

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

I am reading a book at the moment called, “Extraordinary People: An Enzo Macleod Investigation” by Peter May. As I near the end of the book, Enzo Macleod is just about to go down into the catacombs under Paris; there are many miles of tunnels below the level of the Metro and they are like a labyrinth. He is being given directions, which he must stick to for if he deviates from them he could get lost and never find his way out. I know before I read to the end that he will get out of the catacombs, as this is the first book in a series. Will he though get lost? Will he be attacked and need rescuing? That I do not know.

Jesus is giving directions to those who will listen to him, figurative directions that people should follow to find life, life that is fulfilling and lived in relationship with God.

Over the years I have walked many miles, not because I enjoy walking but because I like to respond to a challenge that is relatively safe. I have walked in the Lake District whilst at secondary school, I have walked for Charity in China, Kenya and Peru as well as in 2004 walking the route of Hadrian’s Wall with Anita.

We walked east to west, which the locals we passed said was the wrong way as it was into the prevailing wind. Why did we go that way? It was the way the guidebook said to do it. We were to finish in Bowness-on-Solway; a small community overlooking the Solway. The walk finished in tranquillity. To walk the other way, west to east, would have finished walking through Newcastle on the last day. The same route would have been covered, in reverse, but the experience would have been different.

It was not an easy journey; our 4th day of walking was the 19th day of rain in the area. Why do farmers put stiles in the corner of fields by the gate where cattle gather and churn up the ground? There were times when we wondered what we were doing as the rain was blown into our faces, but at the end, as we wrote our names in a book, kept in a local pub in Bowness, of those who had completed the walk there was a feeling of achievement and satisfaction. We had walked the walk, completed the course and achieved life (and our names were written in the book). Much of the way we walked on our own, just the two of us, but we had a couple of friends who helped us us achieve the goal by meeting us at each walking day’s end and transporting us back to where the car was left at the start of each day.

That is what Jesus invites us to do. Jesus said, "The road is hard that leads to life." To experience life in all fullness, and really experience it the Jesus way, means you have to be prepared to give your all. It is about putting some energy into walking the way, not being a spectator, allowing the person and /or stranger alongside you to help and support you as you help and support them in the Jesus way of life.

Time to put on the walking boots and “walk the walk” and not just “talk the talk” as the often repeated phrase goes.