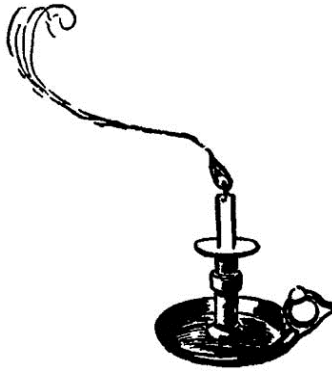


THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

God's solid foundation stands firm. 2 Tim. 2-19

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Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,
but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in
the house.

Matthew 5:15

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For A Conservative Anabaptist Perspective

From The Editor's Desk

In many parts of the world today there are conflicts which are causing people to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere, suffering the loss of earthly possessions; some lose their lives and those who are creating the conflict feel justified in their actions.

Throughout history these have been regular occurrences oftentimes with religious overtones and the persecution and attempted annihilation of a particular religion. As disciples of Jesus Christ we certainly could easily become casualties of such events as many of Jesus' disciples in times past have been and are today in many places in the world.

One of the things we can do is to pray for those believers who are being persecuted and then there are also opportunities to assist in the area of material needs which should be channeled through reputable Christian groupings that we may be associated with or have personal knowledge of.

Jesus gives us food for thought in this area in Matthew 25:31-46 which gives a description in part of the last judgement and it makes for very sobering reading indeed when we relate what Jesus says there in how we deal with others whose circumstances are less than ideal in their present physical and spiritual dimensions.

This month we have a message on the "narrow way" versus the "broad way" another on "The Way of Righteousness" and a third on "The Field of Life" each of these present the scriptural basis for the believers walk and life in Christ not only in this present day and age but for all ages, past, present and Lord willing the future.

They speak not only of our relationship with Christ but our relationship with other believers as well as humanity in general, not based on race, colour or creed but on the fact that each one is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).

Jesus made it clear in Matthew 25 that He was not differentiating between classes of people except those whom He says did not behave in a Christ like way to the 'least of these my brethren' and we can easily see for ourselves who these 'least of my brethren' were.

May our compassion extend further than our own front door, our own family or our own little group as it is evident that we will be judged by how well we have responded to the call of the Gospel in caring for others.

J.v.L



From the Pulpit

The Breadth of the Narrow Way
 Edited from a message by J. Alvin Snyder 2007

The narrow way leads home. The narrow way is the way to heaven and the broad way is the way to destruction. Let us open our Bibles to Matthew 7. A very familiar teaching of Jesus, **Matthew 7:13-14** “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 there at: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Our title is *The Breadth of the Narrow Way*. I thought that I would like to dig around at that title just a little. What are we talking about? What do we mean? I think the first thought that we get would be, “How broad is the narrow way?” Are these two ways the same except that for the fact that the broad way makes more room and the narrow way is more restrictive? Is that how this is with these two ways? I think there is a sense in which that is true. If we are talking about the narrow way allowing only what is a glory to God and the broad way allowing almost anything why maybe then we could think of it that way of how these two ways the one is just more restrictive than the other.

Apparently, the one accommodates more people. It says, “broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at, while narrow is the way that leads to life and there are few that find it.” That I suppose is because of the strait gate, the strictness and the straitness of the gate that puts us on the narrow way.

But, is there anything good on the broad way? Probably not. And so it is the breadth then of this, I do not think we should be thinking of how much of the broad way might there be on the narrow way. I do not think it is that thought. Probably we could draw a rather clear line and say, “This is the narrow way and this is the broad way.” And there is not a lot of overlap. So the thought, likely what we are thinking here is how much liberty and how much freedom do we have on the narrow way? At least, that is what came to my mind as I thought of this, the breadth of the narrow way.

Some people look at the narrow way as being very restrictive and difficult. And they would feel that we have every reason in the world to be unhappy that God would narrow us into such a narrow way to live. And I think that thought is not that much different than Satan's thought at the beginning when he said, "Yea, hath God said" ([Genesis 3:1](#)), and "God is hiding something from you." And we do not find the narrow way that restrictive, although there may be some restrictive aspects in relation to it. We are going to be looking at some of the liberties and limits of the liberating aspects of the narrow way.

I would like to begin to talk a little bit about the great deliverance from the bondage of sin. The book of Romans develops for us the concepts of salvation, deliverance and freedom and how that we as humans are all sinners. "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](#)). And the Apostle Paul proceeds to show how we may be redeemed from that sin, bought out of that sinful condition through our Lord Jesus Christ. And chapters 4 through into chapter 8 show us how all this has happened.

