

Matthew 19-09-22b

We're ready now to resume our study in Matthew chapter 7. We have looked at the asking and seeking and knocking. We've seen that the illustration concentrates attention, focuses attention on the nature of the one to whom supplication is made. It's the Father in heaven, it is the Father on earth.

And he says, this isn't, there's a Latin name for this argument from the minor to the major, but if you as imperfect, might be a good way to translate this, imperfect, know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give to those who ask him. Then there is a therefore in verse 12. You have the idea that there is request being made.

Why is there request being made? Why would one ask? Why would one seek? Why would one be knocking? There is some sort of lack. Why would a child ask their father for bread or for fish? And interestingly, these are staples in the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000. What is the food? This is a legitimate need.

It is something that even without asking, the Lord Jesus supplies. He gives thanks to his Father, but you get the idea that the nature of that need has already been recognized and fulfilling it has been approved by God in heaven. The Lord Jesus dedicates it to his Father in heaven, and then he distributes it to the people.

In the feeding of the 5,000, feeding of the 4,000, you have the bread and the fish. So how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who are asking him? Therefore, and there is a turning point here. You say, well, the application of this is I need to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking.

I need to rely on the faithfulness of God to supply these needs. But Jesus makes a different application. He doesn't say, therefore, keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking.

What does he say? Therefore, what? Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them. And this seems to be a summary application from everything that we've covered in these last 11 verses, which includes judging and measuring with the judgment that you use and the measure with which you measure. It's going to be measured and judged back to you.

The means by which you try to correct faults in others or shortcomings or specks in the eye, you need to first experience that for yourself from God, then you can be a blessing to others. Your requests to the throne of God, should they be largely self-centered because that's what you want other people to do when they're praying is think about themselves or would you like, and do we often ask for prayer from others on our behalf? Well, if that's what you would like others to do for you, do ye also to them. And it's great

if our prayers are largely intercessory rather than personal request, bringing the needs of others before the throne.

And how do we do that? Is this a mechanical formula or is this becoming the kind of person who is outward looking, looking toward God in heaven, recognizing God's character, God's faithfulness, looking not at the specks that others have in their eye, but the needs that others have, the legitimate needs for provision, for protection, for sustaining grace and make those requests. And how likely is it that if we are asking on behalf of others, if we are seeking on behalf of others, if we are knocking on behalf of others, that God is going to give those good things to those who are asking him. And those prayers, you can pray with confidence, knowing that even if we're misaligned with the actual details of the answer, we trust in God's goodness.

And God is going to give good things when we're looking to him. He may ignore the detail of our request, but he sees our heart. He knows our intent.

He understands the pattern of our lives. Well, this is the law and the prophets. Why would that be important? Why would Jesus even bring that up? It's not immediately something I would think of in this context, but you have references to this idea of the golden rule, even before the time of Christ in ancient sources, but it's almost always in the negative there.

Hillel, the great scribe in Israel said, he's recorded as having said to somebody who was a proselyte to Judaism, he said, what is hateful to yourself due to no other. That is the whole law. And the rest is commentary.

Don't do to others. What is hateful to yourself? That's, that's a negative golden rule. And it's been pointed out that the, uh, some people say the negative and positive forms are two ways of saying the same thing, but they're not because just because you're not doing to others, what you don't want done to yourself doesn't mean that you're doing anything for them.

You're just not hurting them. You're not antagonizing them. You're not being a curse to them, but it doesn't require you to be any kind of a blessing.

And this is the, this is the Jewish scribal form. What is hateful to you, don't do to somebody else. So you think of the rich man and Lazarus, he didn't do anything hateful to the beggar at his gate.

He just didn't do anything positive. Jesus is unique in, in presenting the positive side of this. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

And that comprehends the negative side as well, but it's larger and broader and, and more requires more of us than just do no harm. You know, if you're a doctor and here's somebody in dire straits with a potentially fatal condition, well, I'm doing no harm. I'm

not doing anything hateful.

