

Strait Talk  
(Matthew 7:7-14)  
By Randy Wages  
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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

## I. Introduction

Today we will be continuing our study on the Sermon on the Mount so turn again to Matthew, chapter 7. Our text for today is Matthew 7, verses 7-14. If you were here last week, you may recall that we actually already looked at part of this passage in some detail; however due to time constraints, the first part of this morning's message will be somewhat of a continuation of the study we began last week.

As always, today I hope to accurately point you to Christ as He is revealed in the scriptures and I desire to be as clear as possible. I want to shoot straight with you. And I've titled today's message "Strait Talk." But while I certainly desire to talk clear and without ambiguity, this title is actually taken from verses 13 and 14 of our text which speaks of the "strait gate," spelled S-T-R-A-I-T, not referring to something linear but to a narrow way. As some of you know, I have used this play on words before. But all of that aside, it is my desire to talk strait (S-T-R-A-I-T) because I want to point you to Christ who is the strait gate.

So, picking up where we left off last week, look with me in Matthew 7:7 where Christ continues in His Sermon on the Mount saying:

***"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: <sup>8</sup>For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. <sup>9</sup>Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? <sup>10</sup>Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? <sup>11</sup>If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? <sup>12</sup>Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.***

<sup>13</sup>*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*  
<sup>14</sup>*Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

Last week, I spent a great deal of time showing why I believe that Christ was staying right on subject here in this portion of His sermon by emphasizing the context in which He had been speaking and continued to speak. He’s sticking with the theme of His Sermon, the Gospel of the kingdom, that dominion, rule, or reign ó grace reigning through righteousness (Romans 5:21). And we will see that is true through remainder of His sermon. It helps our understanding to keep in mind that Christ continues to address the vital issues of the kingdom of God (or the kingdom of heaven) ó of the way of entrance into heaven.

As always, know that when I speak of this way of righteousness, the righteousness of God, I’m referring to that which Christ alone accomplished in His life and death by making perfect satisfaction to God’s justice (perfect obedience even unto death ó satisfying the law’s precepts (sinless obedience) as well as paying the penalty for imputed sins ó the sins of all those for whom He died that were laid upon Him.

Now we covered verses 7-11 last week; however, as I’ve indicated, I would like to share some additional thoughts and related scriptures that I believe give us even greater clarity, particularly with regards to Christ’s bold statements in verses 7 and 8 that make it clear that *“every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”* Here we can conclude that if we understand of whom and for what we are to ask for, what we are to seek, and the door upon which we are to knock, and act accordingly, we know that we shall receive it, find it, and that the door shall be opened. And we saw how in verses 9 and 10, Christ put God’s character as a loving Father on the line here in asserting that if you sinners (õbeing evilö) know how to give good gifts to your children, õHow much more shall the heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him.ö He obviously means it when He declares ó seek and find!

Much of this was covered in last week's message, the one titled, "Ask, Seek, & Knock." And if you weren't here, I encourage you to acquire a copy of that message, since today's message will be very complimentary to it and somewhat of a continuation of it.

Today, I'd like to take a few minutes to elaborate some more on how these assertions here in verses 7 and 8 are to be understood. Keep in mind from last week that we know from the immediate context, as well as from the message of Christ and salvation by grace as set forth in all the scriptures, that any sinner who does receive, find, and have the door of God's eternal blessings opened unto them, discovers God's way of salvation — a way that excludes the asking, seeking, and knocking as having any causal role in receiving these blessings. While it's clear that all who find shall seek, they do not find, because they seek.

Christ teaches us in John 6:44 that apart from God's intervention, we cannot come to Him, proving that we will not of our own accord ask, seek, and knock according to God's way of salvation (conditioned on Christ alone). You see, the asking, seeking, and knocking are the fruits and effects of what He accomplished for us — the gift of faith and repentance that He procured for us. Christ bought this gift for His people — not the other way around.

