

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

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Isa. 35: 8 – “*And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it. It will be for those who walk in that Way.*”

THE NARROW ROAD

There are two roads on which we can walk as we sojourn here on the cursed earth. The wide 10-lane highway, on which most all of humanity tramps, is, unfortunately, where most of Christendom walks, as well. But this is not God's will for us. There is a narrow road. It is the narrow road to holiness. It is the road on which God wants us to walk.

But we live in a day in which most churches no longer teach holiness. Yet, without holiness, we will not see God. Every Christian, however, has the opportunity to become holy. The Scripture commands it. “*But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’*” 1 Pet. 1: 15.

How do we become holy? We cannot become holy in our own strength. Only God can make us holy. And He does so as we empty ourselves of all the godless things that have pervaded our lives. It is through our transparency that God's holiness shines forth. Radical dis-

ciples, therefore, must walk the narrow road to holiness.

The wide 10-lane highway is similar to the Vietnam War and the current war in Iraq. If we choose to walk that broad, turbid boulevard, we are entering into the enemy's territory. In Vietnam, it was difficult to tell who was a friend and who was an enemy. The devil is like that, masquerading as an angel of light. In Vietnam, the enemy understood the jungle. It was his backyard. We did not. If we walk the wide road, we are walking into the devil's backyard. **God still owns the world, but the devil has been given temporary governance over it. And he knows how to use it.** In Iraq, we are faced with an enemy who is willing to blow himself up in order to kill us. The devil is like that. He cares little how many demons he must sacrifice in order to take down one of God's beloveds. And there are no limitations to what he will do to accomplish his task. Why would we want to walk on the road the devil built when there is another one that was built by God?

THE STRENGTH OF THE NARROW ROAD

The narrow road to holiness is a road that rides above the stench of sin that pervades this world. The devil still patrols it, but he knows that those who walk this road walk in victory. Many of his devious weapons simply will not work on the narrow road because the radical disciples who walk there walk with God's wisdom and discernment – and with His blessing.

The Church today is full of many who are willing to follow Jesus, but few who will deny themselves and take up their crosses.

What makes the narrow road a better place to walk? It is the radical disciples who parade upon it that makes it a better place to walk. Isaiah said that the unclean will not journey on it. It will be for those who walk in that Way. Of what way was he speaking? He was speaking of radical disciples. He was speaking of the way that Jesus taught – deny yourself,

take up your cross, and follow me.

The Church today is full of many who are willing to follow Jesus, but few who will deny themselves and take up their crosses. And without the denying and the cross, the following of Jesus is done without conviction and without power.

The radical disciple must determine that he will yield all to the Lord and he will do so daily. **Yesterday's grace will do him no good today. He needs today's grace to walk the narrow road today.** And he gets God's grace by continuing to yield – to yield everything that he is; to trust God to bring about the necessary spiritual healing in his life.

The radical disciple realizes that, like John the Baptist, he must decrease so that Jesus can increase. He must allow God to strip away the egotistic self, in experience as well as in fact, so that the Lord Himself can sit on the throne of his life. His only desire is to serve God on God's terms. He is willing to pay the price regardless of how steep is that price. Like the man who, upon finding precious jewels in a field and then selling everything that he had so that he could purchase that field, the radical disciple gives up everything – absolutely everything – to have the field to which God has called him; to have all of God that God is willing to share with him. He

has that glimpse – a gift of God – that allows him to realize that God is all that matters. His tour on this earth comprises no more than a minute in time compared to eternity. He knows that he was sent to earth, by God, for God's purposes. How can he do anything else but serve God? How can he possibly walk anywhere else but on the narrow road to holiness?

One cannot traverse the narrow road to holiness without doing so in absolute surrender to the Lord.

YIELDING TO GOD

One cannot traverse the narrow road to holiness without doing so in absolute surrender to the Lord. We must yield totally to Him and be utterly dependent upon Him. All of creation is dependent on God. If God doesn't bring rain, the flowers and the trees and the plants will not survive. If God doesn't provide food, the animals and the birds will not survive. Is it coincidence that the wildebeests roam where the lions wait, in hunger? Is it coincidence that the zebras must cross the rivers where the crocodiles wait, in hunger? Is it coincidence that elephants will walk hundreds of miles to find water, but always know where to find it? Jesus

said that not one sparrow can fall to the ground apart from the will of the Father.

Is man any different? Yes. Man has free will; but like the rest of creation, if man does not rely on God, his chances of survival are not good. If man does not yield to God, he has no chance of being called to the right side of Jesus as He sits on His throne to judge mankind. And no man wants to be sent to the left side with the goats. (Matt. 25:31-46)

We must yield to God. And when we do, God, who is perfectly faithful, will cleanse us and transform us into the vessels that He intended us to be from the creation of the world. That is serving God in His perfect will. That is walking the narrow road to holiness with a freedom unknown to the rest of mankind.

Part of yielding to God is denying your self and carrying your cross. The self was crucified with Christ at Calvary. Our problem is that we don't believe it. We may understand it in our minds, but we don't experience it in our everyday Christian walk. It is because we have been deceived by the devil. He wants us to think that the self is the normal part of us that helps make our decisions and guides us through life. But that is a lie. The self is at enmity with God. The self hates God. The self is in cahoots with the devil. The self is ... selfish.

