

IS CHRISTIANITY TOO NARROW?

(Matthew 7:13-14)

Last week's interrogative sermon topic *"Why God Allows Pain and Suffering"* based on nationwide polls reflected the most anticipated answer of the Big 7 questions of the explore God series but today's interrogative sermon topic - *"Is Christianity too Narrow"* reflects one of the most controversial questions because we live in a politically correct society whereby tolerance at any cost is seemingly demanded. If we took a poll to find out the route each one drove to come to TMFBC this morning we would discover a majority of us arrived at TMFBC from Hwy 75 - Hwy. 380 or Hwy 5 – some of us had to merge onto those highways from the tollway or I-635 and then there are some who live so close to the church you arrived from one of the surrounding streets...so there are many routes to get you to 401 W. Erwin Ave...you do not have to drive *"one way"* to arrive at TMFBC; you can choose the route you want to take. Now as it relates to spiritual matters, most people have a *view of eternal life* and the *worship of God* based on the same principal as to how you arrived at church today – just as there are more than one way to arrive at TMFBC...an overwhelming majority of the people in America and around the world believe *"there are many roads that lead to heaven"* – they believe *"we all serve the same God, we just call him something different."* Again, what a person considers to be their *absolute final authority* will determine what they ultimately believe...evangelical Christians believe the Bible is our final authority and if you believe the Bible is the final and absolute authority on all matters of life, then you cannot read the Bible and affirm "all roads lead to heaven and eternal life." As we closely review our interrogative sermon text, I am confident the text will clearly reveal Yes, Christianity is *narrow* and it's narrow because *Jesus says its narrow* – Jesus is the one & way unto salvation hence, the only way to heaven. You see - Jesus often times surprised people with teachings that cut across the grain of human nature. Jesus taught *"Lose your life to save it"* – *"The first will be last and the last will be first"* - Jesus said, *"The meek shall inherit the earth"* - Jesus said, *"Rejoice in persecution"* - Jesus taught us to, *"Pray for your enemies and love those who despitefully use you"* - Jesus said, - *"It's better to give than to receive."* These command statements among many others was revolutionary teachings at the time Jesus said them. But by far the most outrageous assertion that Jesus ever uttered was *"I am the way; the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* This claim enrages people like nothing else and we who are Christian by placing our faith in Jesus Christ alone, have to deal with the venom of evil statements and even...evil actions from those who oppose the Bible and Jesus as they refer to Christians as being narrow minded – arrogant – bigoted – and we must be foolish people to believe Jesus is the only way to be saved. *We live in a world that demands tolerance and choices.* And for billions – Jesus being the one and only way unto salvation is their stumbling block to faith.

The Path to Salvation is both Narrow and Difficult but it alone leads to Eternal Life (vs. 13-14)

- All roads may lead you to God or a god; but only the road through Jesus leads to Heaven.
- True Christianity (evangelical) is the only religion who believes in a Triune God – a Trinity. Our God has 3 co-equal and distinct persons or essences – God the Father – God the Son – and God the Holy Spirit – and all three comprise One God.
- The gate to heaven is “narrow” in the sense of having a particular requirement for entrance – and that is Faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- Being a Christian is “difficult” because it requires growth. God loves us too much to let us stay the same. Growth can be painful at times, and we usually don’t like to leave our comfort zone, but positive change is always rewarding.
- The reason “few” will enter through the “narrow gate” and traverse the “difficult way” is that an overwhelming majority of people refuse to accept by faith Jesus is the one & only way, the truth and the life as He stated in John 14:6.

Although the Wide Gate and Broad Way Lead to Hell, Many will Travel its Path to Destruction (vs. 13-14)

- Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared person and Hell is also a prepared place – but it’s a prepared place for an unprepared person. Heaven is exclusively for those who accept Jesus the Christ as their Lord and Savior – for Acts 4:12 says, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
- Entering through the “narrow gate” and traveling down the “difficult way” means when we follow Jesus we’ll have to crucify our fleshly desires as stated in Galatians 2:20 – we will have to live by faith and not sight as stated in 2 Corinthians 5:7; we’ll have to endure trials with Christ-like patience as mentioned in James 1:2–3, and live a lifestyle separate from the world as stated in Romans 12:1–2.
- God offers salvation to everyone who accepts it but, only on His terms.
- Even when disputing/dialoguing over prominent doctrines, a Christian should exercise restraint and show respect. It is one thing to disagree with a position; it is quite another to disparage a person. We must hold fast to the Truth while showing compassion to those who question it. Like Jesus, we must be full of both grace and truth (John 1:14). Peter strikes a good balance between having the answer and having humility: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).