

THE TWO WAYS

"A Matter of Inheritance"

John 10:9

I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. (NIV)

How do we walk through the narrow gate? We confess Jesus as Lord and believe God raised him from the dead (Rom. 10:9).

Romans 10:9

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. KJV

If when we do this we get eternal life, why walk the narrow way?

Matthew 7:13-14

13 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. KJV

*In John we are told that if we enter the gate, we **will be saved**. In Matthew we are told that the narrow road **leads to life**. From John's perspective, eternal life is gained when one walks through the door. From Matthew's perspective, entering the small gate is just the start of a narrow road that leads to life. Apparently, two different things are in view.*

Luke 10:25-28

25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. KJV

Mark 10:17-21

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. KJV

In Luke 10, the promise is “You will live.” In Mark 10, the promise is “You will have treasure in heaven.” In Luke, the primary emphasis is on the vertical relationship with God. In Mark, the primary emphasis is on the horizontal relationship with man. The quantity of life asked for and promised in each case is the same: eternal life. But the quality of that life is dramatically different: “you will live” versus “you will have treasure in heaven.”

Why do we walk the narrow way? What is the reason or benefit? It is a matter of inheritance.

1 Peter 1:3-5

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. KJV

Ephesians 1:13-14

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. KJV

*The above verses (and many others like them) speak of the inheritance that is ours because of our having been born into the family of God. Because we are children, we stand to inherit. This election is by grace and **cannot** be earned (or lost).*

Colossians 3:23-24

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. KJV

*The inheritance spoken of here must be of a different nature, because it is described as a reward. That which is by reward is **not** by grace. If it is not by grace, **it must be earned.***

Romans 11:6

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. KJV

Romans 4:4 “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” KJV

1 Corinthians 15:50-52

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. KJV

Here in Corinthians we learn that it is impossible for us to inherit in our present condition. It speaks of a time yet future and speaks specifically to the putting off of this mortal tent and the receiving of an eternal habitation. Testate law in God's word is comprehensive and complex and needs to be clearly understood.

How important is this understanding to our daily walk?

Hebrews 6:17-20

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. KJV

Understanding what is promised to us as heirs is knowledge of the hope which anchors our very souls and carries us in behind the veil.

Acts 1:16-17

16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. KJV

Acts 8:20-21 KJV

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. *(It's a gift, neither earned nor bought!)*

21 Thou hast neither **part** nor **lot** [NIV – share] in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

*Inheritance (divine choosing by lot) is the process by which men receive ministries. We all have a ministry. This ministry is the **gift** of God. A ministry is something that no one deserves or has earned. It is given by the grace of God. The only way we can avoid frustrating that grace of God in our lives is to **walk** in the ministry that God has given us. [To the degree we walk "in our lot" is the degree that we receive the benefit of our inheritance. We have received it all. The amount of it we realize is dependent upon our walk. Like Israel, we have been given the land. But it is incumbent upon us to walk in it that we may have all that the soles of our feet touch (Josh. 1:3).] Because the ministry is by God's grace, its effectiveness is determined by our humility for God gives grace to the humble and resists the proud (James 4:6).*

1 Peter 3:7

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. KJV

Remember that the understanding of our inheritance ushers us into the presence of God behind the veil? Here we see this truth again. To the degree that husbands and wives understand their places in their joint-heirship of life will be the degree that their prayers are effective.

So we see that not only are there different facets to our inheritance, it is also a vitally important subject to understand for our daily lives.

Luke 15:11-13

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. KJV

The younger son asks for his share of the inheritance. The father graciously divides his estate at the precocious request of the prodigal. The elder son would have received a double portion by law.

Luke 15:14-19

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. KJV

What did he remember when he came to his senses? His father's goodness. He realized that his father's hired men were faring better than he. What else does he realize? His sin against heaven and his father. What does he discover next? He discovers that he has forfeited his right as a son.

Luke 15:19a "And am no more worthy to be called thy son" KJV

He had treated his inheritance selfishly and with contempt (flippantly). From parables and types in Scripture, it becomes very evident that we can spend away our eternal inheritance in this life. If we do so, we don't lose our pedigree (we are still children of God by spiritual salvation), but

we do lose our rights and position as sons (those who have ruled over their souls in this life will be given authority over others in the life to come).

Genesis 25:29-34

29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright. KJV

Hebrews 12:16-17

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. KJV

Esau disqualified himself for blessing by selling his birthright. The prodigal didn't so much as sell his birthright as he gave it away (spent it in sin). He used what the father had given him in wanton living. He realized that his behavior had disqualified him from holding the rights of a son born into the family. And yet, with all this realization, he had not lost his boldness to enter the presence of his father. He moves from realization, to revelation, to a request.

Luke 15:19b "make me as one of thy hired servants." KJV

"Make me like one of your hired men." Put me back in the family business, he asks his father, give me the grace to earn a living under your care.

Luke 15:20-24

20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. KJV

The prodigal is received by the father as a son. In view of his repentance, the father reestablishes him in the household as a son, not a hired man.

Luke 15:25-30

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee [*NIV – I've been slaving for you*], neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. KJV

There is a startling contrast between the elder and the younger son.

Points of contrast-

The prodigal *son* realized that his father's *hired men* fared better than he. He returned, ready to be a *hired man* (and as such able to receive wages) but was received as a *son*.

- The obedient *son* describes himself as a *slave*.

