

We're all on a Journey, where is yours taking you?

When I was young I loved going on holiday. It was an adventure. One of the things I loved most about the holiday was the journey – even though mum and dad may say different after 5 hours in a car with 3 boys... I loved getting up really early and getting loaded into the car before it was even light, I loved having our pillows so we could go back to sleep, I loved the games we played counting cars as the journey went on, I loved the tapes we listened to as we took the long drive to our destination. I look back on those journeys with great affection. Now we have our own children, I want them to have the same sense of adventure as we go on holiday, we call it our adventure, we get up early, even though we might not have to, to beat the traffic. I can already see in my boys eyes the sense of anticipation and excitement about our holiday. And the best thing about the journey... We were going somewhere. We were going on holiday.

Now our lives are a journey, nobody's life is ever at a standstill, we all grow a day older every 24 hours. Our journey on this earth starts at birth and ends with our death... we are on a journey through life.

But where will our journey lead us, what is the point of the journey, what is the destination of our journey of life?

The exciting thing about the journeys I described earlier was the destination, not just the journey itself.

This brings me to the words of Jesus in the bible. If you have a bible or phone with the bible on why don't you turn to [Matt 7:13-14](#).

We are currently looking at One of Jesus most famous talks in the Bible called the sermon on the mount, and we are coming to the end, Jesus has spoken about many things, such as giving, prayer, judging, anger, marriage and divorce, building up treasures in heaven and last week we saw how God wants us to ask seek and knock, and we then have the following sentence:

[Matt 7:13](#) "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. [14](#) But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Jesus introduces us to two roads, two gates and two destinations. And encourages, no, urges that we enter through the narrow gate.

For a few minutes this morning I'd like us to look at the two roads, and what the narrow gate is.

1. What is the Wide Road?

This is mankind's starting point, the road we begin our Journey on it is our default position. It is the road the rest of the world is on and as Jesus says it is headed to destruction.

Has anyone here ever been to Wembley way? Here is a picture of it.

It is a path that leads to Wembley Stadium, and when there is a match or concert on at Wembley you walk along to get to the stadium.

Or how about driving along a motorway, it can be quite tedious and boring; you just go with the flow of traffic.

Now both of these are good pictures of the wide road; it is a road with loads of people on all going in the same direction with the same destination.

When you are on one of these paths/roads you really have to go with the flow. If you forgot something in your car when going to Wembley and wanted to go back, getting off Wembley way or going against the flow is very, very difficult, likewise if you are in very heavy traffic on a motorway and you want to turn off, you have to prepare yourself miles in advance to get into the inside lane to exit.

The wide road leads to destruction and Jesus says it is essential to get out of the flow with everyone else, to get off the wide road and onto the narrow road.

So why is it difficult to get off the wide road?

- a. Well friends people keep you on the road, friends, family work mates hold you onto the road. You will need to push through to find the narrow gate that leads to life.
- b. Ignorance, not knowing that the wide road leads to destruction and that there is even another way, a narrow gate and road. No one may have ever told you this
- c. Popular cultural resistance to what the church says, it's just a crutch, not relevant, we're more enlightened than that now, we've moved on from needing that.
- d. The narrow gate and road don't look very appealing.. The church has unfortunately given Jesus and his way bad press, why would we want to be like those religious bigots is a popular view.

If you are on the wide road, it is urgent that you get off it!!

Jesus message here is one of urgency.

2. What is the Narrow Road?

Let's have a look at another picture. This is Striding edge in the Lake District. It is a very narrow path that leads to the top of a mountain, Helvellyn. To walk it is exhilarating, an adventure, but dangerous and not easy.

The narrow path is somewhat different to the wide path, you walk along in single file, you walk realising the danger there is, but the journey is much more exhilarating and adventurous.

The other thing different about the narrow path, is the destination. Jesus says the destination for those who take this path is Life!

