

# The Narrow Way to Life

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Matthew 7:13-14, "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. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

I want you to focus your eyes on verse 14 and find that word "life". Think about the word "life". It's something desirable. I mean, I try to think about it, I know the Scripture talks about the fact that eternity is written on our hearts. You know, we could get into what all that means. But life, man is just wired to desire life. That word, life, is a rich word. Life. The Lord Jesus Christ is not speaking about this life because whatever life He is talking about is a life that few find. And you don't talk that way about this life. He is speaking about something beyond all of this. Something higher. Something better. He is speaking about, (O brethren, we sang it,) He is speaking about being ravished by the beauty of the King. And if you know how Jesus describes eternal life, you know that that is not a bad definition of what it is all about.

Life. To have this King of glory grab you, sweep you up into His arms, take you as His bride; it's life. And you know the opposite of life is death. When you compare verse 14 with verse 13, the opposite of life is destruction. What a word that is. Destruction. And notice in these verses, our Lord is a Prophet. He sees the future. You know, He knew, (you can see it from these words,) He knew before He ever went to the cross, poured out His life's blood, He knew that there would only be a few who would ever truly benefit from that death. Though such a sacrifice had been made, most of the multitudes of mankind will throw away their one and only hope, and wander down this road that goes to ruin and destruction. And you see it there.

The question to ask is, Why do so many do this? Why? I mean, you would think men and women and boys and girls would run from this destruction with all haste, with all effort, with all energy. But they don't. They don't. Most do not run away from destruction, they run towards it. Most men will run towards the cliff. Why? Well, in verse 13 we see why. The ESV reads this way, "The way is easy that leads to destruction. The old KJV says this in a rather different language, many of you are familiar with it. It reads this way, "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction." Why the differences? Why would one say "broad" and one would say "easy"? Well, the KJV is taking the literal meaning of the word. The ESV is giving it more of the metaphoric expression.

Jesus describes the way to destruction in a way that, brethren, I want you to get a feel for this word because it's not just the idea of broad. Now it is that. Literally, it's that idea. But the thing is, in Scripture when this term is used, it's used to express something not just wide, but something very desirable. I want you to hear how it's used. You know what? This is the only time this word is used anywhere in the New Testament. And so, basically, you have to understand, Jesus obviously could have said this word at other times in His ministry, it's just not recorded for us in the Word. But I want you to understand that this word is used in the Greek Old Testament. And you know what? His hearers would have been familiar with these verses; just as some of you are familiar with these verses.

But I want you to hear how this word "broad" - the broad way, or easy, I want you to hear how it is used. In Isaiah 30:23, don't look there but just listen to this, "And He will give rain for the seed with which you sow the ground, and bread, the produce of the ground, which will be rich and plenteous." There is our word - plenteous. You say, "That doesn't sound like broad." No, it doesn't. You see, this word carries the idea of just not a broad, wide, open place; but it's wide and it's open with abundance. That's the idea. It's plenteous. Listen to it used again in Isaiah 33:20-21, "Behold Zion, the city of our appointed feasts! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, an untroubled habitation, an immovable tent, whose stakes will never be plucked up, nor will any of its cords be broken. But there the LORD in majesty will be for us a place of broad (there's our word) rivers and streams." Again, the idea is water that is bringing in abundance. Water is good, it's life-giving. The idea is, there is richness here, there is blessing here, there is broadness, there is abundance, there is riches, there is prosperity, there is freedom. That's the idea.

Listen to this, Psalm 104:25, "Here is the sea, great and wide (there's our word, "wide") which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great." Or this one, (to me this is a very familiar verse, maybe some of you know it well too,) Psalm 31:8, "You have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place." Maybe your translation says, "A wide place." Or perhaps it says something else that basically carries that idea. But think about that. God has set his feet in a wide place. You see what's being communicated there. The idea isn't just an open expanse. A desert can be an open expanse. That's not the idea. That's not what the Psalmist is saying when God sets his feet in a wide place. What he means is it's a place of richness, a place of blessing, a place that's glorious. And the thing that I want you to understand is that when this word is used, time and again in the Septuagint, it carries this meaning. I believe without exception. And Jesus uses it one time in the Scriptures when we come to the New Testament. That says something. That speaks something.

