



THE MAJORITY IS
SOMETIMES WRONG

Presented by

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"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is ~~easy~~ that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few." Matthew 7:13, 14

One of the most frightening things about our modern time is how unnecessary guns are ... how unnecessary force is. During World War II, thousands of bombers and countless tons of bombs were used to achieve victories that, in retrospect, did not really change our world all that much. But great armaments were used, and the use of the bombers, the artillery, and the rifles was, if nothing else, very impressive.

Today entire nations can be enslaved, great populations can be changed, and whole continents can be influenced without a shot being fired. There are other weapons nowadays, other tools, that can change people and their minds.

In connection with politics, for example, we don't need armies and guns anymore to mold people's minds. Candidates are sold. That means that high powered, costly, and skillful advertising agencies and public relations teams are put together to make sure that a candidate looks good.

Another reason we don't need guns and armaments anymore to mold people and influence them is that we have the massive power of education. In the so-called free nations, mammoth educational systems are operating which consistently tend to present one point of view, one version of what the good life is supposed to be. The powerful influence of these educational systems is so pervasive, it has now become hard to detect what is happening to us. The influence of our large educational systems, with their evolutionistic, naturalistic, hu-

manistic, secular point of view is so large that it is fast becoming almost impossible to step back and look at ourselves objectively.

Just by way of example, the evolutionistic ~~view~~ view so dominates education these days that any one who believes what the Bible says about creation is considered to be extremely unenlightened, and possibly even mentally defective. The presupposition that material is independent, self-forming, and self-developing, in short, that material is ultimate reality is so pervasive that it determines the way we ask questions and look for answers.

The point is just this: we don't need guns and ammunition to change people. We have other means.

Now all this, if nothing else, means that the power of the majority is becoming very, very great indeed, and the danger to minority people and minority points of view is increasing daily. And this throws some very important light, I think, on some things Jesus said many years ago. He was talking about the majority, too, about the way most people thought and about the way most people lived. And He suggested that the majority is not always right.

He said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7: 13, 14).

If for no other reason, these words of Jesus Christ deserve attention because we are living in an age of conformity. We should pay attention to His words about the narrow way now, when so many people eat the same breakfast cereals, wear the same kinds of clothes, drive the same kinds of cars, enjoy the same kinds of entertainment, and go to the same schools. It is true of course that we are not all exact duplicates of one another, but within

limits that are usually set by the press, radio and television, and our educational system there is a sameness among us, a sameness of ideas. The majority is very large these days, and its impact on human life is enormous.

Jesus, though, suggests, does He not, that so far as religion is concerned the majority is sometimes wrong. No, He goes further than that—He says that it is often wrong. No, I'm afraid He goes even further than that, for He says that the majority is always wrong so far as religion is concerned.

Isn't this the thrust of His statement which says that the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and many people enter it, but the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and few people find it? Isn't Jesus saying that, from His point of view, the religion of the majority is fatal, and the true religion is a religion that only a minority of people find?

The simple fact is that the majority is sometimes wrong and it is wrong when it comes to religion.

This idea, though Biblical, contradicts the way most of us feel. Somewhere along the line, the idea took hold that right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil, these are determined by majority judgment. And the idea that the people as a whole are able to make momentous judgments regarding truth and falsehood, right and wrong, is with us today. It is reflected in the way laws are made, for example—whether or not the laws express the will of the majority is considered extremely decisive.

In connection with political life, nowadays, it is frequently said that our political problems will be solved if we can manage to find ways to express the people's will rather than the will of the bureaucrats and politicians. What is forgotten is that when one takes all of the so-called bureaucrats (all those working for the government in some form or an-

other) and all the elected politicians, he already has a large number of the people. In fact, in the United States right now there are about as many people working for the government as there are working for private industry. Nevertheless there is the feeling that *the people* can make the great judgments that must be made today.

Now, in some instances this may be very true indeed, but the ability of the people to make useful judgments diminishes as more and more people are influenced by education that is cut off from the Word of God, the Bible, and are influenced by other powerful non-Christian forces that mislead them. In any case, Jesus warns us not to make the mistake of letting majority opinion determine our religion. He says there is only one way into life and that way is very specific, it is narrow, the entrance to it is narrow, and very few find it.

What, would you say, is the prevailing point of view concerning religion these days? May I make an attempt at answering that question? See if you agree with this description of the majority opinion regarding religion.

First of all, would you agree that most people think that religion is very nice? It is, shall we say, "lovely." It is a very beautiful thing. Religion from this point of view has a place in our culture which resembles to a certain extent the place that humor, entertainment, and art have. Religion, from this point of view, is something that a certain type of people are particularly interested in. Some people say, "I'm not a very religious person," conceding as they say this that they recognize that there are other people who are, and they somewhat admire their interest in religion.

From this point of view—religion is nice—people are encouraged to be creative so far as religion is concerned. They are encouraged to learn about the different religions of the world, and possibly

even to experiment with certain religions over the course of their lifetimes.

Closely related to this idea, is the idea that one religion is as good as another. Religion in general is nice, all religion is nice, with the possible exception of those that lead to human sacrifices and other damaging events. But in general, most people would feel reluctant to suggest that one religion was absolutely better than another. To be sure, they would feel, perhaps, that one religion was better for them, but, generally, most people feel that one's religious preferences are determined by what happened to him when he was young. They think this with reference to the many religions of the world, and they tend to think this way, too, about the many denominational persuasions that exist within the Christian sector of the world.

