

THE NARROW ROAD

Contending for the Holiness of God

There is nothing easy about traveling the narrow road. It is full of pot holes and cracks and crevices in unlikely places, where life's trials of afflictions sprout forth, bringing disappointments and what feels like endless delays, as we contend for God's promises to be fulfilled in our lives.

MAKE ME A SANCTUARY – PART 2

EXODUS 35:5, 21-22

Take from among you an offering to the Lord. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the Lord: gold, silver, and bronze ... Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and they brought the Lord's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. They came, both men and women, as many as had a willing heart, and brought earrings and nose rings, rings and necklaces, all jewelry of gold, that is, every man who made an offering of gold to the Lord.

A Willing Heart

In Part 1, we looked in partiality at what it means to make our hearts a sanctuary, where the Lord can come and dwell within our souls. As we look further, we see, in Exodus 35:5, to do so not only required the Israelites to bring their best free-will offerings of: gold, silver, fine linen and precious stones, but that it was a voluntary offering, “...*whoever is of a willing heart.*” Why is this important? Because He is a God of free will and not a God of compulsion. He will never force Himself upon us. Instead, He yearns to be in intimate fellowship with us. His will is that we would reciprocate that same desire—to have fellowship with Him, freely. So that we may know Him and the purpose for our lives. For that to happen, we must be of a willing heart to go through the fire that will burn up everything in our souls that crowds Him out.

Yeshua wants to co-partner with us, in that place of relationship, so together we can work with Him, as the Refiner's fire comes to purify

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our souls. But we must be of a willing heart, for He will never Lord Himself over us, or try to control us. If we choose not to allow this process of purification to take place, we will not mature in our relationship with Him. We will not grow into a mature son and daughter of God. We will stay an immature Christian, trapped in the pain and the wounds of our past. The Blood that He spilt for us to walk in newness of life will have been in vain. This is not His will for us. So we have a lot to say in the matter, by the choices we make.

When we agree to surrender our will for His, the Holy Spirit ‘stirs’ our hearts and leads us into the way, the truth and the Life, one step at a time. And as we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, we can be of good cheer, knowing He is drawing us unto Himself with His holy desires. And in that place of drawing, He will be faithful to do His will and good work within our souls. His grace—His strength and abilities, will flood our souls transforming us to become like Him in our words, thoughts and deeds. We will move towards holiness and further away from the works of the flesh. We will abide in love—connected to the Vine, the Life Source.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Working Together for Good

When we are of a willing heart, it gives the Author of Life full freedom to fight, protect and defend us like no other. Our surrender will enable Him to take what Satan wanted to destroy us with and work it for good. For all things are working together for good to those who love God, and who are called according to His purpose.

ROMANS 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Many Christians love to quote Romans 8:28, including myself! He means what He says, all the time, so we can take great comfort knowing that even in our darkest soul hours, somehow all of our pain and sufferings are working together for good. But few Christians

quote Romans 8:29, the very next verse, which tells us what His purpose is for our lives. And that purpose is that He had predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. May we count it all joy, as we remember, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered [Hebrews 5:8].

ROMANS 8:29

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

That means suffering, until Messiah has been completely formed within our souls. But remember, our temptations and sufferings are not meant to destroy us. They are meant to transform us into newness of life so that fullness of life can manifest with abundant, good fruit which will satisfy His holy hunger. But that fruit can only come forth, when we become like a grain of wheat and fall to the ground and die. To die daily is painful. And if we are not of a willing heart to do so, we will remain alone. We will not bear abundant, everlasting fruit.

JOHN 12:24

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

Dying daily—to our will, needs, wants, desires, dreams and opinions, in order to fulfill the purpose for our lives is vital. And that purpose is, first, to be conformed into His likeness in word, thought and deed: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. And, secondly, that purpose is to complete the works that we are to do, His way by manifesting His name—His character, on the earth, today! For that is how our lives bring the Lamb the glory and praise that He alone deserves. But we must be of a willing heart to lose our life that we may obtain eternal life.

JOHN 12:25

He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Holiness is Not Passive

We see, in Exodus chapter 35, it was a willing heart and spirit that was required for the Israelites to build a sanctuary, where the Lord’s holy presence could dwell in their midst. The sanctuary that they built

was not a passive place, but an active set-apart place. It was a place of pure, holy worship. It was where God taught them His ways, after freeing them from Egypt, by renewing their minds with truth, which would set their souls free from the pain and bondage of slavery. It was a place of authority and protection, where He led them with a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night—Divine guidance. It was a place of heavenly provision, and supernatural encounters where miracle working powers were displayed to save and to destroy! It was a place of refuge for those who were willing to let His ways become their ways. So too, can it be for us, if we are of a willing heart to die daily by bringing our ‘voluntary offerings’ to Him, every day!