That's only, that's only half and maybe even less than half do as you would have done is a fuller expression and requires a lot more of us. And this has its roots in the old Testament. When Jesus says, this is the law and the prophets, what's he talking about? Leviticus 19, 18, you shall not take vengeance nor bear any grudge against the children of your people.

That's the negative side. Don't go after them. Don't bear a grudge.

Don't, you know, throw rocks and bricks through their windows. But second half of that verse, you shall love your neighbor as you love yourself. I am the Lord.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Leviticus 19, 18. And that this is what Jesus had in mind is going to become clear a little bit further along in Matthew, quite a bit further along in Matthew.

When we get to chapter 22 verses 35 through 40, a lawyer comes to Jesus and asks him a question, testing him, teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul. And with all your mind, this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it.

And notice Jesus throws in the second for free because the teacher only said, the lawyer only asked him, teacher, what is the great commandment? He says, well, the great commandment is love the Lord, your God. The second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself on these two commandments, hang all the law and prophets.

What does Jesus say here? What you want men to do to you do also to them. This is the law and the prophets. What is implied? Everything that he said up above has already demonstrated your love for and humility with respect to God, the Father.

And you really cannot fulfill the second until you have fulfilled the first. And our familiar illustration of that with the cross, the vertical component sustains the horizontal component. You have to have first gotten the beam out of your eye, and be in right relationship with God, our vertical relationship and the great commandment before you can think about that horizontal component of being a blessing and loving one another.

So in that Matthew 22, he quotes both our Leviticus 19, 18 and Deuteronomy 6, 5, which is, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. So this is echoed later on. You have this recognized as the essence of the Old Testament by Paul in Romans 13, 8 through 10, owe no one anything.

Does this mean never take out a loan or never be in debt? It means don't get behind in your payments. Don't be delinquent. If I make an arrangement with the bank or somebody else that makes me a loan, a mortgage company, I should be on time.

I should not miss. If I miss, I owe them something that I obligated myself to, and I failed in that obligation. They have no problem with me.

They have no issue. They don't say, why did you take out this mortgage from us? We're unhappy with you. They love it that I took out a loan with them because they're making interest.

There's no case. There's no disagreement. So when he says, owe no one anything in Romans 13, 8, it means never fail to discharge your obligation.

You can be obligated, hopefully wisely, but don't fail. Don't fall short. Don't bail on that obligation.

So owe no one anything except to love one another. For he who loves another has fulfilled the law. He who loves another has fulfilled the law.

And Paul goes on to explain in verse nine, for the commandments, you shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder. You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness. You shall not covet. And if there's any other commandment, all are summed up in this saying, namely, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. That's the harm side.

That's the negative side. Don't break covenants. Don't murder.

Don't steal. Don't bear false witness. Do no damage to another.

That was the law side. But if you remember, if you want to elaborate, there was also love in the law. Do not glean the corners of your fields.

Do not beat your fig trees with a stick twice. Leave something for those who have a need. That's the positive side in the law.

Love does no harm. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. And then Paul goes on in Galatians 5.14, all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

So when Jesus says in verse 12 here, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them. This is the law and the prophets. He has come full circle to where he really began in this sermon on the mount or teaching on the hill.

Back in chapter five, verse 17, do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. And this is the fulfillment, his teaching

in chapter five, chapter six, and chapter seven, this great red ink block in your red letter Bible is Jesus fulfilling his purpose, not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill God's righteous requirements for holy living and God's promises.

The law and the prophets are fulfilled. So it is emphatic here when he says, uh, whatever you want men to do in Greek, this is *Panta Hosa*. This is everything whatsoever.

This is very comprehensive in any area, not just a few areas. Well, if I was at a soup kitchen, I would want somebody to pay for the soup. If I was stranded and didn't have my cell phone, I would want somebody to stop and help me change a flat.

It says everything whatsoever, *Panta Hosa*, everything whatsoever. And when it says, uh, what you want men to do to you do also to them. This is you keep on doing.