The self will never allow us to do anything that is Godly. It will always put up a fight. Why do you think it has been so hard to serve God? It is because the self doesn't want you to serve God. The self convinces you that you have other things to do; you have your own agenda; you are busy; you are tired and you deserve to rest; you've worked hard and you deserve to sit and watch TV (instead of spending time with the Lord). The self does not want you to serve the Lord. The self wants you to serve yourself. After all, it's really all about you, isn't it?

But Jesus crucified the self at Calvary. **The self doesn't have any real power just like the devil doesn't have any real power.** The devil must deceive you and lie to you in order to get you to serve him, and the self, who refuses to believe that it has been crucified, will lie to you, also. Does it really have your best interests at heart? Who knows more about you than your self? It feeds your ego – and you like that, don't you?

All of the skills that we learned in the world will do us no good at all denying the self or carrying the cross.

But Jesus says you must deny your self. You must know that the self has been

crucified. You must also believe it. And one thing more. You must start acting like you believe it. Deny your self daily!

Consider that you are an armed soldier, posted at an entrance door at the Pentagon. No one gets in unless you let them in. If they do not have the proper ID, they don't get past you. Period! That is what you must do with the self. When it raises its ugly head, you must put up a stop sign. "No admittance, buddy! Take a hike!"

We must remember that all of the skills that we learned in the world will do us no good at all denying the self or carrying the cross. We must yield to God and rely on God. He does the work and He is faithful. We yield. He heals.

RESTING IN GOD

We must learn to trust completely in God. We must rest in Him. Psalm 62 says: *My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. Find rest, O my soul, in God alone. My hope comes from Him.* In the 15th chapter of John, the apostle teaches us about the vine and the branches. Jesus is the vine. We are the branches. Jesus does all the work. All the branch does is stay attached to the vine. And that is all we are to do; we must stay attached to Jesus. If we do, God will prune us. That is the

discipline that is necessary (because of our disobedience) to conform us to the likeness of Jesus. But we must stay attached. We must rest in Jesus. We can do that if we learn to trust Him.

Trust is the extension of faith. Faith is a spiritual muscle that gets exercised every time we obey. And according to the Scriptures, we should be obeying constantly. We should obey every command of the New Testament. **When we obey, our faith leaps forth and becomes the fuel that propels our obedience along so that it reaches its destination.** Every time we utilize our faith, our faith gets strengthened. If we only have the smallest measure of faith, faith the size of a mustard seed, we already have enough to make a mountain jump into the ocean. **We don't need more faith. We just need to exercise the faith that we have.**

The more our faith gets strengthened, the more understanding we will have regarding God. The more we know God, the easier it is to trust Him. Trust is vital. Whereas faith is taking hold of a promise not yet seen and clutching it to our bosom, and believing, trust is taking hold of nothing and clutching it to our bosom, and still believing.

The longer we walk the narrow road to holiness, the more we yield to God and allow Him to have His way in

us, the more we will rest in Him, trusting Him implicitly. Ultimately, we will realize that whatever comes our way comes by the hand of God. And we can trust Him. On the narrow road to holiness, we can walk above the stench of sin that pervades the earth below us. We can be in the world but not *of* the world. We can do all that Jesus said we should do. Why? It is not because of us; it is because of Him. We yield. God works.

Our goal is to be nothing so that God can be everything.

THE WAYS OF THE NARROW ROAD

Though it seems to be opposite of the way we normally think, when we walk the narrow road, we don't gain anything. Much to the contrary, we lose everything. And the more we lose, the more of Jesus there will be in us. Our goal is to be nothing so that God can be everything. Our goal is to be transparent, so that God can do in us, with us, and through us whatever He chooses to do. God wants to bring Heaven to earth and He chooses to use radical disciples to bring about His will.

Andrew Murray has said: "God seeks men and women whom He can clothe with power. The world waits to be

convinced that God is indeed in the midst of His people. The perishing millions are crying for deliverance, and the power of God is waiting to accomplish it."

The power of God is waiting to accomplish it. Waiting for what? It is waiting for us, dear friends. God is looking for transparent radical disciples through whom He can send forth His power to bring heaven to earth and turn sinners into saints.

In Luke 8:9, after having spoken the parable of the sower, Jesus' disciples asked what was the meaning of the parable. Jesus' answer to them was: "*The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God have been given to you.*" Likewise, the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God have been given to today's radical disciples, as well – the illumination of the deep, hidden secrets of the word of God. The Holy Spirit will grant this enlightenment to those who have yielded all to God and who walk the narrow road to holiness. **He, the Holy Spirit of God, has the key that unlocks the vaults of truth and power that lie beneath the surface revelation of the Bible and He will grant that wisdom to those whom the Father has marked.**

It is important that we understand that we hope to attain nothing while walking the narrow road to holiness. Rather, we hope to lose

everything. The narrow road is a walk of faith. It is the last road we will walk on earth. **The last step on the narrow road to holiness is the first step into eternity with Jesus.**

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