EXODUS 36:3

And they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning.

The Lord is a holy God, Who changes not. His holiness demands that we come before Him in purity of heart for without holiness, no one will see Him. How do we become holy? Most believe they are made holy because they believe in Yeshua. But that is not scriptural and not what the Lord teaches through His Word. Holiness is not an ideology—a system of ideas or ideals. It is a state of being. It is not passive, instead it is active. Holiness demands that we love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, which can only be done when we are constantly being renewed in the spirit of our mind. When we do, we will worship Him in the beauty of holiness [Hebrews 12:14, Mark 12:30, 1 Chronicles 16:29, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:23].

How could we define holiness? It is a state of being set apart from ordinary purposes. A life of total devotion to God.

Holiness is a state of constant change in one’s life—spiritually, physically, emotionally and financially. It is a state of being, in which we choose to reject everything that is unclean, impure and profane in our words, thoughts and deeds. It is a choice to be consecrated—set apart from this world’s worthless ways of doing things.

When holiness is forged into our character, we will no longer pursue the lusts of our flesh or this world anymore. When we pursue to become like Him in

character, we will become vessels of noble use, who will produce abundant, good fruit. The pursuit of truth, purity, humility, obedience and the fear of God are all required if our conduct on this earth is to be holy, and if we are to travel the narrow road, which leads to eternal life.

Making a sanctuary, where the holiness of God can dwell in our hearts, requires our voluntary obedience to His written Word and to the rhema words that we have been given. It requires our sacrifices to keep watch and pray, always, with undivided devotion, unto the Lamb, daily. It requires knowing that we wrestle not with flesh and blood, and that our weapons are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. For we will have many opportunities on the narrow road to become offended and discouraged by the pot-holes, unexpected twists and turns and what feel like never-ending delays into the Promises of God for our lives.

Traveling the narrow road will cost us everything that we hold dear. And especially our names and reputations, as He proves our hearts in the furnace of affliction, where we are tried and chosen.

ISAIAH 48:10 AMP.

Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried and chosen you in the furnace of affliction.

So we must ask ourselves: are we willing to let go of the low life, that we may obtain the high life? Will we give to Him all that He has ever really wanted from us—our love and our heart? Will we do so from that position of undivided devotion, by becoming dead to the things of this world? Will we murmur, become bitter and find fault with His ways, when in the furnace of affliction? Or, will we see the goodness of God in all circumstances and count it all joy, no matter how much our hearts are hurting? When we stumble with self-will, will we grab hold of His abundant grace and aim again? For stumbling is a part of the journey to be able to taste and see just how good and faithful He is to pull us through. Or, when we stumble, will we listen to the lies of the enemy, whispering, we will never finish the race that has been set before us?

It is not easy when smitten and when we stumble, but His grace is sufficient. And why it is vital that we are of a willing heart, for there will be many times

when we will want to run. But because of our ‘Yes’ to the Master to die to self-will, He will be faithful to bring us through to the other side of our trials. And all of our free-will offerings—our tears, pain, sorrow and afflictions that have been refined by fire, will be more precious to Him than gold. They will make a sanctuary where He can dwell within our souls one degree of glory at a time.

Many Parts—One Bride

The sanctuary that the Israelites built was one unit, which was made of many different parts. All components were used for the common good to bring forth a sanctuary where He could dwell. Today, this speaks of our corporate worship. For when we are of a willing heart to make a dwelling place for Him in our hearts, by dying to self-will, true unity will be restored to the Body. There will be no more competition, jealousy and envy. No more territorialism or agendas exalting themselves above His purposes. Instead, we will become one mind, one heart, one Spirit, one purpose and one accord to do His will, when we let go of our low life—our self-will.

EXODUS 36:13

*And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains to one another with the clasps, that it might be **one tabernacle**.*

The Body is made up of many different parts. Some parts are seen, some are unseen. But the journey is to be the same for all of us—die to self-will, that His will can be done through our lives, for His fame and gain, not for ours. Yeshua is coming back for one Bride—not many. A pure and spotless Bride who has not been built by man’s hands. Instead, a Bride who has been transformed by the renewal of the mind and the refinements of the Holy Spirit into His likeness.