If you'll think back to our study on the initial part of Christ's Sermon in chapter 5, the Beatitudes, the verses which all began, "***Blessed are...***", you'll recall how we established that those various descriptions of the eternally blessed were not conditions but rather evidences. For example, He said, "***Blessed are the poor in spirit...***" and we established that they aren't eternally blessed because they are poor in spirit, but rather being poor in spirit is an evidence characteristic of those who are eternally blessed — because they've been eternally blessed. Likewise, and complementary to our text today, we read, "***Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness***" — and we established that they aren't eternally blessed because they hunger and thirst after righteousness, but rather that's what one does who has been blessed of God — they earnestly ask, diligently seek and persistently knock for nothing else will do — they've been given a hunger and a thirst after righteousness.

To support that further, consider Romans 10:20 where Paul quotes God's words as spoken through the prophet Isaiah saying, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." This declares that those who find God do not initiate the seeking. So how are to understand "Seek and find" here in Matthew 7? Who will come? Well in John 6:37 Christ says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me..." but then in verse 44 He goes on to say that "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:..." So, sinners do not find this precious spiritual treasure, this eternal blessing because they seek it but rather they seek it and come to Christ because they were given to Christ by the Father and in His incarnation He substituted Himself for them and as a result, they are (in time) drawn to look to Christ alone by God's irresistible drawing - a fruit and effect of what was purchased for them on the cross of Calvary some 2000 years ago. It was His doing and dying. The faith exercised by God's elect, it is the gift of God - "...not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Now some accept the indisputable fact that God is sovereign in all things, including salvation. Thereby, they rightly conclude that their own efforts to seek God would have no causal role in the finding. They recognize that God's purpose shall come to pass. But some react to this truth by choosing the path of fatalism in defiance to God's commands for us to ask, seek, and knock. They deny man's responsibility, reasoning, "If it's really all of God, why should I do anything?" That's a natural reaction but think about it. Isn't that mindset a reflection of the natural mind's sinful, self-serving determination that I will only act if my actions gain something for me? Such fatalistic reasoning is accompanied by the sinful assumption that there is no valid motive for me to seek or do anything beyond that which would be self-serving. And so they ignore His commands to seek salvation God's way in rebellion against God and in defiance of the clear commands of scripture. Instead, in recognition to God's sovereignty, we should be encouraged to bow down and plead for His mercy - and in the scriptures, that's the description of all those who ultimately will inhabit His kingdom.

In Romans 9 we read how the Israelites of old sought after God but their efforts were futile because they sought it "...by the works of the law" as all of us do unless and until the Holy Spirit gives us life. Once again we see that all religion fits into one of two categories - the religion of works or the religion of grace.

To seek salvation conditioned on the merits of Christ alone, His righteousness, is the religion of grace. This is God's way of salvation. Any other way makes salvation conditioned on the sinner, the religion of works, and is equivalent to seeking after God **"...by the works of the law."** It really is that simple. Seeking God based upon grounds He has excluded shall prove to be a fruitless search. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and ye shall find (Matthew 6:33)!

Now I also wanted to speak some more about the sense we are to take from these commands, the sinner's responsibility, to ask, seek, and knock. As we discussed last week, we are to ask of God in recognition that salvation is of the Lord, bowing to His sovereignty in salvation. As such, this asking takes on the connotation of an earnest plea for mercy. Likewise, when He says to seek, I believe this indicates a diligent determination that God places in our hearts. It implies more than simply, "I'll ask God and then sit back and see if it's in the cards for me." That's not how God describes those that He's already blessed in Christ. As I just mentioned, we learned from the first part of Christ's sermon in chapter 5 that God gives a hunger and thirst for His righteousness that would be evidenced by a diligent seeking.

And lastly, He says "knock." I believe this is descriptive of beggars who knock at the door and will not go away. They will not be denied. I think there's a good illustration of this in Matthew 15 so be turning there. You almost get the sense that it is though the earnest asker and diligent seeker is now confronted by a closed door. God is not begging the sinner. Rather the sinner is the one reduced to begging, having been blessed to find He is among the **"...poor in spirit..."** with nothing to commend himself unto God. He needs mercy. And the sense of this is that it is if Christ is saying, "Even so, be not discouraged, continue your quest, knock for it shall be opened."