I would like to read a passage from part of Romans 7, as we do maybe we could just think about our lives and keep that in our mind, how it is or was for us. You remember how it was, do you not? How it was when we were in the bondage of sin. I am sure this varies. There are some people that have not gone down the road very far into sin until they cry for mercy and help. And then there are some others that have gone farther down the road into sin. And then there are some that have gone way down the road into sin.

I think there are three times that Jesus raised people to life in His ministry, those three individuals somewhat illustrate to us that truth. He raised a twelve year old girl to life [[Mark 5:35–43](#); [Luke 8:50–56](#)], and she certainly had not gone very far into sin. But she died and He raised her to life and there was not much ado made over that. The next, the other one was this young man who was already on his way to the burial and Jesus had to stop the funeral procession and raise that young man to life, right there in public [[Luke 7:12–17](#)]. Then, the last one was Lazarus [[John 11:1–45](#)] He was an old man, and he was in the grave four days already. And Martha said, in my own words, "Do you know what you are doing?" "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days ([John 11:39](#)). He was going

into the process of decay already. And Jesus stood outside that grave and with a loud voice he cried, “Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:40). And Lazarus came forth.

Well, delivering . . . someone has said that every time Jesus raised someone to life it was a picture of His ability to raise people to spiritual life. And I like to think of that as we look at it that way. The Apostle Paul, which category did he fit into? Well, certainly not the twelve-year-old, and I certainly do not think he fits into the young man’s category either. He was probably down the road further. Let us read his experience and again, let us think in our lives how it was and see if we can identify with his feelings and his experience.

Romans 7:10–15, “And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*. ¹² Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. ¹³ Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.”

Can we identify with that? Can you remember anytime in your life when you really did not allow for the things that you were doing? You knew better. We knew better that it was wrong. We knew that we should not do those things but we did them. We did them, why? Because we had no power or no strength in ourselves, we were under someone else ruling in our lives and controlling us. There was a power working there. “And for what I would,” the things that we wanted to do “that do I not.” I know what that was like. Things that I wanted to do I could not do. “But what I hate, that do I.”

Now **Romans 7:16-19** “If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. ¹⁷ Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. ¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” Maybe we were in some of this state where we were doing some of these things and really did not realize how bad we were or what was all happening.

And **Romans 7:20-24** “Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. ²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Actually, I think it is best to understand this passage that it is describing an enlightened soul. A person who has come to a certain knowledge of the truth but he finds that he cannot live it. He cannot do. He wants to do it but he cannot.

And so I am starting here. I know the subject is the breadth of the narrow way, but I thought this is the narrowness of the broad way. You know people will try and tell us they are having lots of fun and satisfaction and whatever on this broad way, in living their lives and all the while they are not acknowledging that they cannot do what they really know they should. (At least if they have any light of truth at all). And they are in bondage and they are under the control of the devil. And Jesus told the Pharisees, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (**John 8:44**). They were not their own “boss.”

People like to think today that they are their own “boss.” “I can do, we can do what we want to do.” You know, “We are walking on this road and we are in control.” No. Let us read on, **Romans 7:25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. **Romans 8:1-2** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Oh the glorious deliverance from the law of sin and death. It is part of the broadness, the liberty and the breadth of the narrow way. When we come to this point we are moved, we move out of the broad way and we move over to the narrow way to true liberty and freedom. **Romans 8:3-4** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: ⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

And so, the glorious breadth or liberty of the narrow way — delivered from the controlling power of sin.

Now, actually this Scripture maybe leads us into another consideration. It says, “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” As Bible readers, we also understand that something that happens along with the deliverance from sin and walking in newness of life is being under the deliverance of Christ where He makes us new creatures now and we walk in His truth. Part of this then is the deliverance from, or the freedom, let us look at it this way, the freedom of the New Testament covenant versus the controlling confinement of the Old Testament law.

There is a glorious freedom again. You read about it in the book of Colossians how that the “handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, [He] took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Colossians 2:14). And we were delivered from we could say from bondage, we were also delivered from the bondage of the law and the rule of the law. We are delivered from that by a New Testament covenant and approach. God speaking in the book of Hebrews we have this, He says that “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Hebrews 8:10). And then He repeats that and says it the other way around, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them” (Hebrews 10:16).