The prodigal recognized the father's goodness (his servants had a good standard of living).

- The obedient son things his father is stingy (vs. 29 "you never gavest me a kid," when his father had given him everything).

The prodigal addressed him as *Father*.

- The obedient son addresses the father with *personal pronouns* (thee, thou). Even when referring to his brother, he does not use the term "father." Instead, he says, "this thy son."

One final point, it was the prodigal's impertinent request that allowed the older brother to receive his double portion early in life (where sin abounds, grace does much more abound – Rom. 5:20).

Luke 15:31-32

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found. KJV

Even though the obedient son doesn't have a revelation of the father's heart, his place of inheritance still remains by virtue of his obedience ("all that I have is thine"). The problem with the obedient son is not his faithfulness, it is his attitude.

*This parable is used to exemplify the Father's heart over one sinner that repents (verse 10). We tend to think of this parable in evangelistic terms. It certainly has application in this way. But the parable is about **sons**! In particular, it centers around a son who left home and returned. The parable was spoken to Pharisees, who like the obedient son would have a tendency to say, "I*

never disobeyed your orders.” In his self-righteousness, the obedient son didn’t recognize a need for repentance in his own life. Confident of his own uprightness by comparison to his brother, he lost sight of his relationship with his father.

It is my contention that having an understanding of God as our Father is necessary to understand our inheritance.

Col 1:12-13

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: KJV

Galatians 4:28-31

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. KJV

Gal 3:29-4:7

29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and **heirs according to the promise.**

1 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate.

2 He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.

3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.

4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,

5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights [adoption] of sons.

6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. NIV

Once again, we have the comparison of children (vs. 2), slaves (vs.2), hired men (vs. 3), sons (vs. 5), and heirs (vs. 7). This is a progression of reality as we live our lives and is dependent upon God as its ultimate source.

To understand the different aspects of our inheritance from God, we need to understand salvation. And to understand salvation, we need to understand the make up of man.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. KJV

Man is spirit, soul, and body. As we read in Ephesians, when we get saved the Holy Spirit comes to us as the seal of our inheritance. In the Spirit, and via the Spirit, we live in two realms: being born again and saved in this life and eternal life in the new heavens and the new earth. But this still leaves our souls and bodies to walk out the journey. The walking out of our faith in Jesus on the narrow pathway is exemplified in the Old Testament by the sojourning of the patriarchs.

Genesis 15:7-21

- 7 And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.
- 8 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?
- 9 And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.
- 10 And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.
- 11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.
- 12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.
- 13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;
- 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.
- 15 And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.
- 16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.
- 17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.
- 18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:
- 19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,
- 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,
- 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. KJV

Hebrews 6:15 “And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.” KJV

Abraham received what was promised. This was Isaac, the child of promise, the son born by the power of the Spirit. Abraham received this inheritance, a type of the new birth (a child born by the Spirit).

Acts 7:4-5

- 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.
- 5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. KJV

Abraham lived in the land that God had promised to him, but he received no inheritance in it. God had promised Abraham that he would possess the land. This is the sojourn of the soul.

Hebrews 11:9-10, 13

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. KJV

He looked forward to another country. This was his hope of future resurrection. His faith in actually possessing the land in his body was exemplified by his buying the burial plot in Hebron.

We likewise look forward to our inheritance. We enjoy the rights of sonship in this day and age as a token of the inheritance we will have in the new heavens and the new earth to be revealed at the end of all things. We sojourn in the land of our future possessions as we walk out our salvation with fear and trembling and work to the saving of our souls. And we long for the day of the final consummation of our inheritance.

Romans 8:23

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. KJV

There are a number of resources that go to great depths regarding the salvation of the soul [for instance, The Salvations of Man by Dr. Dale Sides which can be found at www.lmci.org]. I want to take a brief look at the body.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. KJV

It is our bodies He asks in sacrifice. The flesh must be brought under the control of the Spirit of God. If we do not control our bodies, we jeopardize our inheritance.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. KJV

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. KJV

Our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit, we are therefore to honor God with our bodies. We are not to be involved in sexual immorality. What is the place of commencement?

James 3:2, 6 KJV

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

To control our confession is to control our character. When we gain victory over a loose tongue, we exercise control over our bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:13-14

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. KJV

When we follow after the flesh, we do so to the detriment of our spirit and reap death and corruption in the flesh. If we by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, we gain God's life in our flesh and bring glory to Him through our bodies. Not only is our body for the Lord, the Lord is for the body. He was sent to complete what was lacking in our flesh, to sanctify and redeem it for glory in the last day.

1 Corinthians 15:35-42 KJV

35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

The resurrection of our flesh is a guarantee. Eternal life in the new heavens and earth is ours by right of inheritance in being children of God. But the quality of that life is determined by our faithfulness and obedience now.

Stars differ from other stars in splendor and so will it be with the resurrection of the body.

2 Corinthians 5:7-10

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. KJV

*Our Father desires our eternal company. All of our inheritance flows from Him. Inheritance from God is a **paternal** obligation. We were birthed into His family by the power of the Spirit because of the sacrifice of the Son. It is a **moral** obligation. By virtue of our sojourn of the soul, our **moral standing** calls forth from Him a **moral** reciprocation. It is a **legal** obligation. We were baptized into the death of Christ and the Father bound Himself legally by out to raise us up. Praise be to our God!*