Brethren, this wide gate and broad way, you look in there and it is broad. It is a place that just speaks of freedom and plenty. That's the idea. You stick your head in there and you look. I mean, you stick your head, (you can see this in Matthew 7:13, you have a gate, it's wide,) you stick your head in there and you look around; brethren, it looks good. It looks broad. It's inviting. Somebody might say, "Well, is this all the godless masses?" No, you can have your religion in there. That's okay. You can take it in. I mean, it's broad. You can have that. In fact, you know what? You stick your head in there and you look around long enough, most of the people in there are religious. Yeah, you can take that in there. You can see some of these folks, in fact, if you go down a little further in Matthew 7. You go down to about verse 22, "On that day many (there's the same many) many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

Oh yeah, lots of people are in there with religion, lots of people are in there talking about the Lord. You can go in there with all that. Don't be afraid of that. You can believe in Jesus and go in there. That's okay. Lots of people in there are saying, "Lord, Lord." There's all sort of religious talk. Lots of people going to church in there. It's easy. I mean, you know what? You can go in there and you can make Jesus into whatever you want Him to be. You know the nice thing about in there is the God of the broad way just smiles on you no matter what you do. He is

pleased with you, He is happy with you, no matter how you live your life. It's easy to live in. You don't have all the constraints of holiness. The only rules in there are the ones you want to make. Oh, you can put yourself in very legalistic situations you want; or you can throw all that off. You can try something different, you can go to the right, you can go to the left. You can chase your dreams there.

You know what? You can live with the hope of eternal life there. Most of the people in there believe that it's going to be okay with them when they die. You can live with that hope, and you can just chase all your dreams, and you can do what you want to do. And oh, the thing about it is, it's so easy. You just go with the flow. You never have to go against the flow. You can just kick back there and let the current carry you away. It's all so easy. You can justify everything, I mean, in the name of religion. You can justify not being nice to people, you can justify holding grudges, you can justify not paying your bills, you can justify not paying your taxes, you can justify prejudice. You can justify all that. You can justify not telling the truth, you can justify leaving your wife, or staring at other men's wives. And it's okay, because after all, in there you can believe that you're saved by grace and that it doesn't really matter how you live. There's lots of freedom in there.

You can justify not concerning yourself about the needs of other people. You can hoard your money to yourself, or you can give it away. You know what? You can be a nice person. It's all okay, it's easy, it's free. You don't have to worry about submitting to any authority. The only authority in there really is whatever authority you want. And you can create a God with whatever authority you want him to have, and you can create the rules. You can do it your way in there. I mean, you can fill your life and obsess your life with what you want - your hobbies, your work, your money, with sports. You can sit down, be a couch potato, and watch TV the rest of your life; become obsessed with whatever latest sitcom. You can do that. You can do that in here and it's just easy. It's easy. You can go to work and make your money, and come home and tend your garden. And on Sunday afternoons, you can go mill around at the mall. I mean, you do what you want to do. It's very liberating.

You know what? You go in there and you can just ask all the time, "What do I want to do?" Now, I recognize there may be limitations. You may not have as much money as you want to have, or things may happen to you that you don't want to have happen. But basically if you want freedom, you can go in there and you can do your own thing. It's easy.

And there are some in here, you're in there. And it's pretty easy. You get aggravated with the other people that are too narrow but remember the other way is narrow. Well, you get aggravated with them, you like the easy way. And you know, the beauty about this is, you can hang out with the church people on Sunday and you can hang out with the people of the world on other days of the week. And you can go on with life thinking it's all going to be okay in the end. You see, it's pretty easy. Pretty easy. And then you die.

You see, the thing about this broad, free, prosperous, easy way is this: It's not a place you can stay. It's a way to somewhere. It's not a stopping point, you're only passing through. And this way goes somewhere. And you know something about the way? The way is broad but where it goes is not broad. There are not many choices there. Where you go on this broad way is narrow. It is only broad in the way. The end, not so much. What a word! Destruction. Destruction.