This is in contrast to the tables of stone. The laws of God, they were written in the tables of stone in the Old Testament. And those tables of stone were broken because they broke that law and God added to them a holy, righteous set of rules and regulations that they were to keep. And if we would still be under that arrangement, I am not sure what today would have held for us. I suppose we would have tried to take some offering to church this morning. We would try to take a sheep or something we have and offer an offering to God for a sin offering or for a thanks offering or for a, or . . . we know from reading through the Old Testament all those things and now God is saying, “I am going to make a new covenant with you I am going to put my laws into your mind and write them in your hearts”

Then in Hebrews 10 he says, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them” (Hebrews 10:16). But either way you want to look at it, it is God putting His rules and guidelines, not on tables of stone, not in a book, but right into our very heart, He writes them. And it is the New Covenant relationship that we are grafted into and it is recorded for us in 2 Corinthians 3:7 of that “ministration of death,” and how glorious it was, that Old Testament law. But it has no glory “For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth” (2 Corinthians 3:10). And we have His new and living way as it says in Hebrews 10:20 “A new and living way.” It goes right into the very presence of God. It is the narrow way. It is the glory and liberty in the narrow way that we have that takes us right into the very presence of God. In our heart, in our mind we can just think. We can pray. We can meditate. We can worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) It is a glorious experience. So glorious that the Old Testament has no glory anymore. It is taken away and it is put away. Well, it is part of the breadth of the narrow way.

A few other things that I thought about as I considered this narrow way, and the breadth of the narrow way. Let us go to Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

Is that not something? We are used to having regulations. You know we go out on the road and we have stop signs and red lights and this and that and you have to stop and go and wait and what have you. Brother Aaron Shank said “Not here you don’t. This is like getting out on a superhighway. It is like getting out there on a limited access highway and you go, you know, you move, you go.” That is against these kinds of things the fruit of the Spirit. In other words, love. We can take love and exercise love. And keep on doing it and go with it and just keep on running and there is no law, no stop lights and no stop signs that say, “Wait a minute,” and then you can go again after a while. No, we could keep right on with peace.

Did you ever have too much joy? Too much longsuffering? Too much gentleness? Too much goodness? Too much faith? Too much meekness? Too much temperance? No, against such there is no law. There is no restriction. There is no regulation, we’re free. Liberty on the narrow way.

We can just go out there and go. And we can give ourselves to these virtues unrestricted. There is just no limit to it.

Why then do we lag so often at times? Why do we not have peace? Why does our longsuffering run out and we get short with one another? Or we are not as gentle or as good as we should be? And our meekness, temperance lacks. You know well, we would say it is our own fault. It is not God's design. God's design is that we would take these things and go with them. That is spiritual. It speaks to me of spiritual expression.

Now, I know, I did not look it up but this verse is it Scripture? "Be not overly righteous" "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself" ([Ecclesiastes 7:16](#))? I am not sure what that means. But I do not think that it means that we are restricted in living out a good spiritual expression and allowing the Holy Spirit to move us and to use us in life without restriction and without hindrance. Let us keep on living that way and living in the Spirit.

Turning now to [John 8:32](#), the words of Jesus. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The Pharisees here, He was addressing and they got the point. And they said, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" ([John 8:33-34](#)). Verse 32 again, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The truth, the glorious truth and privilege to know the truth. "ye shall know the truth." And the truth will make you free, it is part of the narrow way to know the truth.

We had an example here in our Sunday School lesson this morning in [1 Timothy 4:1-3](#), "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

There is a car in one of the little towns next to us and I keep telling myself sometime I am going to stop behind that jeep, a station wagon type of thing but it is plastered on the back of that thing there and as you read you got a little bit of the gist of it as you drive by but it says "Be kind to animals," type of thing and "To eat meat is murder," and you about know

what is there and I guess I do not really need to stop and read any more. I pretty well know what is there. But it is somebody that does not know the truth. There is someone who does not know the truth.

Now, if you want to eat vegetables and only that, and you do not want to eat any meat, why that is all right, you do not have to eat meat. But please, do not try and push that on someone else because the truth is that there is no creature in this earth, no creature, and that includes hogs, that includes spiders and that includes all the rest of the things too and you know Peter he had this idea that there were some things that were clean and some things were unclean, he got that from Jewish tradition and law because they were taught that in the Law that certain things you could eat and certain things you could not eat. They were unclean.

And so, remember Peter's vision? A sheet came down and all kinds of things in there and the voice said, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat" "But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean" (Acts 10:13-14). He would not do it. That happened three times and then of course, there was a knock on the door and he was to go to Cornelius' house and he went there. And Cornelius was an unclean person. Cornelius was unclean but sure enough while they talked in his house the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius, that unclean man, and all his people, just the way it had on the Jews. And Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Well, that is maybe a little bit of a different point. But, if we know the truth it will free us from that bondage to the law and free us. . . "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Timothy 4:4). Now, I suppose there were some of those creatures that they were just as happy not to eat. That is the way I think of such. But it would not be wrong to eat them, if you know the truth it is freedom. Someone wants to eat something that I do not care for, why they have the freedom to do it. They are living, walking in the narrow way and they have that freedom. "know[ing] the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). So, whatever God says, whatever He says, however He guides us we are gloriously free to do His will and ways.

