

Finding the narrow way by Sándor Abonyi

If I had to look for how the message of the narrow way became accentuated to me, I could describe it as a journey.

When we lived our faith “within” the church for years, we knew God’s words about the narrow way, but we interpreted it as meaning that we who tried to take action against sin and represent it to the members of the church are walking on the narrow way. However, we have also seen from the parable of the narrow and broad way and the ten virgins, that there will be believers of whom it will turn out that Jesus does not even know them, and there will be foolish virgins who will not meet Jesus. I have always said that there will be believers who go to church but will not go to heaven, and even the parables of the ten virgins and the narrow and broad way show that there will not be few, but quite a lot. I have said many times: there will be a great surprise in heaven. We will meet people we would not even have thought of, and will not meet other people whom we had expected to be there.

Of course, I also knew the Scriptures that write **about breaking away from the church in a positive sense:**

*“Wherefore **come out from among them, and be you separate**, says the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and **I will receive you**” (2 Cor. 6:17).*

*“**You shall be excluded from the churches**; and the time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he does divine service” (John 16:2).*

*“And I heard another voice out of heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people**, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4).*

I have considered these Words of God in such a way that the time may come in the life of a church when “sin is full-grown” because **the leaders compromise with the truth**. In Revelations 2 we also see that six of the seven churches already need repentance and there are some where Jesus is no longer present in the church: He is knocking on the outside of the door. During my nearly 20 years of church life, I have fought a lot against sin and compromising leaders, and I have considered these Bible verses in a way that they do not apply to us. However, the time has also come in our lives when, due to the compromise of external and internal leaders and the similar thinking of several believers, we were no longer able to be in spiritual fellowship with the church. Given that we no longer received support for the fight against sin from outside or inside the church, we only saw compromise, so the moment had come for us to come out of the church. From this point on, it became clear to me that the Lord could no longer be there in the community called the church, because Jesus did not take fellowship with sin, but promised to be with those who came out after Him.

After we came out, we sought our identity and fellowship with other saints and churches, but after a while it became clear to us that others did not want to fellowship with us, and it became certain in us that we could no longer be in fellowship with those among whom

we came out of, but not even with those who are in fellowship with them. Thus, it became apparent that **with our coming out we found ourselves outside the entire charismatic movement**, but we continually experienced that the Lord was with us and guiding us.

It was then that I began to delve deeper into what it really means to walk the narrow way, and that people on the narrow and broad way **must become separate** (see the three Bible verses above) and **form a separate community**. We know that if two or three of us are gathered together in the name of the Lord, He is with us, and then **we are the body of Christ and we are His church**. This is true despite the fact that according to Matthew 7, there are **many** who walk on the broad way but call themselves a church, and we who have come out are few.

In the first year after we left, the following became clear to us:

- we are the church of Christ, even if we are few,
- we cannot compromise with the truth of the Word, but want to proclaim and **live the Word in everyday life** without compromise (we want to be true disciples),
- we cannot engage in spiritual fellowship (prayer and breaking bread) with those who call themselves a church but have compromising leaders.

After we left, a leader from our old church approached me several more times and talked about several things. When he asked me what the difference is between the broad and the narrow way, I was able to answer in one word: compromise. This is also expressed in the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 7:

*"Whosoever **hears** these sayings of mine, and **does them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (this is the narrow way).*

*"And whosoever **hears** these sayings of mine, and **does them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the grass:" (This is the broad way; it means that pastors know the Words of God but in practice, they do not live according to them and do not demand it of believers either: i.e., they are compromisers).*

Many pastors say they teach about lifelong marriage, but **when it comes to practical application (to do it), they fail**: many come to the church who are already divorced and "remarried," they say, „so let's examine them, mercy, and grace we practice (God also forgives the time of ignorance), so we should also forgive". This way they compromise and **bless those whom Jesus calls adulterers!** In the time after our departure, while clarifying these, it turned out that half of those who came out could not take on this uncompromising life of a believer, so a second separation took place. Many went back to other churches which were similar to the ones they came out of.

That's when I started the Narrow Way blog and quite a few people came to me, but mostly believers outside of churches - or finding no place in churches. However, we have found that there is also a difference between believers outside of churches. There are habitual rebels, frustrated (injured **refugees**), and a real, devoted **remnant** *.

After a few years, it became clear that the communities called churches were, in fact, mostly congregations of believers who walk on the broad way operating on the basis of programs and human organizations, rather than the body of Christ, the family of God. After a while we realized that only the group of the believers outside the institutional churches, called the **remnant**, are the body of Christ, who truly want to walk the narrow way, who sincerely love the Lord and show this by obeying all the commandments of Jesus without compromise:

*"He that knows my commandments, and **keeps them**, he it is **that loves me.**" (John 14:21)*

They are the Christians, the disciples who truly follow Jesus! Those who compromise, that is, do not do the commandments of the Lord, are not even known to the Lord, and in Matthew 7 He calls them outright **evildoers** (the original Greek word is "anomie," which means **lawbreaker**).

Many have complained that I have expectations of believers because I expect them to obey the commandments. Some have called me outright legalistic because of this! To this, I replied that if anyone considered this to be legalism, then Jesus was also legalistic. Notice what Jesus said about this:

- Even in connection with the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus told his disciples, *"Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do"* (Matthew 23:3).

