

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

**“When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. (Pro 16:7)**

**Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,  
(2Ti 1:9)**

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## *The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment (Part 10)*

### *Strive to Enter in at the Strait Gate*

*April 19, 2026*

**Sermon Text:** Luke 13:22-30

**Scripture Reading:** Romans 9:1-29

Hear once more these words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Luk 13:22-30 And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem. (23) And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"

And He said to them, (24) "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (25) "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'

(26) "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; (27) and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.'

(28) "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out. (29) "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. (30) "And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."

As we are continuing to hear God's Word on this doctrine of eternal punishment and the reality of hell, you will recall that in response to His teaching, this question was elicited from one of his hearers – 'Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?' And we noted that it is obvious – the true and accurate preaching of God's Word will elicit

this same question today. And often it comes in the form of an angry outburst – *you think that just a few people are really Christians!!*

The Lord Jesus answered the question with this picture of *the narrow door*. In Matthew's account, Jesus spoke of two doors, or ways- the small, narrow gate, and the wide broad way:

Mat 7:13-14 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. (14) "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Many travel on Broadway. Few even find the narrow way.

### **The Gate is Strait**

As we saw last time, a gate has two functions – to admit or deny entrance. And we also noticed that this strait gate, this narrow gate, *is the entrance into the kingdom of God. To life. To salvation.* The gate

is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Way, Truth and Life, the only way to the Father. *The Kingdom of God is very exclusive. Most are excluded. Few enter.* And this truth is, of course, very widely denied in our day. Most everyone gets in – that is the constant mantra being insisted upon. As that heretic Robert Schuller exclaimed to Billy Graham – *So there is a wideness in God’s mercy!* Which is simply to say that the gate is not narrow, and in fact many find it and enter through it.

But our Lord’s own words plainly deny all of this.

The KJV uses the adjective “strait.” It is the strait gate. Now this word “strait” (not “straight”) is in the news now – the Strait of Hormuz. A narrow passage which is a vital shipping channel for oil tankers. *Strait.* Narrow. Tight. Where walls close in. A difficult way. Listen to Bunyan say it:

*“This gate is wide enough for all them that are the truly gracious and sincere lovers of Jesus Christ, but so strait, as that not one of the*

*other type can by any means enter in.”*

Psa 118:19-20 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD. (20) This is the gate of the LORD; The righteous will enter through it.

The entrance into the Kingdom of God is so narrow that no one who is unqualified can enter – the strait gate will keep them out.

The narrowness of this gate is the narrowness of Christ. Christ is the gate, and He is narrow. He narrows down from all humanity those few who may enter. He is that Stumbling Block over whom most people fall. ALL desire to go to heaven. ALL want to be in the Kingdom of God. But FEW will enter in because Christ is that narrow gate. Faith in Him is required. Being born again is required. Turning our backs upon the world is required.

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is

born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Mat 10:37-38 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. (38) "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

1Pe 2:6-8 For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." (7) This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," (8) and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

This is the most hated doctrine in the Bible – the truth which sinners despise more than any other:

Joh 14:6 Jesus \*said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; **no one comes to the Father but through Me.**

Christ is the narrow door. He is the strait gate.

### Pictures of the Strait Gate

The Old Testament temple gave pictures of this strait gate:

2Ch 23:18-19 Moreover, Jehoiada placed the offices of the house of the LORD under the authority of the Levitical priests, whom David had assigned over the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses—with rejoicing and singing according to the order of David. (19) He stationed the gatekeepers of the house of the LORD, **so that no one would enter who was in any way unclean.**

And in the New Jerusalem, a picture of the new heavens and earth:

Rev 21:23-27 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. (24) The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. (25) In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; (26) and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; (27) **and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

### What Makes the Gate Strait?

Bunyan pointed out three things that make the gate *strait*-

1. There is sin; the sin of the profane, and the sin of the professing “Christian” who is a counterfeit.

Bunyan especially warned the counterfeit ‘professor.’ *“The gate will be too strait for such as these to enter in. A person may partake of salvation in part, but not of salvation in whole. God saved the children of Israel out of Egypt, but overthrew them in the wilderness.”*

*Jud 1:5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.*

*Heb 3:14-19 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, (15) while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME." (16) For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? (17) And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? (18) And to whom did He swear that*

*they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? (19) So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.*

We know that MANY are going to come up to that gate when Christ comes again and they will INSIST that He open it to them. They will plead all of their so-called good works, but it will be to no avail. The strait gate will not permit their admittance.

NOTE: Beware of practicing righteousness before men, thinking that just as people applaud you for your “good works,” surely Christ will applaud you as well. It is not so. I know people who send out summaries of all their activities and doings for the year – *‘I served on the women’s ministries committee, I sang in the choir, I helped at the soup kitchen, I traveled to the Holy Land, I taught children’s Sunday school* – and yet they flare in anger if they hear *the way is strait and few are they who find it*. Do you remember the title Bunyan gave to his treatise on this Scripture? –

The Strait Gate; or Great Difficulty of Going to Heaven; Plainly proving by the Scriptures that not only the rude and profane, but many great professors will come short of that kingdom.

2. And the Gate is made strait by the word of the Law.

Everyone who seeks to enter without Christ, boasting of their own works, will be excluded from entry because the Law condemns them:

Gal 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM."

Unless we place our full trust for justification in Christ alone, and plead HIS righteousness, the strait gate will never open to us. This, again, is still another way that Christ Himself is that strait gate. His way is narrow. He alone is our

righteousness. All who seek to establish themselves righteous by a righteousness of their own will be turned away and end in hell. The Law must be fulfilled. God never winks and sets it aside.

