

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (9)

"The Difficult Way to Life" (Matthew 7:14)

INTRODUCTION

In His sermon on the mount, Jesus spoke of two ways:

The way to destruction, and the way to life

In describing these two ways, he pointed out the contrasts:

The way to destruction is broad and many choose to follow it, and the way to life is difficult and there are few that find it

If we desire to be saved and to experience an eternal life with the Lord, there will be hardships along the way. This mornings' lesson will help us think about "The Difficult Way to Life." We must first note that we should not be surprised about the difficulties we will face.

We have been warned on many occasions. For example we are warned by Jesus in this mornings text and in [John 15:18-20a](#) (Turn there). We are warned by Paul when he spoke to his fellow disciples in [Acts 14:22](#), "**We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.**" And in [2 Timothy 3:12](#), "**In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**" And we were also warned by Peter in [1 Peter 4:12](#), "**Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.**"

We must take heed these warnings and understand that we have many enemies. Turn to [1 Peter 4:3-4](#) (read verses). People will think we are strange and heap abuse upon us. [1 Peter 2:11](#) tells us that if we are not careful our own sinful desires can become our enemy. And [1 Peter 5:8-9](#) tells us to, (read verses).

Now that we have been warned, how should our attitudes be? Though the way to life is difficult we should not be resentful.

We are told to rejoice. Turn to [Matthew 5:10-12](#) (turn there). When looking at [James 1:2](#) we see that we are to, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds." And in [Acts 5:41](#) we see that, "the apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."

Jesus and His disciples say that we should rejoice. Why? Because it makes us stronger. Paul tells us in [2 Corinthians 12:10](#), "That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, and in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Turn to [James 1:2-4](#) where we see why James says we should rejoice. (Turn to verses)

Can we now begin to see why God would allow the way to life to be so difficult? If so, we should rejoice, not resent, when trials and tribulations befall us on the way to life. What may first appear to be stumbling blocks may in fact be stepping-stones to victory. This is especially true when remembering that we will not be defeated because we have God on our side.

[1 Corinthians 10:13](#) tells us that he will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to endure, and he will provide a way of escape so that we can rise up. He also gives us the strength to stand strong by His Spirit that empowers the inner man. [Ephesians 3:16](#), "I pray that out of His glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your enter being." But not only does he give us strength through His Spirit, but He also gives us His armor to protect us as we fight the good fight. Turn to [Ephesians 6:10-13](#). (Turn to verses)

Through God's providence and provision, we have the ability to be victorious because we have Jesus to inspire us.

Jesus provided an example of suffering, for us to follow. [1 Peter 2:21](#), "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you

should follow in His steps." We should look to Him, as we seek to endure. Turn to [Hebrews 12:1-3](#). (Turn to verses)

Through Jesus' example, we have the inspiration and motivation to succeed on our journey to eternal life.

CONCLUSION

All of this is not to say that we will never misstep along the way to life. [1 John 1:8 & 10](#) tell us that, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." But when we stumble, we have mercy and forgiveness. [1 John 1:7 & 9](#), "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

So as we travel on the way to life, finding it at times to be difficult...

Let us not be surprised,
Let us not be resentful,
And let us not be defeated.

But as the writer to the Hebrews wrote in his epistle in [Hebrews 12:12-15](#),

"Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed."

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:"

"Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;"

May we be like the Apostle Paul when he confessed in [Philippians 4:13](#),
"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."