

Christian Perspective: Highlands Youth for Christ

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In our Youth for Christ office, which used to be the Orangeville Police Station, we turned the former jail cells into a prayer room.

As I walked around the office praying, these words caught my eye on the prayer room wall: Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord Almighty (Zech 4:6)

Think on that for a moment.

Consider your situation, and hear God saying these words to you. How do they apply? I hear Him say, ?not by your own ingenuity. Not by cleverness or cunning. Not by your pushy persuasiveness. Not by your doing anything. Not by doing more. By My Spirit alone.?

He's waiting for me to stop trying, to stop planning, to stop problem solving. He will do it, I must rest in Him and wait patiently, watching for His approach.

As I pondered this and continued walking, I saw this written below it: Narrow is the road and difficult is the path that leads to life, and few are there who find it (Matthew 7:14)

I recalled our family camping trip at Sandbanks years ago.

I was having a particularly difficult time in my life, and I had to make a decision about what I was going to do. On the first morning I hike, in the very early hours of dawn, I came across a fence with a very narrow gate, rusty and old, hidden among the overgrowth of tangled weeds.

It was jammed open, and only someone as small as I am could fit through it. My mind immediately went to the narrow gate in Matthew, and I thought about what God would be saying to me. On the other side, I saw a wide groomed path through the forest, lined with mulch, inviting me forward.

To my right, there was another, smaller path, almost hidden in the bush that had overgrown it. It was narrow and steep, and looked like a much more difficult way to hike.

I heard God speaking to me in that moment: ?You have a choice, Ann. I will leave it up to you. I will not condemn or chastise you; I will be with you whichever way you go. But you have to choose.?

I knew immediately what God was talking about. He was giving me the opportunity to get out of the painful situation I was in; that He was releasing me without condemnation. This was the wide path; and if I chose it, it would change my life and make it straightforward and abundantly easier.

But there was another path I could choose.

I could choose to stay in my difficult circumstances. I could choose to take the narrow, less travelled, more arduous path. It would be steep, I wouldn't often be able to see very far ahead of me, and there were dangers.

Here, too, He would be with me. But my life would not be easy. My heart was drawn to the difficult way. I made a choice that day to stay in my difficult situation and trust God to bring fruit out of it. I can't say it was always a way of joy, but I can say it was a way of miracles.

I have watched God work in every hardship.

It has strengthened me, challenged me and made me rely on Him in ways I would never have imagined; and ways I would not have experienced if I had chosen the wide path. It was not a popular decision and no one really understands why I chose and continue to choose to stay in it when I don't have to. I can't explain it very well myself, except that Jesus was beckoning me to follow and I did.

Why do we think the path to following Jesus should be easy? Why do we expect that when we decide to do what He asks, that He's going to smooth everything out and make it delightful? Why do we expect everyone else to be travelling the same road? Why do we teach others to expect life with Christ to be free of trouble? Why are we surprised when Jesus points to our cross and says, 'pick it up'? The way to life is narrow, difficult, and few find it. Be one of the few! Don't turn back because it's getting hard ? that is probably the best indication that it's the right road you're on!

Keep your eyes on Jesus and allow Him to show the way. How do you do that? 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit', says the Lord Almighty