And that is another thing I thought of here. James 1:25 speaks of "the perfect law of liberty." The perfect law of liberty? Law and liberty do they go together? Yes, they go together. God teaches us and we read and obey

His truth and we are free to do it and it is a liberating type of rule and regulation.

Let us turn to **1 Corinthians 9:19** on this, I think God put some protections into His Word and into His arrangement for us. Here Paul was talking about accommodating himself to other people and how what he did so that he might be able to gain others. He says, “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.”

Well, we know how he did that. He even took a vow one day and he was free to do that. He was accommodating himself to the Jewish people. They came and they told Paul that there “This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law” (**Acts 21:28**). And so they said, “Go and purify yourself in the Temple. And there are a lot of Jews around here and they will see this and they will understand that you are not against the law.” And he did it. Why? Because he was accommodating himself to them and he had the freedom to do that so he might be more effective to the Jews and gain those that are under the law.

Then, he says, “To them that are without law, as without law,” but then this parenthesis “(being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law” (**1 Corinthians 9:21**). And God protects. Some people would like verses like that and they would say, “Well, I like that, to those that are without law I can go without law and I do not like this law and regulations anyway and so I am going to live like they do.” And Paul “Yes, that is what I am going to do but . . . ‘not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.’” And he carefully guards and sets the boundaries (I guess we can say it that way) he sets the boundaries and where our freedoms are and where they are not, and where our liberty is. And so, Paul had the liberty to go to those that did not have the Law — the Romans, Gentiles, but he would have been careful to make sure that he was living by the laws of Christ and the truth to that degree.

Galatians 5:3 says we “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.” That is another way people take the thing and distort it. And they say, “Well, we are called to liberty,” and then they use liberty to do as they please. It does not work that

way. True liberty is according to the laws and rules of God and within those boundaries.

Now, there is another liberty, what I would call a social liberty. And does anyone feel threatened here tonight? Does anyone feel challenged? Do you feel at rest and peace? I was travelling one time and talking with a man and he said to me, “Are you threatened? Do you feel threatened?” I said, “Well, no what do you mean?” “Well,” he said, “You are always using this word ‘challenge.’” And he said, “It sounds to me like you feel like you feel threatened.” It was very interesting for me to hear that how people are analysing us and what we are saying and what we are doing. They are coming to some conclusions. But I think you are free here tonight.

If let us say that we would all be sitting on one side of the auditorium and the other side would be people we do not know, they would be town folks and they would be sitting over here. Would we feel any different? I think we would a little. It does make a difference. We are at liberty and have freedom, the freedom of the narrow way. Part of this broadness, or this breadth of the narrow way is the freedom that we enjoy as people of God and fellowshipping one with another.

Whenever this is violated in that one of us decides (or maybe not decides) but falls or decides deliberately or maybe just slips and falls, spiritually speaking, and we go into sin then something happens and I have had individuals tell me already, individuals that fell into sin and then they regained themselves and they were received back into the fellowship and then they had this to say that they did not mean to complain but just one thing they wanted to say was while they were in sin and while they were in that situation they really needed encouragement, they needed strength, they needed help but no one talked to them. No one would talk to them.

Now, the Bible does say we do not “company” (1 Corinthians 5:9-11, 2 Thessalonians 3:14) with individuals like that, chum around with him, but it says, “Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2 Thessalonians 3:15). And we ought to talk with people like that. We ought to encourage them. But what was happening was that there was a lack, a sort of estrangement moves in and we are not free to talk and encourage each other quite the same way. That is just an illustration. Jesus said, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin” (John 15:22). Everywhere Jesus went people who if they were the kind that were saying, “Ah, I can do as I please,” they

did not feel like that when they were standing beside Jesus. They did not feel like that because there was something shining forth from His life. They had no cloak for their sin. There was no place for them to hide.

I remember a brother telling us one time he was working for a kitchen firm installing a kitchen and they sent out a new helper and he was right off the street this lasted till about halfway through the morning. Then this fellow said to the brother, “I am tired of this. You cramp my style.” Well, what was wrong? He was not free. He liked his “freedom.” He was thinking he was free. He was controlled by the evil one. But he liked to smoke, he liked to swear and he liked to do as he pleased and he could not do it because the brother was there and he could see something in the brother and so he did not feel free. And that is the way this works.