It's another present tense. This is all the time, everything whatsoever be doing all the time, ongoing action in present time. So of course, this is a, a fair challenge.

Never speak a hasty word, never let a root of bitterness spring up, never, uh, do an out of place thing or say an out of place word. Um, so the scope is unlimited and the persistence in it is unlimited. It's in everything all the time.

Uh, you ever heard the Eagle sing life in the fast lane? There's a line in that song, everything all the time. Well, that's what Jesus says here about our expression of love toward one another. It's everything all the time.

Um, so beyond the, uh, rabbinic sayings do no harm. This is a much higher requirement. And because of this, and because of the parallel I mentioned in, uh, Matthew 22 that we will see later on, uh, this reminds us that Jesus struck the theme of love that is going to be carried forward into the new Testament age, into the, the apostles and apostolic teaching.

And, uh, uh, if we could all do this, you listen to John Lennon singing, you know, imagine, uh, you listen to come on people now, smile on your brother, you know, imagine that everybody owned everything on the planet. Nobody had to hate, nobody had to covet, nobody had to acquire. Uh, what would that be? What's a one word proper noun for that heaven, paradise, Crosby, Stills and Nash.

You know, Stephen Stills wrote that song. Actually, I think Joni Mitchell wrote that song. We got to get back to the garden.

Uh, you know, there would be all the bombs in the sky would turn to butterflies and all this kind of, listen, there's nothing wrong with that idea. It's actually a very biblical idea. It's the means that is lacking.

It's not by goodwill. If you would just imagine that there was no conflict, uh, no, no

issues. The reason he says, imagine there's no religion is because people see religion as divisive.

It's us and them. Uh, it's, it's a reason to go to war. It's a reason to commit acts of terrorism.

It's our way or the highway. Uh, and, and so, uh, looking at different things that divide people, uh, imagine there's not rich and poor. Imagine there's not factions.

Imagine there's no countries. Uh, there's no, uh, wrong headed patriotism and, uh, take over the world. Imagine.

Wouldn't it be great? Uh, I'm a dreamer, but there's a lot of people who feel this way. There's nothing wrong with the dream per se. God created that kind of environment in the garden.

Why did man not stay in the garden? Why do we have to get back to the garden? But why can we not? Why is the cherub and the whirling sword at the gate? Why? Nothing wrong with the garden. Nothing wrong with no divisive elements. There's something wrong with us.

We need to be fixed. And people who rail and Matthew and I have heard endless amounts of argument that, well, religion is the problem. If you could just get rid of religion, it would solve all of this terrorism and conflict and, you know, misguided government and all the rest of it.

It's these Christian values, you know, it's religion. It's a, that's like saying, it's these red bumps on me. If I could get rid of these red bumps, you know, the measles virus would go away.

No, it's the virus. It's not the bumps. The reason there are factions and divisions and wars, even in the Christian realm, we saw that in first Corinthians.

I hear that there are wars and divisions among you. It ought not to be that way. But the individual controversy, the individual beef, the individual case, the individual who's right and who's wrong, you know, all the people with signs in the street, Steve is singing about, you know, something's happening here.

It ain't exactly clear, but somebody's right. Somebody's wrong. All of this goes back to the corruption that is inherent in our nature.

And you have to get the corruption fixed. It's not enough to eliminate the expression. It's just going to crop up somewhere else.

Stamp this out. It's going to come up over here. You can't use makeup and paint over acne and say, I don't have acne anymore.

Yes, you do. And the makeup is going to aggravate it in many cases and make it worse. You can't paint over an infection and say, look, I don't see the red streak headed to my heart.

I've painted over it. It's not there anymore. Got to go to the source of the infection.

Have to go to the source of the malady. Well, that means become those who love by nature, who look out not only for their own interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians chapter two, that was the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

And Paul says, let that mind be in you. Who? For the joy that was set before him. And what is the joy that was set before him? The approval of the father, the fulfillment of the father's plan, the reflection of the father's glory.

