

Sound Doctrine

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship ... (Acts 2:42)

Two Gates And Two Destinations



Raymond Woodward
www.RaymondWoodward.com

I'm not complaining, really. But I'm working on this article inside Toronto's infamous Satellite Terminal, and that's not exactly a picnic. With the computer glitch-plagued merger of Canada's two major airlines, the resulting lengthy lineups of disgruntled passengers and delayed luggage, and the ongoing construction of a new terminal at Lester B. Pearson International Airport, this place can seem a bit like Wal-Mart on the weekend. They tell me they'll be able to handle 50 million passengers a year by the end of 2005, but that's small consolation to me at this point.

My problems at Pearson begin with the fact that I live in New Brunswick. Now I myself have no problem whatsoever with this, but the Greater Toronto Airports Authority seems to. You see, about 35% of Canada's 31,000,000 people live within a hundred miles of Toronto, but less than 2% of Canadians live within a hundred miles of me. And that means I get stuck with all the bad gates. I never get to fly home on the big impressive jets, or board through the big impressive gates in Terminal 2, just around the corner from the Tim Horton's franchise. There just aren't enough people going my way to merit a perk like hot coffee (pardon the pun). Instead, my tiny group of Atlantic Canadians is awarded a major cardio-vascular workout, as we have to lug our luggage to the far reaches of the main terminal, or make connections by hustling ourselves to a downstairs exit, then boarding a bouncy shuttle bus for a pilgrimage to the dreaded T-2 satellite building.

The tiny Satellite Terminal looks to me like an oversized metal-sided tool shed that they got on sale at Sears. It is basically reserved for small volume flights, and it seems like they're constantly renovating. I don't mind watching workers tear walls apart, or hanging out with weary travelers mesmerized by CNN, but I do sometimes secretly wish they'd bump some of the big shots from the center of Terminal 2 and make room for us little guys to fly in style. However, it seems unlikely at present. There are just too many people using those big impressive gates, traveling in a totally different direction than the one I want to go.

My dilemma reminds me a bit of what Jesus said about gates: "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: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."¹ This statement is part of the Sermon on the Mount, and it is directed exclusively to Jesus' disciples.² The Lord is not contrasting the believer and the unbeliever here, but rather **two different kinds of believers**. And He unequivocally declares that it is possible for believers to end up in destruction if they take the wrong gate!

To understand the drastic implications of His statement, we must look at its context. As He concludes His famous sermon, Jesus refers to the Day of Judgment, when an eternal demarcation will be made between those that merely **PROFESSED** salvation and those that truly **POSSESSED** salvation. He teaches that our eternal destination is determined in great part by our earthly dedication, for "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."³

Can it possibly be true that there are Christians who have called Jesus their Lord who will not make it into Heaven? Jesus says that there will be MANY of them, and also that He will deny He ever knew them at all!⁴ The Greek text gives the sense of God's utter astonishment that these would-be citizens of Heaven would ever claim a relationship with Him, because they never kept His commandments while they were citizens of earth!

When Jesus called disciples, He carefully warned them to count the cost of following Him,⁵ and turned away all those reluctant to pay the price – like the rich young ruler.⁶ However, thousands of people today totally ignore Christ's warning. They allow themselves to become somewhat involved in Christianity – enough to be respectable, just not enough to be uncomfortable. But a Christian is not one who simply buys "fire insurance," who signs up to avoid an unpleasant afterlife. A Christian is one whose faith expresses itself in submission and obedience to the law of God. True discipleship is full commitment, with nothing knowingly or deliberately held back. **No one can come to Christ – or be ready for Heaven – on any other terms!**

In making His case for commitment at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives three examples to help us distinguish true disciples from the false. He talks about two trees, only one of which brings forth good fruit; He talks about two houses, only one of which is built on a lasting foundation; and He talks about two gates, only one of which leads to eternal life. In the case of the gates, one leads to a **NARROW** way, a pathway that is "compressed, restricted and confined,"⁷ while the other leads to a **BROAD** way, a place that is "unbounded, expansive and spacious."⁸ The Greek expression for "broad way" is a word picture describing a wide-open country with no fences or boundaries. With no rules or regulations, its residents may go anywhere they want and live their lives as undisciplined as they choose. They need not worry about getting off the road – they cannot, for there is no road once you step through the wide gate. There is only one problem with a disciple living this way – **Jesus says that such a lifestyle leads them to their destruction!**

I've got to close now, because Air Canada just made the boarding announcement for my flight. True, there aren't many people using this little out-of-the-way gate. It would certainly be more impressive over there in Terminal 2 where the majority of Toronto's travelers hang out. But this gate has one important distinction – it takes me to my final destination.

¹ Matthew 7:13-14

² Matthew 5:1

³ Matthew 7:21

⁴ Matthew 7:22-23

⁵ Luke 14:25-30

⁶ Luke 18:18-25

⁷ Greek word thlibo (#2346), *Strong's Enhanced Lexicon*, Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁸ Greek word euruchoros (#2149), *Ibid.*