune with God. Too many see only the negatives of the narrow way. But "there is joy in the journey" when one settles the issues of life and his course is set. He then rejoices in the word of the Lord that says, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16).

1Sa 12:23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

Am 6:5 That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David;

Mt 22:2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

2Ch 29:30 Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

The Christian message is not some theory, but His life to be lived.

The Straight Gate and the Narrow way has to do with the life of faith working by love, walking in the Spirit

The impressions, one would think, should never have worn off, and yet, it seems, they did. Thanksgiving is good, but thanks living is better.

Isa 38: 10 I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.

2Ch 32:25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

eye-gate or your ear-gate? your eyes and ears are gates into your mind.

As a Christian You can open them or you can close them. You are the one who is the guard (watchman) over what you see and what you listen to. You are the one who is in control.

2Ti 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Isa 33:14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? 15 He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; 16 He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. 17 Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.

Where is the seat of Satan in this city. (Persecution)“Is it here?” “Is it there? strip joints, jails, drug houses, ghettos, affluent neighborhoods, “**What Christians allow in the city with restraint, unbelievers practice without restraint.”**

Antipas was put to death in a popular excitement. So Stephen (Ac 7:1-60) was put to death, and so Paul at Lystra was stoned until it was supposed he was dead, Ac 14:19.

Pr 29:2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

God-given authority in the affairs of their work places, in their city, state or nation. The result is that our gates have been torn off in the name of Openmindedness and Tolerance, and the walls have began to fall down as we resigned our place to the humanists, the Eastern religions, the cults and the occult. But, God has been stirring His people, the Holy Spirit has been doing His job of convicting of sin, and slowly but surely, Christians are beginning to take their place.

Ps 87:2 The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

God "loves the dwellings of Jacob." He led, fed, guarded, lighted, visited them.

He loves Zion "better"; and gives all those blessings in a richer form.

1. There are loved more.
2. Their occupations are more spiritual.
3. Their songs and worship are more enthusiastic.
4. Their testimony is more powerful.
5. Their knowledge of truth is more clear.
6. Their fellowship is more heavenly.

Re 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 1Co 16:9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. Ac 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Eph 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Col 4:3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

Priority Gates

    The Sheep Gate *(Benjamin Gate; Gate of the Flock)*

     The Fish Gate

     The Old City Gate *(Middle Gate; Mishneh Gate; Jeshanah Gate)*

     The Ephraim Gate

Purifying Gates

    The Valley Gate

     The Dung Gate *(Refuse Gate; Potsherd Gate)*

Power Gates

    The Fountain Gate

     The Water Gate

     The Prison Gate

     The Horse Gate *(Foundation Gate; Sur Gate)*

Prophetic Gates

    The East Gate *(Beautiful Gate; Kings Gate)*

     The Inspection Gate *(Miphkad Gate; Muster Gate; Gate of the Guard)*

Ne 12:27 And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.

(Jerusalem was designed to be a holy city, all parts dedicated to the service of God)

28 And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi;

29 Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem.

30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

31 Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate:

39 they stood still in the prison gate.

Stood still-Waiting, as also their brethren did, that they might go together in due order into God's house, 43 Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

**THE NARROW ROAD VERSUS THE BROAD ROAD**

One must choose to follow the commandments of God or the commandments of men. One way is easy, the other way is hard. The boundaries are clearly distinguished. One gate leads to destruction, the other gate lead to eternal life. Revealed truths compel obedience to God’s way. To enter the "narrow gate," one must leave "self" behind; on the other hand, to enter the "roomy way," there is no limit to the baggage—self-righteousness, pride, hatred, envy, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, discord, and so on. The "narrow gate" is the very opposite of these works of the flesh.