To illustrate this, let's consider the story in Matthew 15 of the Canaanite woman who cried unto our Lord to help her daughter. There it reads beginning in verse 22: **"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. <sup>23</sup> But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. <sup>24</sup> But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>25</sup> Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.**

<sup>26</sup>*But he answered and said, It is not meet (or a good or proper thing) to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.* <sup>27</sup>*And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.* <sup>28</sup>*Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."*

Now this doesn't present a picture of a pleading Savior, anxiously waiting to enter your heart as (regrettably) I and so many others used to sing in that popular invitational song. Notice that initially our Lord didn't even answer her and when He finally did He repeated words similar to what He said in the text we looked at last week, Matthew 7:5, where He instructed them not to give that which is holy unto the dogs.

But this Canaanite woman had no other option. She knew she needed the crumbs. God irresistibly calls His people and they beg for mercy at His feet. They discover they have no other hope but that God be merciful to them, the sinner. God is not the beggar. Instead, the blessed of God are brought to fall at His feet and plead for the mercy found in Christ alone, and worship Him. And there, in Christ, they find their relief and their need is met.

I believe this is an excellent picture of one who is knocking at the door of Christ, so convinced by God's Spirit of their need for Christ and the imputation of the righteousness He produced, that they have nowhere else to go and so they knock with determination as one who will not be deterred from entering in this one, sure way.

Now, picking up where we left off from last week, direct your attention to verse 12 of Matthew 7. I want us to see the sense in which this verse, commonly known as the Golden Rule, Matthew 7:12, fits in the context of this passage, since at the first reading, it would seem to be a one verse diversion away from the flow of this passage. There in verse 12 we read, ***"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."*** Notice the verse begins with "therefore" and I believe it is there in this context for a purpose.

If you will remember the flow of this section of Christ's sermon, He had begun in verses 1-5 speaking of matters of eternal judgment & of the standard of judgment and He mentions the analogy of the "beam" in the eye of understanding which must be removed if one is to be qualified to deal with the "motes" in the eyes of others. That is, until one is blessed by God to see the necessity of the righteousness of God established by Christ alone and adopt that, God's standard of judgment, as their own & they are not qualified to relate to others the remedy for their sin problems. And then in verse 6, He says, as if to those who have been so blessed, "do not cast your pearls before swine & do not share this blessed truth with those who you know want nothing to do with it. And then, beginning in verse 7, as if to those who might be thinking, "but what if I am interested," He says, Ask, seek, and knock and it shall be given, found, and opened. And He supports that in verses 9-11, bringing us to this verse 12 which begins "therefore" &

Now Christ makes clear that this is a broad, sweeping command when He says "for this is the law and the prophets." Remember that in Matthew 22, Christ summarized the law by stating that we are to love God perfectly and, secondly, to love our neighbor as ourselves and He says, "***On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.***" So, we know that His referral here in Matthew 7 to that portion of the law that pertains to dealing with our fellow man is to be applied broadly. But in this context, I believe the specific application pertains to treating others how we would want to be treated with regards to the ministry of the Gospel, speaking again of the wisdom we are to use. Whereas, in verse 6 He instructed them to not share this valuable truth with one who shows animosity towards it, He then encourages those who are interested beginning in Matthew 7 to seek Him.

So I believe here that the application in its immediate context is that we should treat others how we would want to be treated in witnessing and sharing this most precious truth & the Gospel of the kingdom. If you do not want something, wouldn't you prefer to be left alone and not have it pushed on you? And likewise, if you are seeking something, wouldn't you want others who have already discovered the truth to be ready to give an answer? Why of course and if God's gospel of sovereign grace has been revealed to you, you are grateful for those used by God to communicate His way of salvation to you. I know I am!