I'll tell you what you have to do to really even start to tremble at that word. You know, you need to go read somewhere like the last five chapters of Job, where God just, in your estimation, get's bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger; till you begin to realize with Job, This God is a great King. This God is not to be messed with. This God is holy. This God is not a God you speak against. This God is so big. I mean, we are nothing in His sight. You begin to realize the enormity of the person of God, and then you recognize, Destruction. Destruction! Who among us can imagine what it means for this God when He takes upon Himself to eternally destroy us? The word, eternal, is not here but Paul uses it to the Thessalonians - eternal destruction. It is not a destruction that is once finished and complete and done. It is eternal.

You think about destroying a house, you think about destroying an item where you basically are pulling member after member out of it. You destroy something in the fire. But the idea here is that whatever destruction takes place, it's never done. It's never complete. This item keeps on going in a way of ruin. When you think about this God setting Himself to destroy someone for their wicked, sinful ways. When the God, (who the heaven of heavens cannot contain; the universe is but a speck; His power is unimaginable,) when this holy God should set His vengeance, His wrath upon [someone.] I mean, we are small; such a puny one as us who have raised up with our fist in His face. And He says, "That's enough, you have dishonored my glory and I am going to hurt you." Eternal punishment is going to hurt. And you know, the thing about it is, most people are going to know this reality. Few there be that miss it. What a nightmare! What a horror!

Most people just don't even want to go here. They don't want to think about this a whole lot, even as Christians. Because even if we are in a place of safety, you start thinking about this too long, you start thinking about all the people you know, who don't know the Lord. And you begin to realize the end of the wicked is absolutely terrifying. Eternity. Eternity. God eternally loathing the sinner. You would think men would flee from this at all cost. And Jesus tells us that the very way that is broad, that is leading to unspeakable, unimaginable horrors of God's wrath, that way is crowded. It's crowded. Not only crowded, but only few ever take the other way.

Matthew 7:14, "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." Our Lord tells us the way is hard. The NKJV says difficult. KJV and the NASB say narrow. But again, narrow is the literal idea but there is a metaphoric meaning that is often brought out in Scripture. Yes, it literally can contain the idea of a very compressed way, but that is not the typical way that the word is used. Paul uses the word in 2 Corinthians 4:8, listen, "We are afflicted," - there it is: afflicted. "Well, that doesn't sound like narrow." No, because there is a metaphoric meaning here. "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair." You see, the idea, the metaphoric meaning of the word is hardpressed. It carries the idea of affliction, distress, trouble.

In fact, you know what's amazing about this word? This same word group is used to describe the destruction at the end of the broad way. I mean, basically what Jesus is doing, He is using a word here that Paul actually takes, (very similar word from the same word group) and he says, 2 Thessalonians 1:6, "Since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you" That word "affliction" there, is the word.

Brethren, you gotta see this for what it is. Our Lord, He came up on that mountain, He saw the crowds, His disciples came to Him, He sat down. And He opened His mouth, and He taught them. I get the idea those disciples were probably right there in the front row. The crowd moving out from there. He looks at these men, just as real as you and I sitting here today, He looks them in the eyeballs and He says, "Men, the way to life is hard." You know, if some prince who had been pampered his whole life, the prince of Wales, somebody who's had everything on gold platters, walked around in soft clothing, their nails professionally done, if they say that it's a hard way, you'd take that for what it's worth. Here is the One who went to the cross. This is the Man of sorrows. This is a Man such as none have ever suffered like this Man. Jesus Christ is no pushover. He is no lightweight. He looks these men dead in the eyeballs, and He said, "The way is hard." Wow, it must be. It's going to be hard.

If you are into easy Christianity, that's the other road. That is not this road. The other road, that's the easy one. This one is not easy. I mean, so what is this? "Common, if my sins are forgiven, that isn't hard, is it? I mean, if I have been born again, that's not difficult, is it? If I have a Savior, I thought life got easy." Well, as a matter of fact, the Christian life is difficult to the extreme. I was listening, last night as I drifted off to sleep, I was listening to the last chapters of Pilgrim's Progress. And again, this morning. The audio. I am always impressed. I don't know, maybe impressed is probably not the right word, but I take note. When Pilgrim and Hopeful, there they are, they are at the Delectable Mountains and the shepherds are there. And the two pilgrims are discussing among themselves. They said one to another, "We had need to cry to the strong for strength." And the shepherds say, "Ay, and you will have need to use it when you have it too." It's like, Yeah, God is going to give you strength, but you can be sure you're going to need every ounce of it He gives you to make it to the end.

