

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



THE LENEXA EDIFIER



John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

June 12, 2016

HOW STRAIT AND NARROW IS IT?

Jim Stauffer

Matt. 7:13 *Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. 14 For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.* Most people with a religious affiliation acknowledge one must restrain himself through discipline. The confusion arises over what standard is used to set the discipline.

Jesus made it very clear His word is that standard. In this same chapter the following verses warn against 1) false teachers who give the appearance of sheep when in reality are ravenous wolves, **vs 15**; 2) saying we do His will when in reality it is only lip service, **vs 21-27** cf. **Jas. 1:22-25**.

To avoid any perception the entire New Testament is not the word of the Lord remember his comments concerning the revelation the Holy Spirit would provide. In **John 16:13,14** He said, the Holy Spirit *will guide you into all truth.....he will take what is mine and declare it to you.* Jesus is *the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* (**John 14:6**) The issue is settled. Jesus' word is our standard.

He warns us in **1 John 2:15-17** not to love the world. This text delineates the difference in a worldly view and a godly view. When we attach ourselves to the world we naturally rub shoulders with its influences. *Sin coucheth at the door*, but it is our responsibility to rule over it (**Gen. 4:7**).

2 Cor. 6:14-16 reads, *14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Unbelievers represent the world, a lawless lot to whom we are not to be in partnership or

unequally yoked. The world represents darkness and we are to be of the light. No greater contrast can be seen than that of Christ and Belial (**Mat. 4:1-11**). Believers are contrasted with unbelievers and God's people with infidels. When we take this admonition lightly we risk putting our soul's eternal destiny in question.

James tells us the art of our religion is to love the souls of men and help them with their needs while keeping ourselves *unspotted* from the stain in the world (**Jas. 1:27**). There is a danger here.

It is typical of mankind to think in the immediacy of his life. As a result he is concerned about health, ability to provide necessities, etc. These material things of our earthly life are constantly before us and block our view of eternity. We tend to be much more concerned about terrorism which threatens our physical life than we are about these things that will condemn our souls eternally. How many people are truly concerned about the influence of what Paul describes as evil companions (**1 Cor. 15:33**)?

The Scripture teaches us not to be *conformed to this world* but to *be transformed by the renewing of our minds* (**Rom. 12:1,2**). Jesus differentiates between being of this world and not as He teaches about His return to heaven (**John 8:23**). Yet He offers membership to those of this world in His eternal kingdom (**2 Peter 1:11**).

How strait and narrow is it? It is so rigid if we follow that way by entering that gate, we will sever connections with the influence of this world. Paul tells us we must live in this world. We cannot go out of it (**1 Cor. 5:10**). But if we plan to inherit heaven as our eternal reward we must not be *of this world*.

Jesus promises if we seek His kingdom first and foremost, putting aside the worries and anxieties and therefore the influences of this world, we will be able to sustain life here and then receive life there (**Mat. 6:33**).

We sing a song, This World Is Not My Home, and we need to sing what we mean and mean what we sing.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18). The birth of Jesus finds a home in the history of the 1st c. **Matthew 2:1** says: *"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem."* Matthew and Luke tell us that Jesus was conceived without a human father intervening; the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary, the mother of Jesus. The divine record is true; still, it must be considered and defended.

For a long time, people have discounted the miraculous elements in the Bible, including the virgin birth of Christ. If the miracles in the Bible are not true, where then did Matthew get his story about the birth of Jesus? Some say that the Apostle just made up his account of Jesus' birth. Other accounts seek to explain the birth of Jesus, such as the *Protoevangelium of James* (an apocryphal book that "explains" the "immaculate conception" of Jesus). Is the Bible record an accurate accounting of God who has made Himself known in history with miracles, signs, and wonders? Add to this, the question of Bible prophecy. For example, can we believe what Isaiah said about the birth of Jesus? *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).* There are many more prophecies about the Messiah; can they be true? Is the story of Jesus' birth simply a myth? Are the historical references by Matthew (and Luke) myths, too?