Now these points of view are fortified by another viewpoint that is part of the present majority opinion regarding religion. It's this: most people feel that religion is primarily an expression of our psychological structure. Religion marks a psychological stage in man's evolutionary development. As man became more sensitive about himself and his environment, he developed the ability to create symbols and myths, and he approached these symbols with awe and reverence.

So then, this is the way the prevailing view of religion can be described: religion is nice, one religion is as good as another, and religion is an expression of our psychological make-up. And with all this most people have a religious streak in them. They may even go so far as to practice a particular form of religion because they are accustomed to it, and it fits their lives. But they aren't that sure of what everything means, they are not willing to say that their religion is extremely important, and if they have questions, they expect that maybe, just maybe, these questions will be answered when

they die and they find out what, if anything, is on the other side.

The result of all this is that most people are not too troubled by religious questions. They coast gaily along through their lives. They don't have to ask how their religious position affects the way they live. They can do pretty much as they please.

Ah yes ... it's a wide and well paved road.

Have you ever driven along a superhighway? It was the right route and everything was going along smoothly. You were leaning back in your seat, munching potato chips, enjoying yourself when suddenly you discovered that you were going the wrong direction. Everything was going so well, but you were not making any progress. This can happen. It has happened to me once or twice. "Well," says Jesus Christ, "there's a road like that so far as religion is concerned, too. It's well traveled. It's easy to travel. Everyone will agree with you along that road. Your religion will never get in the way. But the trouble is, it leads in the wrong direction. In fact, it leads to destruction."

We should take Jesus' words very seriously, for most people who are interested in religion agree that He was an authority on religious matters. We should look carefully at the religion He had in mind when He spoke of the narrow gate and the narrow way, the way that leads to life.

In the light of the total teaching of the Bible, we must say, first of all, that the narrow gate is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He described religion and religious choices in typically Semitic, picturesque language, and He viewed religion as something that had an entry way—a gate. That we should call Him the gate seems obvious from what He said in words recorded in the 10th chapter of John. He speaks there of His people as if they were sheep who were brought into the place of protection and safety. At that time He said, "Truly,

truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ... I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:7, 9). With this, Jesus indicated that from His viewpoint, salvation was related to Him and it was related to Him exclusively.

This is, in fact, the point of view found throughout the rest of the Bible, and it is a distinguishing element of the Christian religion. Jesus Christ is presented in the Bible as the one who made expiation for the sins of His people. He paid for these sins. Those who are familiar with the Hebrew Bible know that it indicates again and again that blood had to be shed if sin was to be paid for. God said to the people of Israel, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life" (Leviticus 17:11).

Jesus was the one who gave His life, His blood, so that the sins of all those who believe in Him might be paid for and so that they could receive salvation. This is the meaning of the cross. Salvation is marked by a cross. The cross is Jesus' cross. There is no other way of redemption. So Jesus is the gate by which men enter into the reality of eternal life. When they believe in Jesus, they enter this gate.

Yes, indeed, the Bible expresses the absolute necessity of faith in Jesus if a person is going to be saved. Speaking of Jesus, His apostles said, "This is the stone which was rejected by the builders but which has become the head of the corner. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:11, 12).

Jesus is the gate, the narrow gate, and you will enter into life, only if you believe in Him.

Jesus says the way is narrow, too. Once a person

is through the narrow gate, the way is narrow. In deed. In contrast to the freewheeling approach to religion that characterizes majority religious opinion these days, Jesus' way is the way of faith and obedience. Jesus, when He saves His people, enters into a solemn arrangement--a covenant--with them.

When God came to His people in ancient times, He made clear to them that the covenant way, the way He expected them to live, was a way that involved all their activities. Moses said, "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God to walk in all His ways, and love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord's commandments and his statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?" (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13).

Jesus, the Son of God, who spoke through Moses, now invites His followers to walk the narrow way. Oh, it is narrow compared to the free-for-all, undisciplined, way of life that many people become involved in. It is narrow compared to the relativistic point of view which so many have chosen. It is the way of worship and love of the Almighty God, our Creator and our Savior. It is the way of living under the discipline of the Word of God, the Bible. It is the way of prayer and thoughtful relating of one's life to God and His plan. It is the way of love and compassion, mercy, meekness, long suffering, and kindness. It is the way of life that springs into existence when believers in Christ receive the Holy Spirit sent from heaven and joyfully obey God and love their fellow man. It is narrow, in comparison to the broad way that leads to destruction. But it is glorious because it leads to life.

You know why I'm telling you this, don't you. I'm telling you this so that you will not be misled

by the easygoing common opinion regarding religion these days, and so that you will turn and enter in by the narrow gate. Those who walk the broad way cannot experience the peace and joy and blessing that human beings were created to experience. Their freedom is more apparent than real. Their progress is an illusion. And their destination is hideous and terrifying. Those who walk the broad way advance toward death.

Jesus is the narrow gate, and the way of faithful living with Him and for Him is the narrow way. I invite you to separate yourself from the crowd that moves away from life and peace and joy. I invite you to come to Jesus Christ now, to believe that He is God's Son, and to believe that His sacrifice paid for sin. I invite you to trust Him for your salvation. Trust Jesus, the joy of man's desiring, our only hope, our peace, our comfort. Walking with Him is life indeed. It is life moving toward fullness and abundance.

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