

STRIVE TO ENTER (PART 2)

Luke 13:22-30
Yeshua §114

INTRODUCTION

The Christian life is likened to a foot race we should train hard to win. No race is won without hard training. I remember one race from my days running cross country. I gained thirty yards on my opponent across a field of sand because of the hard training we had done just days before. We had run sprint repeats in that deep sand until we could hardly stand. My throat was raw and tasted of blood. But race day made it worth it. Victory requires hard work. Accomplishment of any kind requires hard work, especially in the Christian life. If we are to experience the abundant and fruitful life to which God calls us, we must work hard.

We seldom, if ever, talk in terms of working hard at the Christian life. But as we discover in Luke 13:24, Jesus Himself urges us to work hard to gain kingdom life.

SCRIPTURE TEXT

LUKE 13:22-30

22 He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. **23** And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” 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** When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ **26** Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ **27** But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ **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 you yourselves cast out. **29** And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and

Part 1.	The Coming of the King
Part 2.	The Authentication of the King
Part 3.	The Controversy over the King
Part 4.	The Training of the Twelve by the King
Part 5.	The Opposition to the King
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Part 7.	The Official Presentation of the King
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Part 12.	The Sequels

recline at table in the kingdom of God. 30 And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

TRANSITION / REVIEW

The key to understanding this passage is understanding the question in verse 23:

“Lord, will those who are saved be few?”

We discovered it means this:

“Lord, will those believers who are delivered from the carnal life and the loss it brings now and in the Messianic Kingdom, be few?”

Jesus answered:

“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

Jesus’ answer reveals:

Few believers will be delivered from the carnal life and the loss it brings now and in the Messianic Kingdom.

Said another way:

Few believers will gain kingdom life and the reward it brings now and in the Messianic Kingdom.

Many believers will seek to gain kingdom life and will not be able.

“For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

What does this mean?

Jesus’ Parable of the Sower gives the answer (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23). The parable is told in Matthew 13:1-9 and interpreted in verses 18-23. Let’s read its interpretation in Matthew 13:18-23.

JESUS INTERPRETS THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (MATTHEW 13:18-23)

18 “Hear then the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account

of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. 23 As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

Soils two, three and four describe believers. In each case, the gospel message is accepted, takes root and sprouts. But tribulation and persecution block growth in soil two. Worldly pursuits and materialism prevent growth in soil three. Only soil four produces fruit. Only soil four gains kingdom life. Only one of three.

Many will seek to enter kingdom life meaning, many will want what the gospel offers: a restored relationship with God and a better life. But after receiving the free gift of justification salvation, tribulation, persecution, worldly pursuits and materialism will undermine the process of spiritual growth.

POINT #1

Tribulation, persecution, worldly pursuits and materialism will prevent most believers from gaining kingdom life and the rewards it brings now and in the Messianic Kingdom.

This is what Jesus means when He says:

“For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

TRANSITION

Though few will gain kingdom life, nonetheless, Jesus urges us to strive for it:

“Strive to enter through the narrow door.”

The opportunity remains to gain kingdom life, but you have to strive for it; you have to work for it.

To be clear, we do not work for *justification salvation*. We receive justification salvation through faith alone in the finished work of Christ. We cannot work for justification salvation; Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day. We add nothing. We can only receive it by faith.

Justification salvation delivers us from the *penalty* of sin. Justification salvation is received *by faith*. Having received justification salvation, we enter into the second aspect of our deliverance called *sanctification salvation*.

Sanctification salvation delivers us from the *power & practice of sin*. Sanctification salvation is received *by faith and hard work*.

We seldom, if ever, talk in terms of working hard at the Christian life. We are not aligned with Jesus. Jesus says:

“Strive to enter through the narrow door.”

The verb “*strive*” translates the Greek verb “**ἀγωνίζομαι *agōnízomai***”. ***Agōnízomai*** means “*contend*”, “*fight*”, “*strain every nerve to the uttermost towards the goal*”.¹ It is used of the rigorous training of Olympic athletes.

Jesus tells us we need to contend, to fight, to strain every nerve to gain kingdom life here and now. We do it by entering through the *narrow door*.

What is the *narrow door*?

The Sermon on the Mount holds the answer (Matt. 5-7; Lk. 6). The Sermon on the Mount was primarily for the benefit of the disciples (Matt. 5:1-2). Peter, James, and John, and the rest of the disciples were born-again believers by virtue of their faith in Jesus (John 3). In Matthew 5:20, Jesus taught the disciples:

MATTHEW 5:20

20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Because the disciples are born-again believers, *entering the kingdom of heaven* cannot mean “*go to heaven when you die*.” “*Entering the kingdom of heaven*”, in this context, means gaining kingdom life and the rewards it brings now and in the Messianic Kingdom. A righteous person is one who obeys God’s Law. If they are to gain kingdom life, the disciples need to obey God’s Law in a way that exceeds the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees.

Through the rest of the sermon, Jesus teaches the true righteousness of the Mosaic Law. Then, in His conclusion to the sermon, Jesus makes application to His disciples in Matthew 7:13:

MATTHEW 7:13-14 (ESV)

13 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are

¹ Zodhiates, Spiros. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, (75).

many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

The *narrow door* in Luke 13:24 and the *narrow gate* in Matthew 7:13 both refer to God's Law.

The *narrow door* is God's law.

Matthew 7:13-14 aligns with Luke 13:24:

13 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

How is kingdom life gained here and now?

POINT #2

Kingdom life is gained by working hard to obey God's Law.

TRANSITION

Kingdom life is gained by working hard to obey God's Law. The Jews of Luke 13 were under the Mosaic Covenant and therefore the Law of Moses. The Mosaic Covenant and Mosaic Law came to an end with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Heb. 7-8). We, now, are under the New Covenant and therefore the Law of Messiah.

What is the Law of Messiah?

The Law of Messiah consists of all the commands contained in the New Testament that pertain to New Covenant believers.

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Now we can understand what Jesus is teaching us. “By working hard to obey My commands you will gain kingdom life and the rewards it brings now and in My Kingdom.”

By working hard to obey My commands you will gain kingdom life and the rewards it brings now and in My Kingdom.

That being the case, where in your Bible would you turn to find the Law of Messiah? What commands are included in the Law of Messiah? The Law of Moses had 613 commandments; how many commandments does the Law of Messiah have? If you don't know what the commands are, how can you obey and gain kingdom life? It is not as dire as I am making it. Next week we will think about the Law of Messiah and what it means to obey it. To get started, I encourage you to read through Colossians 3 and identify all the commands you see in that one chapter.