

Hidden Treasures 205

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

THE WAY

In the Bible we read how the disciple Thomas asked Jesus the following question in a certain situation: "How can we know the way?" John 14:5+6. And indeed, there have been many people who, in their need and problems, have asked: "How can we know the way?"

It looks quite promising for everyone who asks himself this question, for everyone who wholeheartedly desires to find the way out of sin and darkness, out of quarrelling and disunity - the way to sanctification and peace, to unity and harmony. Jesus answered this question quite simply: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Let us reflect more closely upon this assertion of Jesus - that He is the "way". For the truth is that very few people have come to know Jesus as the "way", even among all of those

who believe in Him. Jesus, Himself, said: ". . .strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. 7:14.

Jesus says of Himself that He is the door. Let us observe these two pictures, the "door" and the "way" more closely. It's a simple matter to go through a door, but it takes time to walk on a way.

The first fundamental experience in the life of a believer is to repent and be converted. He then experiences the fact that the Lord forgives all of the sins that he has committed. This blessed experience can be compared to going through a door. But, then what? Is that all that Jesus has to offer those who desire to follow Him? No! For all of those who have gone through the door to life, the Lord is also a "way". There is a way to be travelled, and a life to be lived for everyone who has received Jesus as his personal Saviour. But, how unknown is this way for most people!

On a way, you go forwards. On this way in Jesus' discipleship, there is growth and development. In Hebrews 6:1 we can read: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." Here lies a glorious call for those who have received Jesus Christ as their Saviour. They

now are permitted to turn to what is mature and to pursue perfection.

That which is perfect is, for example, to repay evil with good. It is to do as Jesus did, and to suffer injustice patiently. It means that we can forgive our neighbour countless times, or, as it is written in 1 Cor. 13: ". . .bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things". Perfection means, also, to be at unity with one another, as the Father and Son are one, as Jesus prayed in His prayer as a high priest.

Everyone who yearns for such a life will experience that Jesus is the way. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews said: (10:19-22) "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Here he expresses what we have just said, namely, that after we have received Christ as our personal Saviour, we have admittance to a holy life, and permission to go on the way that he pioneered. We must understand that Jesus not only came to forgive our sins, but

also to pave a way for us, a way to victory and sanctification, to a holy life which is well-pleasing to God.

In Luke 9:23-24 we can read what Jesus, Himself, says about following in His footsteps: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Is that the way Jesus paved? Yes, that is the way! Here Jesus talks about denying oneself, taking up his cross daily and losing his life for His sake. Blessed are all those who can see in these words of Jesus the way - the way out of sin and darkness, the way to life and blessedness. This is the way - to deny oneself! Take up your cross! Who has an ear for this? It is written: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor. 1:18.

In Hebrews 9:14 we read that Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice. In the Old Covenant, animal sacrifices were offered. But Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice. Here is the way he paved for us. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself". Now we, too, are able to offer ourselves as a sacrifice.

Let us imagine someone who has money, time and strength which he wants to sacrifice for the ministry of the gospel. Let us say he wants to serve God on the mission field. He sacrifices his time, his money, and perhaps even his comfortable life. But perhaps he gets bitter toward his marriage partner, perhaps he gets angry at his neighbour, perhaps he seeks honour, and is insulted at the slightest offence. Then he has neglected his self-sacrifice to the highest degree. He sacrificed his time, money and strength, but not himself. He did not deny himself. He perhaps denied one thing or the other, but not himself. A godly life can only be obtained when our self-life, our own will has been sacrificed.

Therefore, let us follow the admonition which we can read in Ephesians 4:15: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

"Grow", we read!, and "in all things, to Christ!" What good news! That means growth in love, in patience, in wisdom, in humility, in meekness, in purity, in righteousness, in peace, and joy. Growth in all the virtues of Jesus! This is the growth that was made possible for us on the way that Jesus paved for us.

Jesus said: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he

shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:16+17.

The Bible can be compared to a map. On the map we can see, for example, if a road leads to the place we have in mind. And when we start out on the road we can see that the map is correct. It is the same with those who have come to the narrow way of discipleship - they really experience the fact that the Bible has spoken the truth.

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