Ferrell Jenkins suggests five reasons to believe the uniqueness of Isaiah's prophecy about the birth of Jesus. First, it is a sign; as such, Jesus' birth was miraculous. Second, the word *virgin* (Heb. *almah*) is *never used clearly* of a woman who was not a virgin. Third, *almah* translated in the LXX as *parthenos* always referred to a virgin. Fourth, the child in **Isaiah 9:6-7** is also called *"the mighty God, the Everlasting Father."* Fifth, NT explanations make clear what Isaiah predicted about the virgin birth of Christ (**Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38**) (**Truth in Life, Evidences for Faith**, Senior High, Year 3, Book 3, p. 46).

Jesus is unique; He is distinctive. His birth makes this clear. His birth was natural but it was also supernatural. The angel told Joseph: *"Do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife...that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."* Again, the angel said that the one to be born would be the Savior, the Messiah (**Matthew 1:18**). *Messiah*, or *Christ*, is a title, rather than a proper name. Christ is the *anointed one*, anointed by God. *Jesus is the Messiah, the Lord*; He was that from conception. The son brought forth from a virgin was *Immanuel, God with us*. And while Jesus is in

heaven now by God's right hand, let us remember that Matthew's gospel open and closes with Jesus. *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen"* (**Matthew 28:20**). And so, for the faithful, shall it always be.

Randy Harshbarger

The First Commandment

God begins the list of commandments proper by stating in verse three, *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."* J. A. Thompson, in his commentary on this commandment in **Deuteronomy 5:7** points out that this is a clear statement of monotheism, the acknowledgement of ONE AND ONLY ONE GOD. "The phrase 'before me', which could be translated in a variety of ways, e. g. 'near by me', 'at my side', 'against me', 'in defiance of me', 'to my detriment' gives expression to this fact." ("Deuteronomy: Intro & Commentary" IVP, 1974, p. 115). It wasn't like God was telling the Israelites that they could have other gods, just not ahead of Him. He used the phrase, "before my face" and since there is no place we can go in the universe where God is not present, then there is literally no place where they could acknowledge another god!

This was important for the Israelites to comprehend since their history includes those in the family tree who were idolaters: Abraham's parents (**Joshua 24:15**); Rachael who stole Laban's family idols in **Genesis 31:30-35** (why?). They had just lived in a land, Egypt, given to idolatry and worship of false gods, for hundreds of years and had surely been influenced by this. The oneness of God was a fundamental fact they had to assimilate into their world view.

Monotheism is foundational to a proper system of morals toward both man and God. This much is obvious to any basic Bible student. But it is also fundamental to a proper understanding of the world around us. Idolatry, with its different gods for different elements and areas of life, arguing and warring like spoiled children will never equip men to properly approach study of the world and the universe.

Clee Reddinger, El Dorado church of Christ

The Gospel Is Good News

Jim Deason

If someone discovered a foolproof cure for cancer you would expect him to shout it from the highest mountain. It would be criminal to keep such good news a secret. You would expect even the most greedy of money-mongers to share his knowledge with folks whose lives are on the line. It is true that bad news often travels faster than good, but when good news is of such a critical nature it must be shared.

The best of all news is not of a remedy for some physical malady. Rather, that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners. The angel announced to the shepherds, *"Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you*

continued on page 3

good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (**Luke 2:10-11**). Jesus commanded that this gospel or good news be preached *"to all creation"* (**Mark 16:15**). He wanted everyone to know about His plan to redeem man.

In a day in which we are bombarded from every direction with bad news, we need to hear something good. We need good news. And the gospel of Jesus Christ is good news.

The gospel is good news because it settles our past. Is there something in your past that you wish you hadn't said or done? Is there something that you hope no one ever comes to know because of the shame it could cause you? Something you have a hard time letting go or forgiving yourself for? Are you not able to do your best today because yesterday just won't let you go? There's good news! The gospel settles all of that! When the people of the New Testament city of Corinth looked back they saw an ugly past; a past filled with fornication, adultery, homosexuality, theft, drunkenness, and a host of other shameful sins. But in hearing, believing, and obeying the gospel they had been washed, sanctified, and justified in Jesus Christ (**1 Cor. 6:9-11**). In Christ they had become new creatures with their past behind them. Friend, it can be with you just like it was with them. No matter what is in your past, with the gospel you can put it behind you.