The objective of our Lord in this "Sermon on the Mount" is to bring people to an understanding of their nature, their character, and their practice of the two great commandments—love God and love one another (**Matthew 22:34-40**). One must realize that kingdom behavior is set forth in the beatitudes (**Matthew 5:3-12**). This kind of conduct is the narrow road and the narrow gate that Jesus addresses in His Sermon—not individual cups, Sunday school, solos, handclapping, instrumental music, and so on. The realm of the New Jerusalem is a dominion of light. This kingdom consists of those who allow their good works to be seen by men in order that God may be praised (**Matthew 5:14**).

Jesus speaks of ethical behavior that is in harmony with the will of God as that which God desires in His children. It is an inward righteousness that God is delighted in, not external righteousness. Following the beatitudes, Jesus addresses the praiseworthy performance that is pleasing to the Father and the unworthy conduct that is not acceptable to the Father. He explains that the quality of one’s actions that pleases God is practice that is in harmony with the intent of God’s law:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven (**Matthew 5:17-20**).

Paul also addresses kingdom conduct in his epistle to the Galatians. To begin with, he tells the Galatians that a certain course of action will prevent their entering the kingdom of heaven:

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God (**Galatians 5;19-21**).

These works of the flesh will prevent one from inheriting God’s kingdom. This kind of behavior is not kingdom behavior. Rather, it is the "broad road" that leads to eternal damnation. This deed of achievement reminds one of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount in which He calls for radical reformation in one’s life style. Paul, too, is describing in these verses the actions that are illustrative of the "broad road." Following this catalogue of negative behavior, he then enumerates "good works" that are representative of the "narrow road":

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other (**Galatians 5:22-26**).

Again, Paul stresses the nature of the kingdom in **Romans 14:17-18**: "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. The Kingdom of heaven’s righteousness is not to be confused with the darkness of Satan’s kingdom (the broad road). We are now, in the words of Paul, "set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness (**Romans 6:18**).

Beginning with **Matthew 5:21** and going through **Matthew** **5:48**, one discovers that Jesus again sets forth the distinctive characteristics that are representative of the righteousness that is and is not pleasing to God. The "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago" (**Matthew 5:2**1) stands for of the "broad road," on the other hand, "But I tell you " (**Matthew 5:2**2) characterizes the "narrow road" that Jesus addresses toward the end of His Sermon (**Matthew 7:13-14**).

The "broad road" is composed of people who perform their "acts of righteousness" to be seen of men (**Matthew 6:1**); the "broad road" is about human beings who pray to be "seen by men" (**Matthew 6:5**); and the "broad road" consists of individuals who fast to "show men they are fasting" (**Matthew 6:16**). The "narrow road" embodies men and women who give to be seen by God, who pray to be seen by God, and who fast to be seen by God. The "narrow road" and "narrow gate" involves individuals who are bankrupt in spirit (**Matthew 5:3**); it includes people who mourn because of their sins (**Matthew 5:4**); it contains human beings who are meek as a result of their bankruptness and mourning (**Matthew 5:4**); it encompasses those who hunger and thirst after the righteousness that is inward—a righteousness that glorifies God (**Matthew 5:6**); it embraces one who is merciful (**Matthew 5: 7**); and it encloses one who is pure in heart (**Matthew 5:8**).

This way had nothing to do with the many peripheral issues that divide so many Christians within the Stone/Campbell Restoration Movement. This "narrow way" had nothing to do with absolute perfection in knowledge; this "narrow way" had nothing to do with the performance of "five-acts" of worship on Sunday morning. The believers in Rome, Corinth, and so on, did not possess flawlessness in their comprehension of God’s written revelation; nevertheless, they were still in the "narrow way" as a result of living pure, holy lives. There were doctrinal differences within the early community of God, but, nevertheless, they were still exhorted to follow Jesus, so that with one mouth and heart they could glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (**Romans 15:5**). This is what the "narrow road" and the "narrow gate" is all about—holiness in one’s life (**Matthew 5:3-20**).