Oh yeah, you're supported underneath by the everlasting arms, but you are going to have to fight and claw and scratch and work out your salvation. There are going to be such powers as to resist you in this world. O if God's arms were not underneath you, you would fail in a moment. It will press you, it will squeeze you, it will make you cry, brethren it will make you sigh, it will break you. Have you ever noticed? I mentioned this not too long ago, but I'll mention it again. We heard about Bunyan in the first hour. John Bunyan wrote his Pilgrim's Progress, and if you really take note, City of Destruction; into the Slough of Despond; to the worldly wise men; to Mount Sinai; to the Gate where the arrows are whizzing past his ear from Apollyon's battlement; he gets through, you have Hill of Difficulty, loses his scroll, has to backtrack, and then there's lions. You keep going on, you've got Vanity Fair, you've got the Valley of the Shadow of Death, he's got the Valley of Humiliation, he's got to do battle with Apollyon.

You begin to look at Bunyan's assessment of the Christian life and it's like, out of the frying pan into the fire. For a good reason, because that accurately describes the Christian life. O, there's some places of solace and rest, but it seems like the one outnumbered the other.

Tozer said this in his Pursuit of God, he said, "The way to deeper knowledge of God is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and abnegation of all things." You see what he is saying? What's the abnegation of all things? It means you get stripped. You see brethren, the thing about it is, you peek your head in at the narrow gate, there's not a lot of laughter in there. There is sorrow in there. There is some worship and there's some song. There is the sound of clippers - the gardener's shears. Wow, look at the people that went in there, they are getting all

sorts of stuff chopped off. If you have heard the audio version of Pilgrim's Progress, they follow the Flatterer, and they get whipped [whipping sound]. You stick your head in there, there's sounds of the rod. You ever been around a blast furnace? Stick your ear to the narrow gate, you're going to hear the sound of the Refiner's fire in there.

Brethren, I'll tell you this (David is going to go into 1 Peter). Peter says, "If the righteous will scarcely be saved, what of all these ungodly people?" "What do you mean if the righteous will scarcely be saved?" With difficulty. The way is hard. You know why it's hard? What Tozer said - if you're going to get to know God, deeper knowledge of God, lonely valleys of the soul. You know what God does? He takes you out to the lonely valley. Brethren, it was no mirage when Jesus Christ went to the rich young ruler and said, "I want it all. All of it."

You go in that narrow way, you're going to get stripped. You are going to have taken from you every idol. And it is going to be torn away from you; it is going to be sheared from you; it is going to be disciplined from you, and it is going to be purged from you in the Refiner's fire. It is a hard way. Peter says, "Scarcely saved." You want to take that with much difficulty. It is difficult. You strive to enter there. Few there be that find it. It is with difficulty. People fall out. People fall out. All the time, people fall out. Jesus Christ with that rich young ruler, the idea's to strip him naked.

Brethren, you know why it's hard? You know why it's hard in there? Because there is death in there. Jesus said it, time and again. We tend not to hear Him. You know, you get the idea He probably says things as often as He says them, certain things more than others, because we tend not to hear them. But how often did our Lord come along and say, you have it in Matthew 10, "Whoever finds his life will lose it; whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." Again, Matthew 16, "Whoever would save his life will lose it; whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." You have it in Mark 8, Luke 17, "Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it; whoever loses his life will keep it." Brethren, it's a place of death. That's why it's hard. Because when you surrender to Christ, Christ is militant about turning you into His likeness. And there is so much in you that must die. It is a place of death, and it is a place that's hard, and it's a place that's going to confront us.

Listen to Tozer again, "There is within the human heart, a tough fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess; always to possess. It covets things with a deep and fierce passion. The pronouns "my" and "mine" look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die."

Brethren, you see, the thing is that when God saves us, He means for all of us to be on the altar. All of us. I don't say all of us numerically speaking. All of You. All. All your plans, and all your desires, and all your life. God will not allow His reign to be challenged. And brethren, you and I know it. Our wills are strong, and our desire to do what we want to do is strong.