- and also to the apostles before his ascension he said, *"Teaching them **to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen!**"* (Matthew 28:20)

The term '**to observe**' corresponds to the Greek word 'tereo', which means **to pay attention, to keep an eye on it, to look after it, to take care of it**. So before His ascension, Jesus commanded the apostles not only to teach the disciples, but to watch, be convinced, and see to it that those who were taught keep the commandments that were taught them. Everyone can remember from their school studies that the teachers not only taught but also wanted feedback afterwards: the teachers wanted to make sure that the students learned what they had taught! That's what this is about. It is also important to note that at the end of this commandment there is a wonderful promise: *"Behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."* But this promise is conditional: Jesus will be with us only if we keep his commandments, with the disobedient (those who deny His commandments and thus Himself), NO! Many like cherry-picking from the commandments, but the commandment of Jesus is also about keeping **all** the commandments. Jesus commands not only the teachers but also the disciples:

*"Obey them that have the rule over you, and **submit yourselves**: for they watch for your souls, as **they that must give account;**"* (Hebrews 13:17)

Here we also see that not only will the disciples be held **accountable** for what they have learned, but the teachers will be held **accountable** to Jesus!

Many believers act as if they are being saved by the church, so they go there diligently because they think they will go to heaven this way, but that is a lie! We know from the

Word that the Savior is Jesus Christ! Churches that work in a Scriptural way are important and can help believers a lot in living their faith, but if the leaders of the churches start to compromise with the truth of the Word, they will have to come out after a while. **Coming out is also a commandment** to be obeyed so **that we do not partake of the sin of evil** (lawless, compromising) **people**.

Of course, we are not perfect, but we must strive for it, and if we follow this path, the Holy Spirit will send other believers as companions, because it is Jesus who builds His church by the Holy Spirit, which is truly His body.

Walking along the narrow way, many other topics also need to be re-examined and cleansed of false teachings, many of which are present in communities called churches.

I do not know whether a series of obedience to the exhortation and the truths recognized subsequently is a condition for these Scriptural truths to become obvious to someone? It seems so, because most people don't understand until this day why we had to come out. It also seems that we are trying in vain to explain the reason, as if no one understands what we are talking about. Then the words of the prophet Isaiah come to mind:

*“The Holy Spirit by the prophet Isaiah spoke well unto our fathers, saying, Go up to the people, and say, **Hear you, and understand not; and looking, behold, and see not. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them**” (Acts 28:25-27)*

When we came out, we had a spiritual experience: a powerful spiritual wall descended between our old community and us. This has resulted in a spiritual separation (the Holy Spirit simply did not allow us to be in fellowship), and I believe it is an obstacle to understanding as well. That's what Thess. 2:10-11 is talking about:

*„And with all **deceivableness of unrighteousness** (transgression) in them that **perish; because they received not the love of the truth** (they compromised), **that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie**”*

The broad way is the way of compromise, disobedience to the Word, the way of transgression that leads to damnation, and the narrow way is the way of uncompromising obedience, the action of the Word, which leads to eternal life. An accurate understanding of the message of the broad and narrow way is therefore not simply a theological question, but **a matter of salvation**, who gets where, depending on which way they take!

At the beginning of the writing, I said that recognizing the truths described could be likened to a *journey*. Like the church in Philadelphia, a church can walk the narrow way as long as it walks **in righteousness and holiness** (see Rev. 3:7-10). In the case of the Corinthian church, however, the decline is already visible. Paul wrote his first letter to a church

- where all gifts of grace worked,

- he called them holy,
- they were in fellowship with each other, but there were splittings between them, they were **carnal**,
- there were **sins** among them which are serious even in the world,
- but **they tolerated all this, compromised, and fellowshiped with the sinners.**

Paul therefore rebuked them and called them to recovery. Notice that this is a picture of a fallen church if one might think it is an acceptable church condition! This is clear from the fact that after the church did not repent of its sins, in his second letter to the church, Paul is already calling on believers who follow Christ to come out of this fallen church. Notice Paul's vocabulary because it is very instructive as he writes of this situation:

“Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? Or what communion has light with darkness? And what is Christ's agreement with Belial? What has a believer got to do with an unbeliever? Or what is the correspondence of the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:14-17)

Paul is already calling true believers to break away from the church that does not want to repent, calling them **unbelievers**, those **who are in darkness, with whom they must not be in touch** (“don’t even touch the unclean”), **with whom they cannot be in a covenant** (prayer and spiritual) **fellowship**.

Paul also addresses his second letter to the church, yet calls some of the church **unbelievers**. This troubled me for a long time, and it was not until much later that I understood that he who does not trust in the Lord and obey His commandments is actually denying the Lord, and thus denying his own faith, so he is in fact an unbeliever; despite being part of a community called a church! Paul writes about these people, for the true believers cannot be in yoke with them. The good news is that obedient people who trust in the Lord in all circumstances, the Lord will be with them, even if only a few come together in His name. And where the Lord is, there is fullness, and there is no shortage of anything! Amen!

Note: * See David Bolton: “Rebels, Refugees, and the **Remnant**” on the Narrow Way blog.

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