

THE NARROW ROAD

Contending for the Holiness of God

The narrow road can be quite painful and humbling. Walking conditions can become treacherous, especially when the 'fog' sets in with zero visibility and no sign of lifting, while He heals our soul wounds. At times, we have to be still and know that He is God and not push our way through.

ABIDING LOVE

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Dividing Lines Clearer

In this late hour, we are seeing an increase of the separating of the goats from the sheep—those who will stand with Israel versus those who will not. We are seeing an increase of the separating of the profane from the holy within the Church—those who will bear the fruit of the Spirit versus those who bear the spirit of this world. What we have been seeing, over the past year, is the dividing lines becoming clearer in both individuals and within nations.

Hard times are coming. Persecution is going to increase. As believers, we are going to have many opportunities to become fearful, troubled, offended, deceived and to focus on falsehood if we do not think upon whatsoever is: true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, whatever has virtue or anything that is praiseworthy.

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As 'safe access zones' for abortion clinics have become our 'new reality' in Europe, we will see more Christians being persecuted for 'praying silently' within these zones. As hate speech laws come into effect in the coming days, we will see believers fined or put into prison for speaking the truth which sets souls free.

MATTHEW 24:6-8

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

The Lord forewarned that these days were coming. He does not want us to be fearful or to be troubled. Instead, He wants us to be prepared so that we can overcome them, His way. Our faith is not tested when everything is going well, but when things are hard to endure. And, often, walking in faith precedes our understanding of circumstances. Yet, He expects us to walk them out not by what we see, hear or feel, but by what His Word and Holy Spirit tell us.

Divine Opportunities

The reality is, we often miss divine opportunities to see and to hear what He is saying, and to overcome His way because we see self, others and circumstances through a cloudy spiritual lens. Meaning, when our 'soul wounds' have not been healed, we will see through the filter of those wounds, and especially when we are going through trials. We will have a 'perceived reality' that becomes our reality, but not what is truth—reality.

To help better illustrate, our mind is like a hard drive where it is constantly taking in and storing data, with a lot of files that need re-organised or deleted! Our mind—our soul, is where we store life's events, both good and bad. It is where we store our thoughts, emotions and traumas—past and present wounds that we have suffered.

JAMES 1:21 AMP.

So get rid of all uncleanness and the rampant outgrowth of wickedness, and in a humble spirit receive and welcome the Word which implanted and rooted [in your hearts] contains the power to save your souls.

So depending upon how much we have allowed our soul to be saved, meaning refined by the Refiner's

fire and for His healing love to manifest in our lives, will determine whether we respond or react to the data that has entered into our mind and stored in our soul. What do I mean by respond or react? When we respond to circumstances, we are walking after the Spirit, and we will have peace. When we react, we are walking after the flesh, and we will have death.

ROMANS 8:6

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

We are to bring every thought into captivity to Messiah, and be ready to punish all disobedience, when our obedience is fulfilled. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds and casting down arguments that exalt themselves above the knowledge of God. When we do, we will have life and peace, even in difficult times.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4-6

For the weapons of our warfare 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, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Soul Wounds

We all have wounds that need to be healed and parts of our soul that need to be restored. If those wounds are not healed, with the truth that will set our soul free, they will distort what is true and affect our relationships in a negative way. They will cause us to become stagnant in our walk with the Lord. We will not mature into God's plans for our lives. And that plan is for us to be a mature son and daughter of the Most High. Sons and daughters who are restored wholly: spirit, soul and body. So that the God of peace will be able to direct us through the storms ahead.

An example of a soul wound: a child who was not wanted when conceived in their mother's womb. When that takes place a wound of rejection is put upon their soul, while in the mother's womb. He or she will grow up thinking no one likes them, and that others are purposely excluding them, when often not the truth. They can be withdrawn, often living in self-pity because of filtering relationships through what becomes a 'perceived hurt' with others who

have embraced them. They believe the lies that Satan whispers in their ears, throughout their life, telling them that they are not wanted. They find it hard to believe the good report about themselves or others. Therefore, cannot see what is praiseworthy in their life and other's lives.