Brethren, Christianity is not about simply getting our theology right. We can get that idea you know, "I got to believe right. I got all my doctrine down." Brethren, what Jesus tells us over and over again is, if you are going to follow Me, I am going to take you on a death path. There is a cross to carry. And you know, we can look at it and say, "Well, not really. Not really. I don't literally have to carry a cross out there to Golgotha and actually be crucified." But I would just

ask you this: Would our Lord use the imagery if what He really meant is the Christian life is easy? Or would He probably use that if really the Christian life was going to be that hard. It's hard to die.

Tozer says this, (I plucked these three quotes from him, I thought they were really good. As I was going through this, I was reminded that he had said something,) he says, "The ancient curse will not go out painlessly. The tough old miser within us will not lie down and die in obedience to our command. He must be torn out of our heart like a plant from the soil; he must be extracted in agony and blood like a tooth from the jaw. He must be expelled from our soul by violence as Christ expelled the money changers from the temple. And we shall need to steel ourselves against his piteous begging." Maybe coming off a week of prayer and fasting, you might even know about that piteous begging. I don't need to see a show of hands, but if I were to ask, How many of you determined to fast certain days, certain hours, certain meals, and in the end you didn't. Maybe you did some but not as much as you originally thought so. Why? Piteous begging from within. "O let me have food, let me have food." He says, "We shall need to steel ourselves against his piteous begging (his - your own is what he is talking about,) to recognize it as springing out of self-pity, one of the most reprehensible sins of the human heart."

Brethren, here is the thing. You be like Don Johnson, you come through the narrow gate, he says, "Laying on the grass and just looking up at the sky, and thinking the Christian life was just going to be one baptism of the Spirit after another." And then all hell broke loose against him. You see, the thing about the Christian life is the testing. The testing is coming. And it doesn't just come once. The Refiner's fire doesn't just come once. Brethren, like I say, you put your ear to the narrow gate, the sound of the blast furnace in there, the sound of the shears. And those shears don't lie dormant for long. The sound of the rod. That's the sound in there.

O brethren, but, the consolation here is, our Father carries the rod. Our Redeemer fires the fires. It's the Gardener who bears the shears, and He means to produce fruitfulness. Brethren, it's good but it's hard. Dying is hard. And there is that root that to tear it out, brethren, there are the things that you think, "I can't live without that; I can't go on without that." And be sure, if you think that, God is going to rip it out! The testing is coming. And it will feel like it's tearing part of you out, but God will not have His reign challenged. He will have all of you. He will have your heart. It's a hard way. It's a hard way. And few there be that find it. But you see, brethren, this is what real repentance is all about. It's about, "Okay, Lord, I surrender. I trust you."

It is amazing to me, I mean, you really want to think about this. I think there is vast significance in this. Twice that I can find, very specifically. Once in Luke 9, Jesus says this, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." You know what's interesting? He would say this, and then He would look to the people He is saying this to and He would say this, "Now you got that in your mind, you got my suffering in your ears, you're thinking about what I just said, Ok let me tell you this: If you would be saved by Me, if anyone will follow Me, if anyone would come after Me," You hear that? Come after Me. Guess what happens when you peek your eyes in at the narrow gate? You see footsteps. That's the way our Lord went. If you would go that way, He says, "Let him deny himself." O, we don't like to deny ourselves. Did you like, I mean, those of you that fasted? "Deny yourself." And it's not just food, it's everything. It's everything. That

doesn't mean that there aren't any joys in this life, but the moment you love something more than Him, He is coming for it. He is coming for it.

Deny yourself. It's a path of self-denial. You get schooled in this. The school of renunciation. You get schooled in saying, "But Lord, I like this." "Yeah, I know you do. I want that." Luke 9:23-24, "Let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it." You see, you've got to die. You've got to lose your life. I mean, look, you can only go in that way if you really trust Him. Because in that way, just like Bunyan portrayed, there are lonely valleys. He would take you through the hardest things that you can imagine. Things that you would cry piteously, as Tozer talked about. He is going to lead you to your death in there. He is going to strip you. Brethren, He does purify the sons of Levi in the Refiner's fire.