As we come out of Babylon and this world’s worthless ways, the narrow road appears to get narrower. Because truth, purity and holiness have become our plumb lines and measuring rods, where we will no longer tolerate compromise, mixture or doctrines of demons. At times, we will have to make difficult decisions, where we will feel quite lonely as we travel the narrow road that few are willing to walk upon. But when we choose rightly, to let go of fleshly desires and ways, He will help us overcome. He will keep stirring our hearts. He will be our biggest cheerleader, giving us the grace that we need to bring Him our freewill offerings of self-will, with a willing heart, daily!

EXODUS 35:21

Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and they brought the Lord’s offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments.

We see, in Exodus 35:22, it was only those who had a willing heart, who brought an offering of ‘gold’ to the Lord. Gold represents the holiness and the glory of God. Aaron, in his priestly role, before entering into the Sanctuary—the Holy of Holies, would attach to his turban a pure, gold plate that had ‘Holy to the Lord’ engraved upon it [Matthew 22:14, Exodus 28:36].

EXODUS 35:22

*They came, both men and women, **as many as had a willing heart**, and brought earrings and nose rings, rings and necklaces, all jewelry of gold, that is, every man who made an **offering of gold** to the Lord.*

Where it says, “...as many as had a willing heart” implies that not all of the Israelites were of a willing heart to bring a free-willing offering. Today, many Christians are content living a selfish, carnal life. They may live a good moral life, but live unto self. They are not interested in surrendering their will fully. That speaks of what are known as the ‘outer court’ Christians. Those who are justified by faith, but not willing to be purified to the extent that is needed to be a part of the first resurrection that we are exhorted to partake, mentioned in Revelation 20:6. That company of people are the Overcomers, who will be the Bride of Messiah. They will reign with the King of kings in the Millennium Reign [Revelation 2, 3, 20:6].

REVELATION 20:6

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years

Harlot Church

As the apostasy increases in the ‘harlot church’ and the dividing line becomes clear, we can be certain the Bride of Messiah will face persecution and sufferings, as we stand for truth, purity and the holiness of God to be restored in the Sanctuary. That persecution is going to increase in the coming days, as the Bride of Messiah arises and wars against a ‘harlot bride’ who wants to mock a holy God. God will not be mocked by ‘pastors’ who identify as transgender, dressed in drag

giving glory to their ‘make-up’ artist, as seen within the United Methodist Church. He will not be mocked by anyone who say they belong to Him, yet follow Satan’s will for their life.

But we can be of good cheer, for when we suffer, His way, it not only recovers the eternal purposes for our lives, but causes the fragrance of holiness to enter into our spheres of influence. For that fragrance attracts a holy God to come and dwell amongst us. That fragrance, when released from a surrendered heart, enables the Holy Spirit to minister to hearts. Souls will become aware of their sin nature, without saying a word. For the glory of God will be released just by our very presence. It will turn hearts to towards repentance, as souls come into contact with the holiness of God. The holiness of God changes hearts. It changes minds and situations for good. It brings restoration in ways that only a holy God can do, if we are of a willing heart.

2 CORINTHIANS 2:15-16

For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life...

Beloved, in this late hour, we must not only contend for our faith, but for the holiness of God to permeate every area of our lives, as if our lives depend upon it! The Lord is not going to marry a harlot. Just as when a couple marry, they expect the other to be found faithful prior to and during their marriage. The Lord requires our faithfulness—no other lovers! He expects us to love what He loves: truth, purity, holiness, humility and being willing to obtain those treasures at whatever it may cost us. He expects us to hate what He hates: Babylon, the profane, the unclean, sexual immorality, compromise, mixture, falsehood and faithlessness.

REVELATION 17:4

These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.

In concluding, we can see that when the Israelites built a sanctuary where God could dwell amongst them, it was an orderly process. It did not happen overnight. And it took those who were of a willing

heart, who were intentional in following ‘heaven’s blueprint.’ It required their voluntary obedience, sacrifices and free-will offerings, daily. It was costly, using only the best materials—no compromise, mixture or short cuts. No cost was too great in order to make a place where God could dwell amongst them. They brought offerings of gold, representing the holiness of God. And that holiness was to permeate every part of their lives, so His eternal purposes could manifest through them. The Sanctuary was built His ways, and not man’s worthless ways.

We are all called to be the Bride of Messiah. May we choose wisely and be of a willing heart to make ourselves ready, no matter what the costs! AMEN!

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