For those of you who have walked striding edge on a clear day, reaching the summit of Helvellyn is one of the most amazing things ever, the sense of achievement, the view it is truly worth the effort.

The narrow road in our journey through life is the same, if we take this road, though harder and more challenging than the wide road, the result is definitely worth it! In fact the result in not taking it is unthinkable.

The main reason for getting on to the narrow road is simple... where it leads....

And to get onto the narrow road we need to get off the wide road and go through the narrow gate.

3. What is the Narrow Gate?

So how do we get onto this road that leads to life and off the road that's destination is destruction, well we go through the narrow gate. Now it is narrow, it has more of a feeling of a turnstile, something that you go through on your own, not in a crowd.

Moving to the narrow road through the narrow gate is a personal moment, it is a decision you make as an individual.

So what is the narrow Gate?

Well Jesus is the narrow gate... He said in: [John 10:9-10](#) "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full".

He also said in [John 14:6](#) "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me".

The only way to get on to the narrow road that leads to life is to go through Jesus, he is our only way in.

So why is Jesus the only way in...

Well.....we have God, he is completely holy. God hates sin and the punishment for sin is death. The thing is, God loves mankind, he loves you and me. Now God is a Just God, and he needs someone to pay the penalty for the sin they committed, and we're not in the old testament where we can go down to the corner shop and pick up a lamb to sacrifice. So cos God loved us so much he had a plan. He would send his son Jesus, to be that lamb, to be the one who would die. And Jesus did, he died on a wooden cross 2000 years ago, we know he did, it's in the bible, but also in other writings of the time. So Jesus died, and because of him, God sees those who trust in and give their life to Jesus like he does his son, part of his family. And because Jesus didn't just stay dead in a tomb, he rose again to new life, so those who trust in him will have life, eternal life with God their father. This is the life that is at the end of the narrow path....

So the narrow gate is specific, it is the only way, it's not one of many ways... as I heard another preacher say, if the bible taught 240 ways to God I'd teach them all. But it doesn't it teaches one way!!

Jesus came so that we might have life....

We were created for life! We can only know life in Jesus... He brings us life, life now here on earth and best of all life at the end of our journey here on earth!!

4. So where are you going?

Now let's be clear! it is not that we get to the end of life and there are two options which we have to choose from, but we chose a certain road/gate whilst we are alive on earth.

If when we die, why would God, a God whom we have denied and lived without want to accept us into his kingdom when he has given us every chance to go his way whilst we were alive. [Luke 13](#) Jesus says: "But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.'"

Whereas those who chose the narrow road and gate, those who honour God and know him will be welcomed in as those God knows.

This sums it up a bit for me:

"West Indian who had chosen Islam over Christianity; his reason: Islam is a noble broad path there is room for a man and his sins on it and the way of Christ is far too narrow"

In this text, Jesus, is warning us that the wide road and gate, the easy way, the way apart from him, leads somewhere we won't want to end up. A place separated from God. He says the narrow way might not be popular, it might be hard, but it will lead somewhere we would want to go, a place of life.

And the journey there will be an adventure.

Now in our culture it is not popular to talk of life and destruction, however recent surveys suggest that 66% of British people believe in life after death. The bible teaches clearly about life after death, but where will we be when our earthly bodies fail us and we die. Will we have the confidence that we will be with God, living a life we were designed for, or do we have any doubts about what might happen and the fear that we might end up as Jesus said going through the gate to destruction..

Which road are you on, what is your destination, have you given your life over to Jesus, who makes a way to living life in all its fullness, or are you still on the road that we all start out on our default road, the wide road who's destination doesn't sound like much fun at all!!

I believe there is some here who have taken the narrow gate to life and are travelling along the narrow road to life, but life is sometimes hard and keep looking back to the wide road thinking wouldn't I be better off on that path.

I want to encourage you to remember to think of the destination, not the journey in this life.
If we live with eternity in mind not the current world, it will make a huge difference to how we go through the tough times, remembering there is even more life to come, rather than destruction!

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