



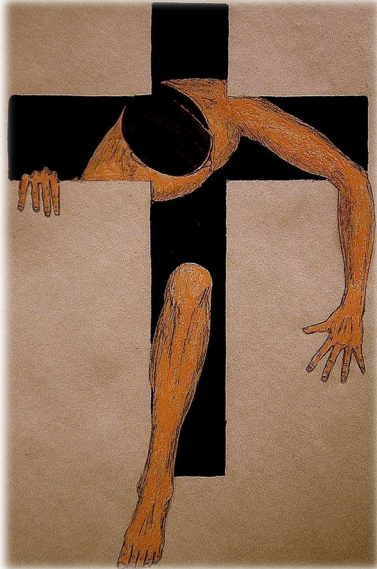
THE NARROW GATE (part 1)

As He was bringing His Sermon on the Mount to a close, JESUS said, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." [Matthew 7:13-14]

In his last "Note from Ray", my husband wrote about The Broad Road. We can see clearly from Matthew 7:13 that there are MANY that choose to go through the Wide Gate to travel on the Broad Road of religion in order to get to God. But, the Wide Gate will never lead a person to God. It is the way of deception [Matthew 7:15] and it leads to destruction.

It is GOD HIMself that places the desire in people to seek Him. The Scriptures tell us that "there is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for GOD; ALL have turned aside...there is none who does good, there is not even one..." [Romans 3:10-18] There has **never** been anyone that sought God without GOD HIMself first placing that desire in their heart. AND the reality is: FEW actually find HIM -- because Jesus said the Gate is so very small and narrow.

The Wide Gate grabs our attention!!! It grants us what our natural human nature is truly seeking: a "god" of our own making that is passionate about *our* purpose and *our* potential. The Wide Gate gives us a god we can manipulate with our own faith-filled words to alter our life for our own pre-determined destiny. But it is to the GOD of heaven that ALL must bow down and submit to HIS pre-determined purpose and plan -- which includes suffering and may also include persecution and even martyrdom -- as it did Christ's New Testament disciples and many down through the centuries. The Wide Gate god is also much more merciful about our sin seeing it as "mistakes" that keep us from our best life now; but the GOD of the Bible sees sin as absolute rebellion and wickedness that separates us from HIM. GOD hates sin; judges sin; and demands that sin be atoned for at the cross of HIS Son. Sin is not a mistake; it is an abomination and a stench in the nostrils of holy GOD.



I believe few find the Small, Narrow Gate because it is the Cross of Jesus Christ. It is the way of leaving our "self" and by faith laying down our very life for the One Who loved us first and lay down His life for us in order to atone for our sin -- even though we have willfully and grievously sinned against GOD -- having even been born in sin.

It is through the small, Narrow Cross Gate that a person will find the One True GOD -- the GOD of heaven and earth. Pastor John MacArthur describes the Narrow Gate to be like a turnstile gate where only one at a time can go through. No one can go through the gate with us and no one can carry us through it. We go through it alone -- forsaking all, we trust Christ and follow Him through the Narrow Cross Gate to the narrow road of true life.

Again, **the Narrow Cross Gate is difficult for our natural eyes to find.** It is so very small and narrow -- and might I add, that I believe it is low to the ground. Dr. MacArthur also once said, "No man enters the kingdom who doesn't crawl". The Small, Narrow Cross Gate most definitely involves bending, bowing, and yes -- even crawling on our knees -- in humility before Holy God for mercy, grace, forgiveness, reconciliation, and regeneration.

James 4:6 tells us that "GOD is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble". And, of course, Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that it is "by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast". Humility. No boasting of self-righteousness or "good" works -- because in GOD's economy, man is incapable of either of these. In the words of the hymn Rock of Ages: "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling! Naked -- come to Thee for dress!! Helpless -- look to Thee for grace!! Foul -- I to the fountain fly!!! Wash me, Savior, or I die!!!"

The low, small, Narrow Gate will never appeal to my pre-conceived, self-centered, self-absorbed ideas of GOD. Humble hearts crawl gratefully through this Gate that brings us on to the true Path of Life -- Abundant and Eternal.

Have you found the Narrow Gate? Are you on the Narrow Road? Or have you been deceived by a false prophet/teacher that looks like a true shepherd but inwardly is a ravenous wolf seeking to divert you to the broad road that leads to destruction?

The Narrow Gate/Narrow Road is the Way of the Cross, and FEW find it. But, it is the only way to know GOD and to abide in HIS presence now and forever. If you haven't found it yet, cry out to GOD to give you eyes to see it and a faith-filled, humble heart to enter through it.