In our Lord’s prayer (**Matthew 5:9-14**), Jesus taught His disciples to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" . . . "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (**Matthew 5:12, 14**). This is a part of the "narrow road." As stated above, Jesus begins this Sermon by expounding upon the characteristics that must be manifest in the life of every follower of Christ. It is imperative that every man and woman be "poor in spirit" (**Matthew 5:3**), that is to say, he or she must not be self-righteous.

Following this Sermon, on another occasion, Jesus had the opportunity to illustrate this aspect of His Sermon on humility with the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (**Luke 18:9-14**). In this parable, Jesus illustrates the sanctimonious spirit of the Pharisee. This holier-than-thou kind of spirit leads to destruction—it is the "broad way." One’s attitude should be like the attitude that Paul expresses in his Galatian letter: "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted" (**Galatians 6:1**).

In order to stress the true meaning of the "narrow road," it is necessary to exercise repetition in the retelling of some of the beatitudes. Once more, the second beatitude—"Blessed are those who mourn" (**Matthew 5:4)—**describesthe feelings of an individual that is poverty-stricken in spirit. This person aches over his or her sins. And, as a result of his or her destitution, this brooding will display a make-up of unpretentiousness (**Matthew 5:5**). No one will pray, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get’" (**Luke 18:11**)—this self-righteousness is the "broad road" that leads to destruction.

The person that is bankrupt, the person that is mourning, the person that is weak, will unremittingly long for goodness. This person will yearn for virtues that belong to God. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6). This beatitude blesses not only the deed but also the dream that never comes true. Nevertheless, in spite of our failures, everyone is to strive toward faultlessness. Our Lord expresses it this way: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (**Matthew 5:48**). One must mirror God in all his or her actions.

Christians are the "salt" and "light" of the world (**Matthew 5:13-16**). The believer’s morality must exceed that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law: "For I tell you," says Jesus, "that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven (**Matthew 5:20**). Remember that the teachers of the law and the Pharisees’ righteousness lay in externals (to be seen by men), not inward (to be seen by God). The righteousness of the religious leaders embodies the "broad way," not the "narrow way."

As stated above, Jesus now proceeds to show His disciples that His followers must put into practice the righteousness of God. He demonstrates this kind of righteousness by giving detailed instructions concerning murder (**Matthew 5:21-26**), adultery (**Matthew 5:27-30**), divorce (**Matthew 5:31-32**), oaths (**Matthew 5:33-37**), an eye for an eye (**Matthew 5:38-42**), love for one’s enemies (**Matthew 5:43-48**), giving to the needy (**Matthew 5:1-4**), praying (**Matthew 5:5-15**), fasting (**Matthew 5:16-18**), laying up treasures (**Matthew 5:19-24**), worrying (**Matthew 5:25-34**), and judging others (**Matthew 7:1-6**). In this Sermon, Jesus approaches the believer’s whole disposition toward others. He lays down the kind of ethical behavior that constitutes the course of action that is representative of the "narrow way"— performance that God is pleased with.

Jesus says, in effect, that good behavior is kingdom behavior; this is the "narrow road" and the "narrow gate." Jesus now comes to exhortation and to application. He warns that it is not praise, as such, from the lips of men that will enable men and women to enter the kingdom of heaven, but practice. This Sermon is functional; it is meant to be lived. It is something that everyone is to achieve and execute. Paul throughout his epistles stresses this kind of behavior. One only has to reflect upon the writings of Paul to the Ephesians (chapters 4 and 5) to capture the essence of Jesus’ teachings in the Sermon on the Mount:

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love (**4:2**); Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (**4:3**); Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor (**4:25**);Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen (**4:29**); Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (**4:32**); Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (**5:1-2**); But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people (**5:3**); Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving (**5:4**); For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God (**5:5**).

**CONCLUSION**

The Christian message is not some ideological theory, but something that is to be lived. The "narrow road’ and "narrow gate" has to do with one’s everyday living—our relationship to God and to one another. It is works of the Spirit versus works of the flesh. Paul, no doubt, echoed the thoughts of our Lord Jesus when he expresses himself to the Galatians: "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Galatians 5:16).