Another example: a child who grew up in abusive relationships. He or she will grow up to be a very angry, rageful, resentful and bitter adult. All directed at the very ones who should have protected them, but did not. If not healed that anger will seep into every relationship, making them toxic. Often, those abused put up walls, where they will not let anyone enter—they fight hard to self-protect, because they did not grow up with the loving protection that was due to them. They have major father and mother issues to overcome, finding it difficult to trust our heavenly Father to protect and take care of them, driving them into self-preservation.

There are countless ways our soul can become wounded: spiritually, emotionally, physically and financially. But we have good news, the Lord has provided everything that we need to be made whole: spirit, mind and body! When He said, *"It is finished."* He meant what He said, and does what He says, all the time. Without the Cross, there would be no hope for restoration and redemption from what Satan intended to use to destroy us.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

ISAIAH 53:5

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

Philippians 4:8—the Filter

As we travel the narrow road, on our way to saving our souls, Philippians 4:8 must be a filter that we use to take every thought captive, in the situations we are facing. Especially, as the shakings increase within and outside of the Church, for we will have many opportunities to become offended with people and situations. And in this late hour, we cannot afford to do so.

For every time that we do, we are taking an offense with Yeshua, for all things come from Him. He allows

unpleasant people and circumstances to test, prove and refine our hearts, if we are of a willing heart. For it is when we are pressed, like an olive in that olive press, when what is really in our hearts is exposed—good or bad. And if we respond—not react, we will bring forth the pure oil which is needed to fill our lamps. We will be like the five wise virgins, making ourselves ready, in that place of relationship with Yeshua, for the dark days ahead.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

True could be defined: Conforming to reality or fact, not false or wrong, free from error, authentic – not imagined.

Noble could be defined: Having high moral qualities, ideals or character; a moral or mental [mind] character of excellence.

Just could be defined: Free from favoritism, self-interest, bias or deception, guided by truth – what is morally right and fair.

Pure could be defined: Freedom from foreign or inappropriate elements, anything that contaminates, pollutes, any modifying addition. Freedom from sin, guilt or evil; it is innocence, chastity, cleanness, without moral defects.

Lovely could be defined: Having a beauty that appeals to the heart as well as to the eye. Morally, spiritually attractive, gracious.

Good report could be defined: True story about a person doing something good.

Virtue could be defined: Moral excellence, thinking and doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong.

Praiseworthy could be defined: Deserving of approval and admiration.

Paul says, that when we meditate on whatever things are: true, just, noble, pure, lovely, of good report, having virtue and praiseworthy, that the God of peace will be with us. We can be assured that no matter what we are facing, the Prince of Peace will be in our boat!

Anxious for Nothing

In Philippians 4:6, Paul says that we are to be anxious for nothing and to pray with thanksgiving. When we do, the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard our hearts and minds. Paul learned that a grateful heart, all the time, was a key not only to his prayers being heard and answered, but a key to knowing peace, especially when facing difficult times. Our thanksgiving expresses to our Creator that we trust His ways are righteous, just and true in all that He does, whether we understand them or not. Prayer with a thankful heart is a way to guard our hearts and to keep our minds set on the things above.

ISAIAH 26:3

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

Paul learned that in whatever state that he was in, to be content. He knew want, he knew gain and he knew persecution. He knew the resurrection power of the Cross, for he died daily to his desires—self-will. He learned the secret of His power being brought to perfection in his weaknesses, and that he could do all things through Messiah Who strengthened him. Paul knew God would liberally supply his every need according to His riches in glory in Messiah Yeshua.

PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to [b]e abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Unoffended Love

Paul knew how to lean on the Lord's strength, wisdom and counsel, while abiding in love. Paul learned to love his enemies and to pray for those who persecuted him. If we are to be the Bride of Messiah, who will sit next to Him on His throne, we too must overcome life's situations by learning to abide in unoffended love. If we want the peace that surpasses all understanding, as the shakings increase, we must learn to abide in unoffended love.

