

February 12, 2021

Just a few miles west of Hazel Green, Alabama, is a small, privately-owned airport officially designated M38, but generally known as Hazel Green Airport. It is a sleepy little airport with few aircraft movements on most days. Private homes with hangars line the runway. M38 is not notable for much, but one thing local pilots know is that its runway is **very difficult** to spot from the air.

From many of the questions Jesus received during His ministry, we know that salvation was foremost in the minds of the people. In His Sermon on the Mount, He used an analogy to describe salvation. He said it was like having to go through a narrow gate and that the road was “difficult”. He added that there are “few who find it.” (See Matthew 7:13,14)

All my life when I heard or read these verses, my mind would go to the same place—basically that it is easy to be lost, and hard to be saved; that the vast majority choose the pleasures of sin, the “easy” road and very few choose the rigors, discipline, and effort of the difficult way. Just look around--the world we live in seems to provide plenty of evidence that this understanding is correct. Sadly, I found the verses to be discouraging, condemning.

But didn't Jesus also say “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”? Did He contradict himself? Let's take a more careful look at Matthew 7: 13 and 14. The word “difficult” used in the NKJV **actually means confined, NOT hard to achieve**; and the NIV reads “narrow is the road.” But the part that I find particularly interesting is the very last statement: “...*and there are few who find it.*”

Because M38 is so difficult to see from the air, many pilots fly directly over it without even knowing the runway is there. It is often impossible to see until you are only a couple of miles away. I know this from experience. Unlike most airports, the clearing on either side of the runway is narrow and trees obscure the open landing zone. The break in the trees made by the runway's clearing looks about the same from the air as for any road or highway. And once you have spotted it, the next challenge is actually landing on it, because it is only 40 feet wide. If you are even 25 feet off the centerline then you are off the runway, landing in the marshy grass at risk of flipping over upon touchdown. If you are 200 feet off the centerline, you will crash into buildings or trees.

I believe what Jesus meant is that the path to life, --eternal life, Salvation,-- is very specific. All roads do not lead to the “good afterlife” as is popularly believed. In John 14:6 Jesus said: “*I am the way and the truth and the life.*” So, in fact, **Jesus IS the Narrow Way, the specific way to truth and life.**

I believe many Christians miss The Way because they are focused on things other than the saving grace of Jesus as their means to Salvation. The Gospel message has been corrupted with implications that we have a role--a part to contribute--in our salvation beyond belief in Jesus and accepting His righteousness and grace. “*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*” *1 John 5:13.*

Is it possible that we have not found the way? Is it possible that we are in danger of crashing into the trees rather than landing safely on the narrow runway? Not if we stay focused on Jesus. It is so much easier than I believed.

*Jesus said: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” John 14:6*