Another illustration here. I remember one Saturday morning I went to the rental place to rent something and there was a man in front of me standing there waiting and he looked around. “Oh,” he said, “I am sorry.” Well, what was wrong? Apparently there was something about me that he recognized something different I guess, I do not know. But he was there without a shirt he was not wearing a shirt and I guess he was a little ashamed, and he apologized, which I appreciated. But it illustrates the point. He was restricted again, by my presence. And that is the way this works.

Now, if you were to be yoked with an unbeliever or you are yoked with an unbeliever (which is something the Bible tells us we should not let happen) which road would you walk on? Would you walk on the narrow road or would you go over on the broad road? “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14), is the same thing because there is an influence that is going back and forth and usually what happens, I think the reason the Bible teaches that is because we go over, we move over and we start walking on the broad way. And that is the way the push goes and that is the way the influence will go.

So, we call it social fellowship, or social exchange, but spiritual dimension enters into it. There are other people who would try to walk on the narrow road. Let us go back again to [Matthew 7:15-16](#). It says, following these two verses about the broad and the narrow way, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” Here is a group of people that try to walk on

the narrow way, they dress, they put another set of clothes and they are false prophets. They are not true disciples, but they put sheep's clothing on and they walk on the narrow way. And we must discern that. And we can, we have the ability to discern that by looking at the fruit.

Than there is another group of people that does the same thing, I do not know how long that lasts, but in [Matthew 7:21–23](#), “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” But they were people who were saying, “We are doing a lot of good things.” They were walking along the narrow road, or walking on the narrow way. Or, are they? Maybe we do not know who all this is but one thing we can be sure of that is whenever you see someone doing something that is iniquity that is not right, he does not belong on the narrow way. He belongs somewhere else.

Now, we can all fall into sin and we can repent. I am not saying God always moves us off the narrow way right away. No, we can repent, and come back and He can save us. But let us thank the Lord for the freedom that we have with each other and the peace and tranquility that we enjoy among the people of God. That is why the fellowship is so sweet, is it not? It is interesting because we do not feel threatened by each other. But it can happen, I think it is really a violation of the breadth of the narrow way when we feel threatened by each other.

We ought to feel that unity of heart and mind and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment the Bible say then as we walk together then we are happy to be together and happy to see each other. We are glad to visit with one another and we are blessed, refreshed, encouraged, and edified. That is Christian fellowship. It is the liberty of the narrow way as we walk together in truth and righteousness where others just do not fit.

We know how it works. Some of us have families that we relate to and you know not everyone is saved. We are not all of the same mind but we visit together and we share together but you know you come home and you really have not been blessed. You have not been really encouraged and blessed because you are not on the same road.

Well, then there is the liberty of conscience — personal conscience before God. Let us go to Romans 14. Actually this is given in relation to brotherhood relationships, brother to brother relationships. In the closing of this chapter he says this in **Romans 14:22-23** “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” I think that our conscience before God is in view here. And this might not be such a liberating, this might be a little bit of a restriction on our liberty. But I am as free before God as my conscience allows me to be.

And the Bible would tell me here that if I have faith, or if I would have faith like the Apostle Paul would have faith, that I could go down to this market here, or whatever and I could buy meat that was offered to an idol and I knew it was offered to an idol, somehow I knew it, either because I knew where it came from or it says it right on the label or something whatever, but I could buy that meat and I could eat that meat and it would not hurt me. You could do that. You could go there and you could buy that meat and you could eat that meat and it would not hurt you because you know that an idol is not anything. It is nothing. They cannot talk. They cannot do this and they cannot do that. They are nothing. And so that which is offered to an idol is nothing. And so you can take that meat and you can eat it and it will not hurt you. It will not defile you. And you have that conscience that freedom.

But not everyone has that freedom. There is another dimension to this. But I would say with our personal freedoms we have let us live free before God. The meat eating that we are talking about and offered to idols is put into a little different category than whether or not we eat meat versus being a vegetarian. Meat offered to idols is something different. But if we have knowledge, we know we could do that. But he says, “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.” I think what he is saying is that if you want to eat meat like that, it would probably be good if you would go buy your meat and just sort of have it to yourself and eat it and not talk about it.

