

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## FOLLOW THE ARROWS

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11TH JULY 2020

One of the many things that have noticeably changed during the recent lockdown is peoples shopping habits. Having to queue outside in the rain, follow at a safe distance and only buy 2 toilet rolls at a time are all new concepts to us. One change that we have made is to go to alternative supermarkets that we don't normally go to. This has revealed a bewildering array of different approaches by the different supermarkets as to how to manage their customers. Supermarkets are normally a free for all with people heading in all different directions, pushing in, reaching over you, or blocking the aisles while they chat loudly on their phones. As the pandemic took hold things changed. One of our local supermarkets even posted staff at the end of every aisle to stop people taking short cuts or from standing within about 20 feet of anybody else. Woe betide anyone trying to go back to something they forgot to pick up earlier. Now normally I am not especially impressed by all of this and would much rather take my own route around the supermarket, but a couple of weeks ago we went to a different shop and I was so taken by the way the directions were laid out that I felt compelled to keep to the set route.

Now this made me think about the road to life. As Christians we often talk about life being like a journey. A journey on a road. The concept of life being a journey is almost universal with people of faith and people of no faith, so where does this idea come from? Jesus puts it like this "You can only enter God's kingdom through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it"

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**So Jesus is using this concept of the road of life but what does it mean to choose the narrow gate?**

Like shoppers in the supermarket we all start in the same place. Most shoppers try to get where they want to be by their own choice. You can observe for yourself that as the lockdown eases it is very noticeable that people have stopped following the marked routes. Those who choose to still follow the arrows on the floor are like those who are on the narrow road. They are following directions laid down by someone else and may be going down an aisle that they wouldn't normally have done. In order to follow the marked route you have to do two things. Firstly you need to make a positive choice that you are going to follow the marked route and, secondly, you have to keep looking for the signs that tell you where to go.

This `positive choice` is choosing to follow Jesus. Jesus said "Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise" The said these words at the end of the part of Matthews gospel often referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus commenced this Sermon by describing some of the attributes of people who followed Him starting with "Blessed are the poor and those who realise their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs" So to choose Jesus you must first realise that you need to follow Him. You need to know that the narrow road exists and that you can walk down it. A major problem in understanding this might be that, as most of us live in an affluent part of the world, we might think that we have all that we need, that we are not poor. In reality though, we are poor because the poor referred to here is the lack of God's blessing. You can have a million pounds and yet still be poor if you are not blessed by God.

Remember Jesus said "Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise", well the book of Proverbs has much to say about wisdom. In chapter 8 wisdom is speaking, she says "And so my children, listen to me, for all who follow my ways are joyful. Listen to my instructions and be wise. Don't ignore it. Joyful are those who listen to me, watching for me daily at the gates, waiting for me outside my home. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favour from the Lord"

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**So having made the wise, positive choice how do we continue to follow the right road.**

Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me". What Jesus is saying here is that there is only one way to eternal life. Though the world may have many religions to tempt our interest, though all make

lofty claims, Jesus is telling us is that it is only by faith in Him that you will get to spend eternity with God.

***Proverbs 3:5&6 says "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your way acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight"***

So having made your choice to follow Jesus you must also tell others that this is what you have done. By acknowledging Jesus He has clearly promised to make the road clear to you.

***Psalm 119:105 says "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path"***

This world is a dark place, the light of the word of God is seen less and less in our modern society. This psalm reminds us that we need to be able to see where we are going. Trying to navigate a narrow path in complete darkness would almost certainly lead to disaster. This is why we need the word. If we continue to read and study the words in the bible we will find our way will be well illuminated.

As you navigate your way through the supermarket let it be a reminder that there is only one road that leads to eternity.

Lets close with some words from the late Billy Graham "People who follow the broad path are shallow. The path they choose is riddled with compromise. The narrow road means to stand strong for Christ. It's not always easy, but it is right and blessed by God. When we find ourselves standing at a crossroads, we gaze into the faces of those living for popularity and self-pleasure. That road leads to Hell. Consider the journey and choose the way of the Lord – the narrow path. Jesus is there and He is the way that leads to Heaven".



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