

Dear Friend,

In American society today the gospel of Jesus Christ has been so "watered down" by man's reasonings that I wonder if many people who "say" they are Christians have ever really heard the truth to begin with. There is so much "greasy grace" which manifests itself in all manner of sin and depravity ... even among those who profess that they are followers of Christ. Many today say that God's grace covers everything so they profess Christ with their lips, but in their daily lives you can tell little difference between them and the world. But the only true gospel is the one that Jesus Christ Himself brought us.

Mat 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 thereat: (14) Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Straight is the gate means ... Jesus is the ONLY way to salvation. There is no other path to God. Narrow is the way ... it is a path of love, obedience, and holiness that leads to life. MANY say the gate is wide and the way is broad ... but that is the path to hell. FEW choose surrendering their life to Jesus alone, and to walk the narrow path of holiness. To help us understand what He meant, Jesus gave us the illustration of the fruit trees:

Mat 7:15-20 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (16) Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (17) Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (18) A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (19) Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (20) Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

The false prophets (false teachers) proclaim ... "Wide is the gate and broad is the way. God's grace covers all of your sins no matter how you choose to live. Don't worry. Most people will make it into heaven." I even heard one of them recently say that people are "born saved" and they cannot lose their salvation. What is the end result of that false doctrine? If you are born saved ... and you cannot lose your salvation ... then it doesn't matter how you live. Does that sound like a "narrow way" to you? Of course not!

Notice the illustration of the fruit trees. It is so simple. A good tree produces good fruit. A corrupt tree produces bad fruit. While meditating this passage, the Holy Spirit said to me, "*The only way for the fruit to change is for the tree itself to change. It must become a different kind of tree.*" That is exactly what happens when a person is genuinely born

again. Their nature changes from one of sin and death passed down from the first man Adam, to the nature of love and righteousness imparted by the last Adam ... Jesus Christ.

A truly born again person becomes a different kind of tree at the core of their being. Their very "nature" is changed. It does not mean they won't be tempted to sin because they are still living in fallen flesh that has the motions of sin working in its members. But they have a new nature at their core. They are new creatures and the fruit of their lives will change. The fruit of righteousness from their new nature will change their path from being broad (like the world) to being narrow (the way of righteousness).

Jesus makes it very clear ... if there is never any change in the fruit ... the tree did not change. Religion is not enough. Dressing up a corrupt tree in religious trappings does not change the core of the tree. Eventually what the tree is ... at its core ... determines the fruit that is produced on the limbs. That is why later on in this same passage Jesus says,

Mat 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. (22) 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? (23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, **ye that work iniquity.**

Notice, Jesus rejected them because ... they continued to work iniquity! Iniquity was still the fruit of their lives which meant ... they never became a new tree. They were never born again. They may have said a "sinner's prayer" and worked in the church, but they never surrendered their heart and lives to Jesus. I fear many today think they are "okay" just because they said the sinner's prayer years ago. But words alone do not save us. We must surrender our heart to Jesus and allow His nature to become our nature. There is only one way to build your house upon the rock ... by doing His sayings. [Mat 7:24-27] That requires surrender.

Sue and I love you and appreciate you. We thank God for your generous and giving heart. God bless you!

Your friend and co-laborer,

GARY