One thing I want to say yet and that is I think there is a liberty of faith, a liberty of love which we have, which we exercise and Paul did, Paul said that, “I could eat this meat offered to idols and it would not hurt me.” “Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth” (**1 Corinthians 8:13**). He would keep himself from be-

ing an offense to his brother. Why? Because of the love that he had for him and that he could bring harm to the other brother's conscience. He said that conscience is not in everyone that there is not something tainted about this meat and that you should not eat it. In fact is it not in one of the churches in Revelation that it is written that they were eating meat, one of the things that Jesus held against them was that they were eating meat offered to idols [Revelation 2:20].

But so this can be an issue at least, but I give it as a guideline yet of liberty on the narrow way, of the breadth of the narrow way that we live by the great law of love in relation to each other and carefulness and that we do not bring harm to anyone else in any way but we respect their conscience as well if it is going to be a problem for them. I know people say, "Well, some people need to be taught and they need to be told that these things are not a problem and they should just strengthen their conscience." Maybe there is room for that maybe there is some place for that. But on the other hand Paul said, "I will not eat meat if it makes my brother to offend I will not do it because of the love that I have for him."

Scripture says all the Law and the prophets hang on two great commandments, loving God and loving our neighbour as ourselves. And actually, Paul writing to the Galatians says, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5:14). One thing, the freedom that we have to love and the prominence of love and as I studied through this I come to the conclusion that in our liberty and freedom that we have we are free from the controlling power of sin and the devil. We are free to do the will of God. We are free to love others, to love them unto the end. And we have Jesus who came to this world and gave His life for us. He loved his disciples unto the end. He said, "as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

The only way, the only place that we are able to fulfil that is if we walk on the narrow way, walk to heaven, walk to glory taking the narrow way where we can "love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). It is part of the glorious freedom that we have.

May you enjoy your walk with the Lord and your freedom that you have.
May the Lord bless you.

The Way of Righteousness

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those. the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

Isaiah 35:8

Anyone walking on a public path becomes known, and his goals are revealed by the path he takes. In Scripture this expression often refers to a course that is approved or disapproved of by God. In the book of Acts we find that those who believed the gospel and walked therein were called people of the "way" ([Acts 9:2](#); [Acts 19:9](#)). This, in turn, referred to Jesus' statement, "I am the way" ([John 14:6](#)). There is only one way of righteousness that leads to that heavenly home where Jesus dwells. The righteous are those who with the power of Jesus do right, are just and fair, and shun all evil. May this brief outline help us to learn of the abundant blessings that attend those who walk in this "way."

The Psalms have some very wise words of instruction to us which if we were to heed them would most certainly help us to walk (live) in the way of righteousness.

We have this in [Psalm 1:1-6](#) Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. ³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. ⁴ The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away. ⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

And then these few words of wisdom from [Psalm 15:1-5](#) LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? ² He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. ³ *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. ⁴ In whose eyes a vile

person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. *He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.* ⁵ *He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*

If we were to live in accordance with these admonitions we would fulfil much of what God requires of us as we travel in the way of righteousness and furthermore we would also see the fulfilment of the call to bear fruit in **Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³ Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Psalm 1:1 says that blessed is the man (and woman) who walk not in the counsel of the ungodly and to be blessed means to be happy and contented and favored in spiritual or material benefits. This blessing is reserved for those who do not pattern their lives after the ungodly, scornful sinner. Fairly good counsel can often be found among morally good men, but such counsel may be tainted with temporal advantage. The writer of Psalm 1 longs for a deeper blessedness that comes to those who seek it through communication with God by His Spirit. The true seeker of heavenly blessings finds his happiness in the law of the Lord, in meditation, and in unselfish living. Temporal blessings are secondary to him, but if the Lord gives them, he receives them with thanksgiving as an added bonus.

A flourishing Christian shows cheerfulness and a balanced attitude toward people and situations around him. These attributes indicate a living connection with the true Vine, which in turn prompts obvious fruits of good works toward God and men. This results in confidence in his fellow men as well as favorable relations with them. Prosperity in the form of "fruit and leaf" are plainly evident. "The humblest citizen of all the land, when clad in the armour of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of Error" (Bartlett's Quotations).

The story of Joseph is a clear example of the foregoing statement. His brothers intended to do evil to him by selling him into slavery, Potiphar's wife maliciously accused him, the man whom he helped forgot him for a season, and he was left in prison for several years. Yet he continued to

prosper. He had no book like our Bible to show him the way, yet his spiritual training and confidence in God kept him from seeking retribution. The time came that Pharaoh acknowledged that the Spirit of God was in him and that the Lord caused whatever he did to prosper (Genesis 39:3). His integrity was rewarded beyond his expectations when he became a ruler of one of the greatest nations of his time. His roots reached out for the rivers of water and his tree thrived amidst his adversities. Would our faith have thrived under such circumstances?