Unlike the other way, there is not a lot of freedom in there. You are free in Christ definitely. When I say there is not a lot of freedom, you're bound by God's will. That's really the issue: My will, His will. That's where the tension is. And I can tell you God is not in the business of taking you where you want to go. It's kinda like our Lord's words to Peter, "Peter, you're going to be led; others are going to dress you and they are going to lead you, they are going to take you somewhere where you don't want to go." But he told him by what means, what death he was going to glorify the Lord. You see, that's bringing glory to God. That's where God wants him to go.

In John 12:23, Jesus answered them, "The hour has come," - this is the second place where you get this kind of thing. "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." His hour of death was at hand. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." You see what He does here again? He goes from His own suffering to looking at those who contemplate following Him, already following Him, and He says, "Look, I'm telling you what is going to happen to Me, because I'm telling you that, don't think that if you're going to be a follower of Me that I am the only one that suffers. It's not the case. You have to follow Me. Follow." John 12:25, "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." You have to hate your life in this world, all you are, when you come to this narrow gate.

Brethren, God doesn't ask you to change yourself. But you see, you only go in there if you believe Jesus Christ is really going to get you to the end. You only go in there if you really believe that having Him and His salvation is worth it. Jesus said, "Count the cost. The way is hard." And, I mean, at the end is eternal life. Once you have that, you can look back over your shoulder and say, "Oooh, momentary light affliction." But when you are in it, it doesn't seem momentary or light. "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me." Put away the idea of any kind of Christianity that doesn't have to follow Christ. It's not real. That Christianity is in the other way.

You know, I don't know what 2016 is going to bring specifically, but I know for the true Christian, what it's going to bring, generally, is going to be hard. God is going to take His people up hills of difficulty. We live in Vanity Fair. Some of you will be thrown into Doubting Castle. Your assurance may be strong now, you would come under such dark clouds of despair and unbelief that you cannot even imagine right now, perhaps. The snares, the trials, they are there. You will have things to overcome. You've got to follow. As brother Andy said years ago when he was

here, "There's two crosses. Christ had His upon which our atonement is made, and you have yours." And be certain, God will require you to carry it.

Just think about the reality of Christ's cross, you know how it was for Him, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." You see brethren, that's how it is for us. Every day you are called upon to deny yourself, carry that cross and die, that would be where you're at. That's really the Christian life. "Lord, I don't want to carry this." Nobody wants to carry the cross. I mean, it's not delightful, it's not enjoyable. It wasn't for our Lord, nevertheless He went that way. He doesn't expect that it's going to be (delightful) for us. Brethren, it is for a season, and there is life at the end. There is "Well done, good and faithful servant" at the end; there is glory at the end. But the thing about it is, Not my will, but Thine. You see, it's not a wide place. It's very narrow: Thy will. No free spirits here, that's in the other way.

Just in a few verses Jesus says, "Not everybody that says, 'Lord Lord, but those who do the will of the Father.'" You see, that's the real issue. And it is the will of the Father that you go through the shears, and the fire, and the rod, with that crossbeam on your shoulders. And every step, you're saying, "Lord, if it's Your will, please deliver me from this; take me out, take me out, take me out, take me out." And you know what? Sometimes He will. But, more often than not, the way that our Lord walked is the way you're going to walk. What glory there is to God when you say, "Not my will, but Thine. Having You is more important to me than escaping this cross. Your will be done." And He promises, "I'll never leave you nor forsake you." There is going to be grace. But brethren, be sure, those of you, count the cost. Count the cost. You know why people don't go in the narrow way? There is really only one reason. It's only one thing that makes it hard to go in there. You love your sin. You love your freedom.

The other way looks really good but it ends bad. This way looks really bad. It's hard, but oh, what glory is at the end. Be sure, if you go in there, lots of trips to Mount Moriah. You know what I mean by that? "Abraham, I want you to sacrifice Isaac." "Oh, Isaac? This is the son I've been waiting for for how long? This is my heir." "Yeah, you take him up to Mount Moriah."