The gospel is good news because it gives meaning for the present. The volume of bad news that we hear today is testimony to the fact that we live in the midst of masses who have no direction and no purpose in their lives. The gospel gives us a reason to live. We are saved to serve. After Jesus had washed the disciples feet he commanded them, *"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet"* (**John 13:14**). Jesus was commanding his disciples to be selfless servants. This was the badge of identification that they would wear before all men. It was what set them apart from the rest of the world (**John 13:34-35**). Serving one another gives us a purpose, a reason for living. It is more than what we do, it is who we are! No matter how shallow or meaningless you may feel your life to be, Jesus can give you meaning and direction for a rich, rewarding life.

The gospel is good news because it assures our future. Peter rejoiced in that he had been born again unto a *"living hope"* which included *"an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven..."* (**1 Pet. 1:3-4**). There were certainly things in his life that had brought him a lot of shame. Yet, having obtained forgiveness in Jesus, he was looking to the future. Jesus had gone to build an eternal home for his people (**John 14:1-3**) and Peter was confident that one of those rooms was reserved in his name. That's why he kept his faith in Jesus Christ. And herein is the good news- we can anticipate that

same reward. Friend, your life, like that of a lot of folks, may look a little bleak sometimes. You may not know how tomorrow's bills will be paid. You may be in fear of what the doctor's report will tell you. But faith in and obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ can help us look beyond things here and give us an eternal perspective. And that's good news.

What about you? What's your life like? If you haven't obeyed the gospel your past is unsettled, you have no meaningful purpose or direction in life and there's no future to which to look forward. But with Jesus Christ there's a better way. If you want to learn more about the gospel and God's plan for your life, I'm always available. Let us be of service to you.

From the website southcullmanchurch.com

The Truth

So many religious people don't seem to think God's **truth** matters. They think there are many ways to heaven (Christian, Judaism, or Islam). They think all the different Christian type churches are right even though they all teach different things. Can 2 plus 2 equal 4 and 5 at the same time? If only one answer is right in mathematics then only one answer is right in religion also, and that would be God's answer, understood by reading His word (**Eph 3:4**).

Pilate asked Jesus in **John 18:38** *"what is truth?"* It seems most so called Christians don't know the answer to that question anymore. The answer is *"thy word is truth"* (**John 17:17b**). And in the first part of **Joh. 17:17**, Jesus taught that we are sanctified through that truth. That implies false teaching (religious error) will not cause us to be *"sanctified"* (made holy, forgiven). **John 8:32** reads *"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* So only Bible truth will save us from sin. That implies religious error will cause us to be lost. Yet many run merrily along not checking, not caring what they are being taught (**Acts 17:11, Matt 15:14**).

Not only must we believe the truth, we must obey the truth. **Rom 2:8** shows that those who *"do not obey the truth"* will receive *"indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish"* from God. **Gal 2:5** and **14** show that the gospel is the truth, and **Col 1:5** shows the *"truth of the gospel"* is found in God's word. And **II Thess 1:8-9** teaches that if we *"obey not the gospel"* (the truth found in God's word), God will *"in flaming fire taking vengeance"* on us and we will be *"punished with everlasting destruction."* **I Pet 1:22** says we purify our souls in *"obeying the truth."* And yet many say as long as we believe in Jesus, it doesn't matter if we obey what He said / the truth (**Luke 6:46, Heb 5:9, Matt 7:21**)?

Yes the truth is *"narrow"* (**Matt 7:14**). But if we want to be saved, we must believe and obey the truth, not the doctrines and commandments of men (**II John 9, Matt 15:9**). If we love and respect Jesus, and appreciate what He has done for us, then we will believe what He said and do what He told us to do.

By Patrick Donahue; patdonahue@bellsouth.net

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

Check out the following websites:

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist

lenexachurchofchrist.org

NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

GRANT CLOTHIER, J.R. DANIEL
AND JAN PATRICK.

SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE BOOK
OF ACTS - BYRON TAYLOR

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE
BOOK OF JAMES - JOE HURD

SUNDAY SERMON: SALVATION IS
IN THE TRUTH



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10