

You know the way

John 14:1-4, Matthew 7:13-14
March 2, 2008

These are Jesus' words ...

Don't be worried and upset. Believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I go to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it was not so! And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am. You know the way ...

It's the way that goes through the narrow gate, because the gate to hell is wide and the road that leads to it is easy, and there are many who travel it. But the gate to life is narrow and the way that leads to it is hard, and there are few people who find it.

But you know the way!

Maybe you are young ...

You have your whole life ahead of you! You have talent and energy and desire ... and youth! There are so many ways you could go, so many things you could do.

What will you do? Whom will you marry? Will you marry? Where will you live? Who will be your friends? And how will you leave your mark on this world? What way will you find that provides the sense of purpose and fulfillment you desire so much, as well as pay the bills?

You have so many choices, so many opportunities, so many ways from which to choose. Which way will you go?

You know the way. It's not an easy way. To go that way will require of you courage and sacrifice and fortitude and commitment. It's a way few of your peers will take, and, if you take it, it will surely cost you.

But you know the way and you know where it leads ...

Maybe you are old ...

Not old in years, just old. Just pushed and pulled and sifted and shaken and run over and beaten down. You're used up and worn down and just plain tired! Tired of trying. Tired of giving. Tired of being used. Tired of getting hurt.

You don't have any dreams or desires or plans anymore. You're too old and too tired for that. You just want to sleep, to sleep without dreaming, to escape from all of this, even if just for a little while ... if it can't be forever.

You have nowhere to go, nowhere you want to go, no way you want to take.

But you know the way!

The way is hard. Maybe you've already been on it and want to get off. Or maybe you've avoided it or pretended you didn't know it.

But you do know the way and you know who it is who calls you into that way and you know who it is who will go with you along that way, all the way!

Maybe you are open ...

Open to new ideas. Open to different points of view. Open to alternative lifestyles and to alternative styles of living. You can see every side of every issue, so much so that sometimes you're not really sure what to think. You're one of those people they joke about: *If they were any more open-minded, their brains would fall out!*

And you laugh with them ... because you are open-minded! You don't want to judge what anyone is or what anyone says or what anyone does. You just want to live and let live ... however, whatever.

But you know the way. And the way is narrow. To go that way, to fit through the narrow gate that guards that way, there is much you will need to leave behind, many ideas you will need to leave behind, even many people you will need to leave behind, people who are not ready to go with you on that way.

There are many other ways, but you know the way, and you know that to take that way means to turn aside from every other way. The way is not easy, but you do know the way.

Maybe you are closed ...

Your mind is made up and has been made up for a long time! You know what you think. You know what you believe. You know what you want. You know where you're going. You have chosen your way and you're sticking to it, no matter what anybody else says, no matter what anyone else wants, no matter what anyone else ... suffers.

But you know the way. It is a hard way. And if you take that way, it will mean loving your enemies and denying yourself. If you take that way, it will mean putting other people first and considering other people better than yourself. If you take that way, you will suffer.

It's a hard way. It would be much easier to stick with your own way, but you do know the way. You do know his way.

Maybe you are blessed ...

Blessed beyond your expectations. Blessed beyond what you deserve. Yes, you have known suffering ... about as much suffering as a man who skips lunch has known hunger! Life has not been hard for you, and its rewards have been great, not merely its material rewards -- money and houses and things -- but its intangible rewards as well: happiness and companionship and fulfillment and honor.

Your way through life has been easy and the gate to satisfaction has been opened wide for you. You haven't had to look hard for a way to happiness. It has come to you. Things are good just as they are, right where you are. You don't have to go anywhere!

But you know the way. The way is hard and the gate is narrow. There is suffering along that way, suffering for you and suffering for those who go with you, suffering for the people whom you see along that way, maybe for the first time, not because they haven't been there before, but because you haven't noticed them before.

The way is hard. The way to life is hard and few choose to take it. But you know the way.

You know the way.

(Standing behind communion table ...) This is the way. This is the way to life: the way of sacrifice, the way of self-denial, the way of suffering, the way of obedience.

It is a hard way, a narrow way, but you know the way. You can take it! You can choose to go with Jesus, whoever you are, whatever you are. There are no prerequisites of wisdom or talent or experience. All you need is desire ... desire backed by courage and sealed with devotion.

You know the way. Take it!