Brethren, the narrow way is a path of ten thousand deaths, but our Lord came not to destroy but to save. Brethren, what we have to recognize is this is salvation. God isn't destroying you. Did you hear? He says the pruning shears are there to make you fruitful. The fire is there to make you pure. The rod is there to produce righteousness. Brethren, this is salvation. What we fail to really understand is how much we need to be saved from. How much that just seems like it's part and parcel of ourselves we need to be saved from. How many of those deep rooted things that are just part of ourselves have to be torn away, I mean, there's blood, like Tozer says. Like pulling teeth or maybe chopping off arms. It's like that. But it's good. He wouldn't take us down this road if it wasn't good. You know, one of the things we don't recognize is how lost we are when we come to Him to be saved. You know what that narrow way is doing? It's killing your lostness. It's killing your un-Christlikeness.

You see, they call His name Jesus because He will save His people from their sin. If you're going this way, it's because you want to be saved from your sin, but bank on it, He is going to save you from things you didn't think you need to be saved from. We have a lot of ignorance; a lot of blindness; a lot of things in our life that we say, "Well, that's not sin." You see, He knows our heart so much better than we do. He knows what we need.

Brethren, 2016 is before us. This way is hard. But I'll tell you, if you've got eyes to see, maybe I'll go to Pilgrim's Progress again, they were on those Delectable Mountains and they tried to see the Celestial City off in the distance, and their hands were shaking and they couldn't see it very well. But it's out there. The end, brethren, the end, "For those who overcome," Oh, what promises there are. And He has promised to be there with us. He has promised. It gets dark, the enemy comes upon us, and He hides His face. Difficult seasons. But you know what? We have His promise. You walk these lonely valleys with all the promises of God. You walk this path in faith, not by sight. You believe He is there, He will not leave you, He is going to help you, He is going to bring good from this. He is always going to give you a way out of your trials and your suffering; a way, a path that you can walk without falling into sin. Every temptation that comes, there is a way you can walk.

Brethren, it's going to be difficult, I don't doubt. But, brethren, resting on Him; we rest on Him to take us through. Brethren, He is a Savior, and He is in the business of saving us, if you can see it for that. Whatever difficulties may be upon us, there is a way that leads to eternal life. You can't bypass it. We wish we could. We wish we could go around it. Some of us actually do get the fast path. You know, we, maybe in this past week, remembered the five fallen missionaries from Ecuador. Some do get on the fast path. But for most of us, that's not the case.

Some like Enoch or Elijah, maybe their time was cut short and they were translated right there. But even Enoch even lived 350 years, we don't have to go that far. But for most of us, the path is still somewhat long before us. Oh, it may get cut short, but we have all the promises of God. And He does promise, that at the end there is life. Brethren, eternal life. It's forever. What are you going to do forever? Be lavished by the kindness of God, be married to Christ, behold Him face to face. There is life. And Jesus said, "It's life more abundant." More abundant than anything here, more abundant than living on the South Pacific Island supposed paradise. Hawaii is not paradise, pop. There is a Paradise that eclipses that. And we see it there in the words, that's at the end. I mean, forever and forever and forever, how does that stack up against a few years? It doesn't stack up. It's not even to be equated.

I was thinking, you know, we talk so much about age. You know, "Oh, he is 60 years old." To young people, "Oh, that's so old." Imagine when we all say, "Yeah, we all turn a million today." It's like, so what? We don't even care. I mean, if there even is such measurements of time. You know, It's been a million years since we all lived here, and we are no closer to the end. And as we sang that song, brethren, Immanuel's Land, we are not going to look at the glory, we are going to look at our Bridegroom. And I guarantee, not one of us is going to look at Him and turn to him beside us and say, "Nah, it wasn't worth it." We will forget, like the woman in childbirth, you forget. I mean, the glory, the joy is just too great. That's nothing. It won't matter.

Brethren, we are only here for just a little bit, and then we are gone. Just a vapour. And I'll tell you, when death takes you, it comes so fast. My stepdad died, I think, at 67. He died lost, and the day he died, I thought, "What if he had lived for Christ? If he had just lived for Christ, it'll be all over now. He'd be in glory." And he lost everything. Destruction. Destruction. Look, if you're living the easy life right now, yeah we have it by Jesus' own words, it's wide, it's broad. There is freedom there. It's easy, for a season. Yeah, there is pleasures and sin. The sins you enjoy in there, the pleasure and sin, is for a season. And then the end.

Father, I pray that the narrow, the wide, the way; one hard, one easy. Lord, I pray that these realities might sit heavy upon us. I pray in Christ's name, amen.