I believe this application of Christ's words here in verse 12 helps us to see how it fits in the context of this section of Christ's sermon. Nevertheless, as I've said, this verse does reference the summary of the law and as such, it again amplifies how we absolutely are unable to abide by it with the strict perfection required before a holy God. And of course, the broader context is also consistent with the overall message of with that which Christ was conveying earlier in the sermon when in Matthew 5:17 when He said, **“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: (see the same phrase) I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”** We're reminded even here, that there is no merit in our very best efforts. We should strive to act in accordance with this, God's revealed will, but not in order to gain or maintain favor with God thereby so that's the work Christ came to do so He came to fulfill the law and the prophets. We dare not assign any merit to our very best efforts to follow this golden rule for that would place our own self-righteousness in rivalry with the only righteousness which satisfies God, that of the Lord our righteousness.

Turn with me now to Luke 13 before we move onto verses 13 and 14 in our text today. I believe this discourse with Christ will help us see the connection between the "seeking" described in verses 7 and 8 and the command of verse 13 to enter in at the "strait gate." Look at verse 23 of Luke 13. There our Lord was asked, **“Lord, are there few that be saved?”** (Here we see that He is discussing salvation itself). **And he said unto them <in vs. 24>, <sup>24</sup>“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”** How does this square with "Seek and find" as set forth here in today's text? It is true that many seek after eternal life yet fail to find it. Can one actually seek to enter into fellowship with God yet not be able? Our Lord's own words in Luke 13 say just that.

Yet we have a command and an encouragement to "strive" to enter in God's way ("the strait gate") while making it clear that many will seek to enter in yet not be able. From other passages we learn that this inability is derived from a refusal to seek salvation God's way. Paul told Timothy concerning religious men that **“...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;...”** See, they were religious so but they will not endure sound doctrine so God's truth so His way of salvation. They want in, but not God's way.



Simply desiring salvation and fellowship with God, in and of itself, will not insure an effectual search for the truth. That's not the same as searching for Christ ó the way. We must seek the truth ó salvation God's way, to the exclusion of any other. Who then seeks to enter into fellowship with God but is unable? Answer: The sinner who seeks salvation or strives to gain favor with God based upon anything other than the only basis upon which a holy God is reconciled ó the righteousness of God wrought out by Christ on the cross and freely imputed or reckoned to the account of all those for whom He died. To strive to enter into fellowship with God based upon anything else is to be as Christ described in Luke 13 ó to be unable. It is to fail to find eternal life and favor with God.

Now with that backdrop, let's go back to Matthew 7 and look at verses 13 and 14. There Christ continues saying, ***“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: <sup>14</sup>Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”***

Notice here He is talking about a ógateö and a óway,ö the gate being the entry into the way. And He speaks of only 2 options. One way leads to destruction, and the other way leads to life. Now we know from Luke 13, that He is speaking of eternal life and eternal destruction. Recall that His command for them to ***“Strive to enter in at the strait gate”*** was in response to their question, ***“Lord, are there few that be saved?”*** He's talking about the ówayö of salvation.

Now since there are only two destinations, heaven and hell, all shall ultimately arrive in one or the other. And we know that even people who are indifferent regarding spiritual or religious things are proceeding down the road to destruction. But in this context, I believe Christ is speaking more to religious folks ó those who are consciously choosing a ówayö ó a way that they believe shall lead to life eternal. We see this in the context if you consider the words that follow in verse 15 where He begins to warn of false prophets and then down in verse 21 He starts to speak of religious folks who presumed to be on the road to eternal life, but of whom it is said they shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. We'll examine those verses in more detail in future sessions, but for now, I simply want you to see that this further proves that simply desiring heaven, proceeding down a óway,ö does not ensure that it is God's way that leads to eternal life.

Now multitudes of religious people seem to believe that simply being on a road, being religious and sincerely desiring eternal life puts them on the road to heaven. But think how foolish! Do you go to the bus station or the airport and conclude that boarding just any bus or plane will take you to your desired destination? Oh they may have a few distinctions that they use to describe their "way." They may say, "Well, you have to believe in God, perhaps even the Bible and Jesus Christ," but beyond that, most are not seeking after something contrary to their natural persuasions — not a strait gate or a narrow way.

