



Mind the Gap

Mind the Gap—perhaps the most famous phrase associated with the London Underground—is an imperative to be careful of (“mind”) the distance that exists from the door of the train and the platform of the station where you have determined to disembark.

But *Mind the Gap* is much more than an ominous, pre-recorded warning heard by commuters who travel on London’s Underground tube (subway). It is more than a sign painted on the station platform, seen as one exits the train, advising about the gap between your chosen means of transportation and the platform of your desired destination. *Mind the Gap* can be understood as a generic reminder that there are many gaps in life, and we need to take care when crossing from one side to the other.

I’m sure you’ve seen humorous images, or maybe even a video, of a man standing with one foot on a dock and the other in a rowboat. The rowboat is moving away from the dock (in many illustrations the expression on the man’s face provides ample explanation of his grim reality).

Life usually demands that we make a choice—we can’t remain in two places—we can only occupy one space. Those who make choices early in the process, before the gap widens, before the boat drifts away from the dock, stand a better chance of surviving without injury!

There are all kinds of gaps in life. There are gaps between the way we wish the world operated, and the way it does. Real life includes horrific problems—terrorism, cancer, AIDS, corruption, hatred, bigotry, violence, crime, lust, greed...the list goes on.

Many years ago, as a college administrator, a college student was telling me about their commute to campus on a bicycle. I expressed concern about the shortcut the student took through a crime-ridden part of town. She assured me, “Don’t worry about me. I don’t have anything against *those people*.”

The school of hard knocks eventually teaches us that although we don’t hold a grudge or have any past history with another person, another person may still wish to harm us. We may be cheerfully anticipating another day as we exit the “train” that is taking us where we want to go, but we would always be well served in remembering to *Mind the Gap*.

Many find themselves heading to the tube (subway) to board a train that promises to take them to marriage. They board the train, and before they arrive, via what seems to be the endless same-old same-old droning of parents, pastors and friends, the soon-to-be-married are warned to *Mind the Gap*. But warnings like *Mind the Gap* are just background noise in the lives of many who contemplate marriage.

Arriving at the station where the wedding entourage awaits, many are ill-prepared for the reality that awaits them. Stepping off the train, they discover the gap between the train and the platform. As they disembark from the train and enter into marriage, many find it’s like they just arrived in a foreign country. If they are able to adjust to another environment (the emotions or lack thereof of their spouse) and another language (men and women do seem to speak different languages!) then they might just survive. Simply arriving at a destination is not the end of the journey. There are gaps of which we must beware.

Married couples deciding to have babies definitely need to hear and see *Mind the Gap* warnings. The act of biological/physiological breeding does not turn two otherwise immature individuals into mature adults. Couples need to know that their marriage had better be strong enough to endure the arrival of another party—because babies usually arrive with the announcement, “turn out the lights, your party’s over!”

Babies don’t solve marital difficulties, but they can definitely contribute to them! *Mind the Gap!* Babies don’t arrive in this world for

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Religion gone Wild...

AND...If you've experienced the freedom of
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Tell us how you were held as a spiritual captive and how Jesus Christ released you from that captivity.

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We are looking for stories about the *good*—God's amazing grace—and we are looking for contrasting stories of the *bad* and *ugly*—religious legalism and all of its contrivances.

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If you are a survivor of RELIGION GONE WILD, **we want to hear from you!** (We will protect the confidentiality of correspondence that we deem to be of a personal nature).

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commentary

the sole purpose of loving us—they arrive to be loved.

Of all the gaps in life, perhaps the most frustrating gaps we face are the gaps between who we are, or someone else is, and who we would like (or would like them) to be.

Mind the Gap regarding the distance that exists between the spouse and parent you would like to be, and the spouse and parent you actually are.

Mind the Gap about the lifestyle you would like to have, the health you wish you enjoyed, the financial security you had hoped for, the spouse you wish you had married, the job you think you could have had, the things you wish you would have said and the things you wish you would not have done—and the reality that you live in and experience. *Mind the Gap!*

As Christ lives his life in us, and as we live in him, we learn two things about gaps:

1) Many physical gaps in our lives will always exist—it is not God's purpose to reconcile all of the physical gaps here and now. He is all about reconciling the *spiritual gap*. That's part of what it means to rest in him, trust in him and wait for him.

2) Spiritual gaps will not be crossed as a result of our own efforts and abilities. *God's grace alone* enables us to cross spiritual gaps.

The Grand Canyon of all spiritual gaps is the gap between life and death. It is that gap that Jesus promises to bridge, if we accept God's grace. "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24).

On this side of eternity, many physical gaps will continue to exist in our lives, some of them may be enormously painful—but be assured there is a bridge across the one gap that is more important than any other. The bridge spans from here to eternity, and Jesus is the name of that Bridge. □

—Greg Albrecht