What does it mean to abide? It means: to stay – to remain. To stay faithful to Him, to His Word, to the call on our lives to be molded into His likeness, no matter

how hard it can seem at times. It means not to lean upon our weaknesses—our weak flesh, but to lean upon His grace—His strength and abilities, to perfect His love into our souls. When we do, our soul wounds will be healed. We will experience transformation, causing newness of life to come forth.

EPHESIANS 4:21-32

If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

To abide in love, means we must constantly be renewed in the spirit of our minds. When we do, we put off the old man—our ways. We will put away corrupt words, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor—loud and confusing noises, evil speaking and malice. We will learn to be kind to one another, tenderhearted—forgiving, as we have been forgiven by Yeshua. We will become the fruit of the Spirit—contending for the holiness of God to permeate every area of our lives. Abiding in love is our protection for the turbulent days ahead.

The Secret Place

Psalm 91 is a chapter most of us are familiar with—we love to quote the hope and the promises that it contains. But many in the Church do not realise that in order to obtain the promises of protection and deliverance that it contains is conditional. To obtain them, we must dwell in the secret place of the Most High. For the promise of protection and deliverance are for those who do so. When we do, we will abide under the Shadow of the Almighty's protection.

PSALM 91:1 AMP.

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall remain stable and fixed under the shadow of the Almighty [Whose power no foe can withstand].

Years ago, this verse became my one passion for a season. Every day, I would ask the Lord, “*Where is the secret place?*” Saying, “*I just have to know!*” I desperately wanted to know where this place was so I could make sure I was in it! Then while on a 40-day fast, during that season, while asking again, He answered, “*The ‘secret place’ is that place of abiding in love.*”

So, we could say, he who dwells—abides in love, will remain stable under the shadow of the Almighty. How much we are protected is conditional on how much we are willing to abide in love—meaning, a surrendering of our will in every area of our lives [Galatians 4:19].

It is not easy to love Him with all of our mind—the mind is our battlefield, where often we feel defeated. But when we take our thoughts captive, we are learning to abide in love. We will love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. We will learn how to love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. Philippians 4:8 is a filter to help us bring every thought into captivity. And when we do, we will have the peace that passes all understanding, when we see life expiring all around us. We will have hope to offer to those who have no hope.

Beloved, war is coming. Persecution is only going to increase in the days ahead. This is not new news. The question we must ask ourselves: are we fearful or are we prepared? Are we prepared to overcome by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of our testimonies and to not love our lives unto death? The Lord wants us to be prepared, not fearful. So we must cling to the Cross, by losing our lives, that we may find newness of life—vessels prepared for His glory!

MATTHEW 16:25

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

Traveling the narrow road, filtering our thoughts and words through Philippians 4:8, can be quite painful and humbling. Walking conditions can become treacherous, especially when the ‘fog’ sets in with zero visibility and no sign of lifting, while He heals our soul wounds. At times, we just have to be still and know that He is God and not push our way through.

Yet, may we never lose sight of the Lord’s faithful, tender love that He has for us. In our journey, He wants to heal our soul wounds, weary emotions and bring restoration to relationships.

He wants us to be a testimony of His name—His character: true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of a good report, virtue, praiseworthy—deserving of His approval and admiration—a reflection of His glory. He wants us to be a testimony of His love. And there is no greater way to show our love, than to just obey Him. He wants us to be a testimony of His mercy: to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us, while giving thanks. He wants us to have life and peace.

May His love to be the anchor of our souls so that when the storms come, there will be nothing that can move us from the secret place of the Most High—abiding love. As we abide in love, may He revive us with His perfect love in every area of our lives, causing a pure and spotless Bride to come forth from the nations. A Bride who will be a testimony of His love, one who will give Him all the glory, the honour and the praise that belongs to Him! AMEN

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