In Proverbs 16:25 we read, ***“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”*** Shouldn't this prompt us all to evaluate whether or not we have discovered a way contrary to that which previously seemed right to us? In that passage in Luke 13, where Christ said to ***“Strive to enter in at the strait gate...”***, that word "strive" means to struggle or labor fervently. A way of salvation must be revealed to us that is contrary to our sinful preconceived notions. It is a strait gate and a narrow way.

Now as we consider verses 13 and 14 together, as a point of interest, notice that verse 14 begins with the word "because." And this could be understood in 2 ways. I think either interpretation is consistent with the truth but since I'm not convinced one way or the other, I'll bring them both to your attention. First, verse 14 may be understood as amplifying what Christ had said in verse 13. In other words, there are 2 reasons to be considered why we should enter at the strait gate:

- 1) (in vs. 13) — for the other gate (the wide one) and its broad way leads to destruction and
- 2) (in vs. 14) — because this strait gate and its narrow way leads to life.

Secondly, verse 14 may be understood as an explanation of the end of verse 13. That is, that many go in the wide gate "because" the gate to eternal life is strait (narrow) and few find it. Both of these interpretations are consistent with the truth being conveyed but since I wasn't sure of the original intent, I thought I'd bring both possibilities to your attention.

In any event, let us consider these 2 alternative paths: (1) The wide gate and the broad way that leads to destruction versus (2) The strait gate and narrow way that leads to life. Often we hear religious people speak of walking the "straight and narrow" and by this they mean the way of morality, religious sincerity, reformation, etc. But sadly, in reality more often than not they are describing the broad way that leads to destruction, not the narrow way that leads to eternal life, for they imagine these things to merit some favor before God.

Look at the adjectives describing this way that leads to destruction. Its entry is called a "wide" gate and the way is called a "broad" way. And these descriptions are exact opposites of how Christ describes the way that leads to everlasting life. So, you would think that this would make it easy to recognize one from the other, but remember that by nature **"...men loved darkness rather than light..."** (John 3:19).

As I quoted from Proverbs 16, this way which leads to destruction is the way that **"seemeth right"** unto men. So it is wide and broad in that it is in every way agreeable to the flesh or to our natural predispositions. It is easy to enter into. It requires no work of grace in the heart of the sinner to proceed down this road. It is the religion of works or of salvation conditioned in some way, to some degree on the sinner or based upon some requirement that we presume to satisfy. It is the path we all begin our religious journey on as we mistakenly presume that our eternal destiny is in our own hands, ultimately a result of something that we can do or that we are enabled to do.

Isn't the first interest in spiritual things accompanied by an inquiry into, "What must I do in order to be saved?" This broad road is comprised of travelers who assume that their salvation is conditioned on something other than, or in addition to, that which Christ alone merited in His perfect satisfaction to God's justice. And if we imagine that this, the righteousness of God in Christ, becomes ours because of (or by means of) any other way than by God's merciful, judicial reckoning of it to our account or by the free imputation of it or then we are still in league with the religion of works and on this path to destruction.

This religious pursuit, called a broad way, is the course of this world. In Ephesians 2:1 we read, *“And you hath he quickened, (given spiritual life to) who were dead in trespasses and sins; <sup>2</sup>Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, ...”* So we all begin on this course. You see, it’s a wide gate because it’s easy to enter ó no miraculous quickening needs to take place to enter this wide gate. A dead fish can float with the water down stream, but only a living one can swim against the current. This broad way is easy because it doesn’t require a new birth and the resulting radical change to see that the way which seemed right couldn’t be more wrong. There’s no real repentance or radical change of heart and mind necessary. This way doesn’t upset your apple cart so to speak. It’s all downhill. Meet the requirement, do your little part, and go to heaven ó or so we imagine.

