

THE ROAD TO HEAVEN

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: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. -Matthew 7:13-14.

Have you ever thought about where you came from, where you are going, why are you here on this earth? Those are all important questions that all of us have probably asked ourselves at one time or another.

Where did we come from? - We came from God. - *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. -Genesis 1:26-27.* God created man in His own image, but man rebelled against God and sinned.

Where are we going? - We are on our way to eternity, but where we spend that eternity depends on the choice we make in life on this earth. - *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: -Hebrews 9:27.* Jesus tells us in the verses above from Matthew 7 that there are two roads in this life; a broad road with many traveling on it, and a narrow road with few traveling on it.

Why are we here? - We are here to glorify God and allow Him to show us the way back to Him, and to make a choice to return to Him. - *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. - Isaiah 43:7.*

As Jesus tells us about the two roads in this life, He also tells us where each of them leads. He says the broad road leads to destruction (hell), and that the narrow road leads to life (Heaven). Both destinations are eternal: an everlasting separation from God without hope and filled with suffering, or an everlasting life in the presence of an everlasting God with all of the problems of this earthly life gone forever. Jesus wants us to take the narrow road and urges us to do so. Heaven is better than anything our minds could envision. The Bible tells us that it is a place filled with joy and happiness, where the sin, tears, and heartaches of earthly life don't exist. The question we have to ask now is "How do we get there?".

To get to Heaven, we know that we have to take the narrow road, and we get on that narrow road by trusting Jesus Christ as our Savior. Why do we need a Savior? The Bible tells us. - *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: -Romans 3:10, For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; -Romans 3:23.* These verses tell us that all of us have sinned. We have all said and done wrong things. God's Word, the Holy Bible, tells us what is wrong and what is right. It provides a "roadmap" to that narrow road, and tells us how we should live our lives on this earth. However, we sometimes do

what we want and not what God tells us to do. It may be only things that we consider small and unimportant, such as pride or selfishness, but if it is contrary to God's commandments, it is still sin. Sin is an awful thing that hurts us, and it hurts others; but the worst thing about sin is that it hurts God. It hurts God because of the great love that He has for us. But even though He loves us, He cannot overlook our sin or pretend that He doesn't know about them. God has to punish sin, and the Bible tells us about a definite punishment for sin. - *For the wages of sin is death;* -Romans 6:23a. That means an eternal separation from God, in hell.

When we realize that we are a sinner, those sins will start to bother us; and when they do, we need to understand that God is speaking to us in love. He wants us to turn from our sins to Him before it is too late. He wants us to repent. - *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:* -Acts 17:30. What does it mean to repent? Repentance is not just being sorry for your sins. An individual may be sorry that he is suffering because of his doing something wrong, but when the suffering is over, he goes right back to his old ways. He has not repented. Repentance is not just crying over your sins. Many people weep and cry out to God, but they do not repent. Repentance is not fear. Many people may ask God for mercy, but when the fear and danger has passed, they go right back to their sins. They have not repented. What then is repentance? Repentance is a turning away from sin, disobedience, and rebellion and a turning back to God. It has been described as a change of mind that brings about a change of heart. True repentance is a "godly sorrow" for sin, an act of turning around and going in the opposite direction. This true repentance carries with it a feeling of remorse or regret for past conduct and leads to a fundamental change in a person's relationship with God. This "turnaround" indicates that an individual realizes that he has sinned against God and has truly repented. A person must see that they have been going the wrong direction and know that with God's help that they must turn to Him and turn from their sins - that is repentance, and it brings joy to the Lord.

It has been said that repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. Repentance and faith go together. By repentance, one turns away from sin; by faith, one turns toward God in accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. Christ is the One who saves us. What does it mean to be saved? It means that an Holy and Righteous God forgives you of your sins and makes you one of His children. You are saved from God's punishment and the wrath that He will pour out upon this earth. Anyone can be saved. - *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* -John 6:37. Some people think that their sins are just too great for God to forgive; that if people knew the things they had done, no one would have anything to do with them. God knows all about all of our sins, and yet, He will forgive us because of what Christ has done for us. We can't be saved by doing good. The Bible tells us that no one will ever be saved by doing good works, or anything else that one can do for oneself.- *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* -Ephesians 2:8-9. Since we can't save ourselves, we need a Savior; and God has given us a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* -John 3:16. When God says "the world"

in that verse, He means all of the people in the world. That includes all of us! When God says “whosoever” in that verse, He means anyone. Anyone can put their name in that verse - For God so loved YOU, that He gave His only begotten Son, that YOU believing in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Verse 8 from Ephesians chapter 2, above, mentions “the gift of God”. What is God’s gift to us? It is His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom He gave to be our Savior. God gave His Son to die on the cross for our sins. - *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* -Romans 5:8. Christ shed His precious blood and died for our sins; and when we trust Him as our Savior, God can righteously forgive our sins. God doesn’t overlook our sins or act like He doesn’t know about them, but He forgives them, because He sees the blood of His Son which was shed for them.

Christ not only died for our sins, but He arose from the dead. He is a living, resurrected Savior that has all power in Heaven and in earth. He can save us from our sins and make us a child of God. - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* -John 1:12. When we come to Christ with a repentant heart and trust Him as our Savior, He places us on that narrow road that leads to Heaven and gives to us everlasting life. - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.* -I John 5:11-12. This doesn’t mean that we suddenly become perfect. We are still going to have problems. Being a child of God is the most wonderful thing in the world, but it will not always be easy while we are on this earth. Sometimes it creates new problems for us, and the Bible tells us that we will have trials and troubles in this world when we take a stand for Jesus. However, we don’t have to be afraid if we are on that narrow road. We have Christ living in our hearts, and He will carry us through the problems and trials and be there with us. - *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* -Hebrews 13:5. God does allow us a choice in this life, but He wants us to choose the narrow road; He wants us to choose life, life in Christ!