The fruit of the Spirit can be described as follows:

Love—ardent affection between God and man, or man to men, and a sincere desire to promote the welfare of others.

Joy—the emotion excited by acquisition or expectation of good.

Peace—tranquility of mind and conscience, harmony between a person and God.

Longsuffering—bearing injuries or provocations a long time with patience.

Gentleness—softness of manner or disposition.

Goodness—inherent quality of kindly and human attributes.

Faith—a firm belief and trust in God and in His ability to save or help.

Meekness—mild of temper, patient forbearance.

Temperance—not excessive, habitual moderation in habits, passions, and appetite.

Biblically, "righteousness is measured by conformity to God's will and His commands. What He is, expressed in His words and ways, remains ever constant, and hence, provides a perfect standard, rocklike in firmness and stability, with which to measure the conduct of all creatures"

By contrast, man often measures righteousness by prevailing cultural and personal standards. In Israel, for a time, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" ([Judges 17:6](#)). Among Christians the standard for true righteousness must always be measured by the Word of God. If too much allowance is made for the individual or for exceptional circumstances, then righteousness is diluted and the structure is weakened.

Self-righteousness is a feeling of being holier or better than others and that one is fully meeting the righteous requirements of God. It is strong on good works and ignores the biblical declarations that "all have sinned"

(Romans 3:23) and "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). It is a self-manufactured justification that will not avail before God in the Day of Judgment. Self-righteousness has no room in the congregation of the righteous, for there it is realized that righteousness is attainable only through humble repentance and acceptance of the blood of Christ as the propitiation for sin. The blessedness that Psalm 1 advocates does not settle on those who attempt to establish their own righteousness.

Those who choose to dwell in God's tabernacle must prove themselves worthy. An upright daily walk with the Lord has its rewards both in this life and in the one to come. No fears of evil retribution plague the faithful Christian after the day is done. With a clean conscience he arises to a new day every morning and sleeps the sweet sleep of the righteous at night. Since he counts none as enemies, his heart is free to indulge in useful labor throughout the day. His outgoing attitude marks him as a man of true inward freedom. He smiles upon the world, and the world smiles back at him. The freedom he feels in his heart is expressed in friendly words and loving deeds. He knows that a self-serving attitude will rob him of that tranquility which belongs to the child of God. Words of truth edify those around him, for he safely dwells in God's holy hill.

Others, however, are missing this freedom because their main goal is that shallow happiness found in social or trivial pursuits. Indulgences such as late night partying, sports activities, carnal familiarities, joking, forays to questionable entertainments, fleshly intimacies, or flirtatious courtship rob them of that inner freedom which should be theirs. Such a life brings insecurity and bondage even though one may be in the fold.

Blessed are those who delight in the law of the Lord, who "make attractive the way" and who "adorn the doctrine" with their speech and their deeds. To them Sunday school and Sunday morning church services are meaningful. The spiritual outreach of the church, locally and internationally, is of prime interest. The spiritual gains or losses of the home congregation are keenly felt; they rejoice when sinners repent and are saved.

Is there ever a danger of becoming too righteous? Some decades ago terms such as being a square, old fashioned, outdated, or stuffy were derogatory terms that no one fancied. Other languages may have their own

terms to describe this state, yet self-righteousness or a false piety certainly does not belong in God's holy hill either. Should we not find a balance in freedom and form in Christian living?

True religion has always had its form as well as its freedom in all ages. Simplicity, economy, and modesty are always in place, everywhere and for everyone bearing the Christian standard. The opposite negates a Christian's testimony. No doubt the world is justified in doubting the Christian testimony by the tremendous deviations they see in Christendom.

The only convincing testimony that cannot be contradicted by the world is that of a Christian walking as the Bible teaches. Where the fruit of righteousness mentioned in Galatians 5 is clearly evident, all argument against Christianity must cease. Only the presence of the Holy Spirit can empower anyone to overcome the devil's wiles and his own sinful tendencies. Such a "holy hill" dweller who actually walks the way of righteousness will gain that eternal, heavenly home.

The question we may ask ourselves as we ponder the way of righteousness:

Why is the way of righteousness attractive to only a few? And what are some ways in which we can make the way of righteousness more attractive to those around us?



THE FIELD OF LIFE

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a treasure hidden in a field.

