

Radiant Church, May 1, 2016  
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**A Disciple's Heart...is Bound to the Narrow Way  
Matthew 7:12-14**

Jesus is now giving his listeners the beginning of the end of His Sermon on the Mount:

- He started His sermon with the Beatitudes - character traits
- He gave two metaphors - salt and light, to illustrate those character traits' impact on the world
- He told us our "righteousness" had to be better than religious people
- He gave specific instructions on giving, praying, fasting, materialism, worry, judging others and prayer

And he capped off his comments on prayer with the Golden Rule:

**Matthew 7:12** *So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets*

The immediate context:

- Related to rightly judging ourselves, instead of judging other people
- Related to praying in dependence for what we need, instead of fighting for what we want and desire

We can foul this up, if we:

- Want people to only mention the good they see in us
- Don't want people to be honest with us, let alone call us out on our sin
- And help us polish our idols, instead of reject our idols

Jesus says that this, the "golden rule" is the summation of the Law and the Prophets, the entire Old Testament - which Jesus said all points to Him

Jesus isn't telling us to just be nice, so other people will be nice to us - He's telling us to change our affections

**Matthew 7:13** *Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.*

We can just follow our own inclinations

- No limitations or boundaries are imposed on what we want to think
- We get to believe and follow only what is either comforting or exciting

Lies we may believe:

- I am always the victim
- I am always right
- I am always in a fight
- I am always self-justified

I'm only human  
I can't help it  
God must have made me this way. It must be His fault

**Matthew 7:14** *For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

Entering through the “narrow gate” means there is no room for baggage  
There is no guarantee that the road will eventually widen. It remains narrow.  
Truth is not determined by democratic consensus

We like Jesus as long as He doesn't make our lives difficult, or painful, or even inconvenient. We like Jesus, as long as we don't have to change.

It's easier to change or alter what God says about Himself.  
And that's why your unsaved friends will sometimes attempt to tell you how God is or how Christians should think and act.

And the “narrow gate” is hard - and those on that narrow road will be in the minority, holding priorities that are not affirmed by the culture we live in.

There will be “suffering”

**Mark 8:34-38** *and calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

The narrow road is not repressive, but it does have boundaries

**John 14:6** *Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

**Acts 4:12** *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

We want to remain neutral

We want to determine for ourselves what our relationship with God  
be like - what that relationship will require of us

But we are either on the broad road that leads to destruction,  
Or we are on the narrow road that leads to life

There is no abyss, no eventual destruction at the end of the narrow road  
**John 17:3** *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

Moses called the people to make a choice:

**Deuteronomy 30:19** *I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live.*

So did Joshua:

**Joshua 24:15** *And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your father served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

The question comes down to this: What do you really want?

Do you want this life, only improved and more comfortable and more affirming?

Temporary pleasures now?

Or do you want real life, eternal life, forever pleasure?

A disciple of Jesus is someone who wants Jesus, more than anything.