We can see something of just how broad this road to destruction is when we consider the one common characteristic that is found to be true of every religion known to man, with only one solitary exception. You name it, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and ó yes ó most of so-called “Christianity” have this one thing in common. They all seek and expect to attain their concept of eternal bliss based at least in part upon something done by, in, or through them, the sinner. And that’s the religion of works and as we learn from Ephesians 2:16, *“...by works of the law (by your meeting a condition or requirement) shall no flesh be justified.”*

Now note that Christ says of this broad way, *“í many there be which go in thereat:”* It’s a crowded road and being wide, it’s attractive to us. We love company and there’s plenty of it on this road because there’s room for all and all mankind are in it by nature. And unless and until a miracle of grace takes place in the sinner’s heart, he has absolutely no desire to be diverted. But it’s a deceptive road. As I’ve indicated, those traveling this broad way have no idea where the road is taking them. It seems right but it leads to death. It’s an eternally fatal road.

But what about the strait gate and narrow way that leads to life? Well it is exactly the opposite of the way that naturally seems right. Strait here does not mean linear as in a straight line but rather it means a narrow passage way. A sinner cannot and will not find this gate unless a miraculous work of grace takes place ó unless God draws the sinner to look to Christ and Him alone for all of their salvation.

This strait gate is Christ. As we read from John 10 last week, Christ said He is “...*the door of the sheep...*” He is the way.

And this narrow way is the way of the religion of grace which sets forth that all of salvation is conditioned on Christ alone with no contribution whatsoever from the sinner. It is narrow because there is only one truth and there is no room for any other. This narrow way is the way of righteousness through another, the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, it is narrow for it is the only way that God can be both a just God and a Savior ó not clearing the guilty or dispensing with His justice in order to save sinners, but rather showing mercy to sinners based upon satisfaction to justice by the sinner’s substitute ó Christ Himself. As Christ said in John 14, “...*no man cometh to the Father, but by me.*” His righteousness must have been charged to my account, just as my sins must have been laid to His account so that He might put them away and that I might be found righteous in Him ó accepted in the beloved. And nothing else will do. Such is the case for all who travel this narrow road. And in the death of Christ, He procured for all those He represented all grace here and glory hereafter ó including the grace of the new birth and the spiritual gift of faith and repentance that would cause me to enter in at this strait gate.

The way leading to eternal life is narrow and few find it, but not because sinners lack the mental capacity to comprehend this way. This way isn’t conditioned on the sinner, his doing or his intellect. The scriptures declare that God justifies the ungodly so there is no sinner too sinful to be saved. He declared, “*seek, and ye shall find...*” But He also told us what to seek ó to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And this way of righteousness, based upon the satisfaction made by Christ in His life and death, and that alone, will not allow or accommodate any other way of salvation. But whosoever desires salvation God’s way, based solely upon the righteousness established by Christ and imputed to the sinner, they shall find it.

Christ does say of this way that leads to life, *“few there be that find it.”* There’s not a lot of company on this road. We prefer large gates, broad ways, and a lot of company. It’s not a popular way and so, sinners will not choose it of their own accord. Those who do choose it have been confronted with their own sinfulness and therefore their own helplessness to save themselves. Their world is turned upside down. They are humbled and brought in spiritually destitute with nothing to plead but for mercy before this just and holy God ó based upon the satisfaction to His justice made by Christ, the mercy seat.

It is indeed a narrow way. So why should we strive to enter in that strait gate? Well for one, we should be encouraged because of its sure, certain, and exclusive destination ó eternal life. In Jeremiah 21:8 we read, *“... Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.”* And this is precisely what our Lord has done here in Matthew 7. There are but two destinations. And He began in verse 13 with a command to *“Enter ye in at the strait gate...”* It must be entered into. In Matthew 18:3, Christ said, *“...Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* And if we’re to enter into this strait or narrow gate, then we have to jettison all our preconceived ideas and notions and receive the truth as a little child. And it’s my prayer that God will so richly bless all who hear this message.

As we saw back in verse 8 of our text, *“...every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”* So, strive to enter in at the strait gate!

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God’s grace found in the only infallible source, God’s word itself ó the Bible.