Matthew 13:44

The man in the parable found the treasure and, no doubt with haste, went and made the necessary transactions to come into ownership of the field. The account leads us to believe that the location of the treasure was known only to the one who found it. The price of the field was not affected by it

containing the treasure, so the treasure was free. It came with the field. A sinner is justified by believing in the judgment and promise of God in Christ and by allowing himself to be washed by the blood of Jesus. Salvation then becomes the treasure. Every spiritual need and desire is satisfied by possession of the treasure. The presence and feeling of joy, peace, and security move the possessor to watchfulness lest that which he values is lost. Satan's first effort in the life of a Christian is to diminish the value of the treasure and the power that comes from the sure knowledge of ownership.

So then, what of the field? The man in the parable had sold all his other possessions. He now owned only the field. The treasure had been received, but now what of the rest of life? It is God's will that we take up residency in the field. It becomes to us a field of life. It is God's will that we walk in the Way of Righteousness. Here there is freedom to live, to move, to grow. David was given an understanding of this place and this Way. "He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me" **Psalm 18:19**.

The church of God today is sailing through high seas. In His own good timing, God clears away the mist and spray and gives us a glimpse of the storm's magnitude and the unerring course of the ship. The sheer volume of questions and concerns overwhelms the human mind. Will there be answers? Is there security? What can each child of God do to help?

Surely it is a great privilege to live in these last times. As the end approaches, the keenness of God's desire toward the Bride is not diminished. The brightness of His love shines upon us, wisdom and knowledge are given us and provide stability in our times (**Psalm 102:13; Isaiah 33:5-6**). It is God's will that each of His children know that his or her sins are forgiven. It is God's will that each of us possesses the field of life. The treasure in it is of greatest value. The gate into it is one of humility and complete subjection to His will. A hedge surrounds the field, which no evil thing can cross. The pastures are green, the waters still. There is no discontent within. Every temptation to sin comes when the voices heard from without draw our attention away from the treasure and toward the hedge. Close examination of the hedge reveals many places to crawl through. It is not the intent of the hedge to be a confinement.

In the final day of Christ's earth life, He was taken to Calvary to die an ignominious death on the cross together with common criminals. He freely

lay down and gave up His life for the world's sin. After He was dead, "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" ([John 19:34](#)). The ransom required by the Law—blood—was given. Jesus paid it all!

This was an atoning sacrifice. It had the merit to provide a covering for man's sins. It is powerful enough to appease the wrath of God. The blood and body of Jesus substitutes for us. We no longer stand guilty before God if we believe in this sacrifice. It reconciles that which was broken in Eden. Jesus told the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. It is noteworthy that Abraham spoke of a great gulf in verse 26. This gulf was impossible to cross. The rich man had missed his opportunity in life. This was his choice, for God has built a bridge to span the gulf. This bridge is Christ's sacrificial death. Unbelief caused the rich man to continue in his sins. Many people today look at the "bridge" in unbelief, saying, "It's a mirage; it's too weak; it cannot carry my weight." Yet, the bridge stands. It's real. It is not weak.

Jacob had a dream in which he saw a ladder set upon the earth, and it reached all the way up to heaven ([Genesis 28:12](#)). Was it an earth-built ladder? No. Since this ladder was heavenly, it was able to reach from God to man. It was so different than the tower of Babel, which was built by man.

Jesus Christ is God's "ladder." By it (Jesus) we can and will reach heaven. Many stand in unbelief and say that the rungs are too far apart. Some say that they are not strong enough to climb it, and still others say that it's not real. But faith believes that the "ladder" is strong, all sufficient, and reconciles us with the Father.

Naaman was sick with leprosy. Through a maid's testimony, he was led to Elisha. The remedy for his affliction was the river Jordan. The Jordan was dirty, and so Naaman turned away in unbelief. He despised what was for his betterment.

God has provided a Jordan (Christ's blood) in which we can wash. Many desire to be cleansed of the leprosy of sin, but when the whole remedy is made known (self-denial, cross bearing, and following), many turn away and say, "It is too dirty (difficult)." Yet the Jordan continues to run from its source in God's mountains. As undesirable as it is to the flesh, it is all-powerful and able to set the vilest sinner free. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever

liveth to make intercession for them" **Hebrews 7:25.**

The eye of faith looks beyond the difficult and seemingly impossible. It sees the freedom from sin-stains, the fellowship with the Father, the deliverance from the wrath to come. Faith sees the gift of God and eternal life.

Brother Robert



Truth

Truth is the gem for which we seek,
Oh tell us where shall it be found!
For this we search, and pray, and weep,
That truth may in our hearts abound.

We want the truth on every point,
We want it all to practise by.
Do Thou O Lord our eyes anoint,
With a fresh unction from on high.

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