*“He therefore must be damned that cannot be saved by the consent of the Law.”* (Bunyan)

That is to say, the Law is only satisfied, fulfilled and taken out of the way by Christ.

3. The gate is guarded by the angels.

Mat 13:36-43 Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." (37) And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, (38) and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; (39) and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. (40)

"So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. (41) "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, (42) and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (43) "Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Once more we see that only the good seed, the sons of the kingdom, will be able to enter. The gate is narrow/strait because the angels will not permit the tares to enter.

Consider this then:

“Unless the man that is unsanctified can master the Law, and conquer angels; unless he can push them out of his way, he will never enter through that gate.” (Bunyan)

Consider Further Jesus'  
Command to Strive

*Strive to enter in. Strive to enter through the narrow door. What is this word?*

*Agonizomai.* To fight, to struggle, to strain every nerve. Remember this:

*You do not need to do anything to go to hell. But you must give your all, you must fight and strive to enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

NOTE: Let's be very, very honest with ourselves here. Am I fighting, striving, struggling, giving my all in order to get through that narrow gate and into heaven? Or am I coasting? Broadway is downhill. The narrow way through that strait gate us uphill.

*"Strive." This word strive supposeth that great idleness is natural to professors; they think to get to heaven by lying, as it were, on their elbows. It also suggesteth that many will be the difficulties that professors will meet with,*

*before they get to heaven. It also concludeth that only the labouring Christian, man or woman, will get in thither. Bunyan, Kindle Edition.*

Justification is by faith alone in Christ alone. Our salvation is entirely free, paid in full by Christ. However, the entrance is through Christ alone and furthermore following Christ is a fight and struggle. Those who claim to have trusted in Christ but who lazily take their ease and detest any cost in following Him cannot have assurance that they are truly saved.

"And, more particularly, this word strive is expressed by several other terms; as, (1.) It is expressed by that word, "So **run** that ye may obtain." (1 Cor 9:24,25) (2.) It is expressed by that word, "**Fight** the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim 6:12) (3.) It is expressed by that word, "**Labour** not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." (John 6:27) (4.) It is expressed by that word, "We **wrestle**--with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the

darkness of this world." (Eph 6:12) Therefore, when he saith, Strive, it is as much as to say, *Run for heaven, Fight for heaven, Labour for heaven, Wrestle for heaven, or you are like to go without it.* Bunyan, Kindle Edition.

The parable of the soils gives us a good example:

Mat 13:20-22 "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; (21) yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. (22) "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

See it? These two kind refuse to strive. They refuse to pay the price of persecution or giving up love for the world. Both seemingly trusted in Christ, accepting what He

offered at no cost – but they refused to follow Him in that narrow, strait, way.

If you profess to be a Christian, if you tell yourself that you are saved because you believe in Christ and the gospel, I want to ask you – *but are you striving? Are you running, fighting, laboring, wrestling here in enemy territory? Be honest. If you are just coasting, if your claim to know Christ never costs you anything, if you are popular with the world, then is it not probable that you don't know Christ at all?*

### **But How do We Strive?**

It is one thing to hear that we must strive to enter, but just what does this fighting, running, laboring and wrestling look like? Let's consider several examples:

1. Striving in prayer. Jonathan Edwards wrote a treatise on this subject:

***Hypocrites Deficient in the Duty of Prayer***  
by

## Jonathan Edwards

(1703-1758)

*"Will he always call upon God?"*

*[Job 27:10]*

The hypocrite, the false professor, the fake Christian, will call on God at times when he is in a dangerous situation, or in some kind of great loss. But his prayers dry up once the danger is past. He has no true friendship with God in Christ and therefore feels no need to converse with Him daily. If we are to strive, then we must pray.

“Let us strive and pray that the same mind may be in us which was in our blessed Master. Like Him, let us be willing to go anywhere, do anything, suffer anything when the path of duty is clear and the voice of God calls. Let us set our faces steadfastly to our work when our work is plainly marked out, and drink our bitter cups patiently when they come from a Father’s hand.” [J.C. Ryle]

2. Striving for the things which please the Lord and rejecting the things which He hates:

1Ti 6:11-14 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (12) Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (13) I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, (14) that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

FLEE from and PURSUE! Flee from the world and the things the world values. And rather pursue the things Christ values.

NOTE: Here then is still another self-examination question to put to ourselves – *Am I running FROM anything? Do I flee from evil when I see or hear or think it?* Think of this:

Gen 39:7-12 It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

(8) But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. (9) "There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

(10) As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her. (11) Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. (12) She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside.

And what is it that we are *pursuing*? Righteousness,

godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness???

3. Take care NOT to strive after things that are of no profit.

2Ti 2:14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

Have you know people who claim to be Christians but who *wrangle* about useless topics rather than running after Christ and the things that really matter? It is quite common. Some people are obsessed with useless things such as nuances and opinions about eschatology. One man who visited here some time ago wanted to focus the discussion upon his conclusion that only the hymn book and piano should be used in church. But, you see, the thing is evident – if we consume our time and striving after things that really don't matter, then we are not striving after the things of Christ

and we may not even have found that strait gate at all.

## **Conclusion**

There it is then. The gate is narrow that leads to life. Many will seek to enter not be able. There is no chance whatsoever that a person without Christ will ever sneak past the guardians of the gate. And entry, though freely provided by Christ, is nevertheless costly – in fact, going to heaven will cost us everything:

Mat 13:44-46 "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, (46) and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Mat 19:21-22 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure

in heaven; and come, follow Me."  
(22) But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.