That was the joy that was set before him. And for that, and for the rescue of people hopelessly lost and hopelessly fallen for the joy that was set before him, he emptied himself, took on the form of a servant and came in the likeness of men and being found in that appearance. What did he do? He did not think equality with God was a thing to be held on to, self-interest, self-glorification, but he humbled himself and was obedient.

And humility and obedience are the path to becoming the kind of person that is going to generate this action by nature and not by regulation, not by requirement, not by external pressure. Somebody telling me, hey, you've got a speck in your eye. I inherently love.

I inherently put the interests of others. I can't do that in myself. I can't decide to be that kind of person.

That is the power of God. How does the power of God come into the life of a believer? It's what we're doing this morning, the word of God, and it is cultivating the active and ongoing and present tense ministry of God, the Holy Spirit, to enable it, to empower us, to bring it to our minds, to cleanse us. Washing of water by the word, that's a divine action.

We don't wash ourselves. We are washed. The disciples didn't wash their own feet in the upper room.

The Lord Jesus washed them. And that, he said, if you don't allow me to wash your feet, you have no portion with me. You have no part.

We don't share anything. You have to let me cleanse you. So that's the idea here.

Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them. This is the law and the prophets, easy to say, impossible to do without the active power of God. And this, Jesus doesn't talk about in this context.

The Holy Spirit is not yet given because Christ is not yet glorified. And so the righteous requirement of the law is held up as an ideal, but it isn't until Paul writes, he says, the righteous requirement of the law is met in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. That's the other half.

The ideal is set forth here, but it isn't until you have that indwelling and filling and sealing and cleansing ministry of God's Holy Spirit that it becomes a matter of practicality to fulfill this. And the people that Jesus is talking to in just a couple of years are going to have that full potential available to them. And it is a return.

This is the way that you return to the paradise of the Garden of Eden. If everyone was a healthy, Spirit-filled, knowledgeable believer, living the law of love and the law of self-sacrifice and had the mind of Christ, if everybody in the world had that, what kind of world would it be? The kind that people dream of, the kind that John Lennon and Stephen Stills and Joni Mitchell and all the other people would long to see. It's a good ideal, but you've got to know the means.

And the means is not within the grasp of humans. It is only the power of God. And God has made it possible and is going to accomplish it by the Lord Jesus Christ.

But you can't just want the goal. Remember the eye with the speck? It's not just eliminating the speck. It is learning how that elimination is done personally that qualifies us to be a blessing to others.

That's the other thing. You will see clearly because you've seen the power of God active in your own life and you will direct others to the power of God. It is not enough to want paradise.

It's not enough to imagine that there's no evil in the world. You have to not only accept the goal, but you have to accept the means. And this is where Mr. Lennon and Mr. Stills and Ms. Mitchell and so many others, to my knowledge, haven't made the connection.

It's a wonderful goal, but it's impossible. And it's really kind of pointless if you want to be there and you want to enjoy it for yourself. Why is paradise wonderful? Why is the heavenly future and the eternal realms, why are they glorious? Because they are a reflection of God.

And to the extent that you appreciate and love God, you are going to fully appreciate and love that environment that reflects Him. Why is there no need for the Son in the eternal kingdom of the Father? The Lamb is the light. He's what defines it.

He's what makes it worth being there. Well, if you're not interested in Him, there can be no paradise because there can be no people who won't immediately mess it up. I've told you many times my amusement at the notion that as we fill up, pollute, corrupt, and destroy this planet, everybody wants to get in a rocket and go somewhere else and start

over so that they can, you know, it's like termites.

Well, we've eaten all the wood in this house. Let's go next door. Let's chew that up and destroy that.

It's us. It's our presence that pollutes, corrupts, and destroys. It's ambition.

I will be like the Most High. Why did Eve eat the fruit? Why did Adam eat the fruit? There is an inherent self-interest in that. Why do people imagine that there is this idyllic environment? I would really like that.

I could really have fun there. It isn't. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing to actually be able to see and have the capacity to appreciate God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior? And wouldn't it be great to be energized and reflect that glory? Wouldn't it be great to be a part of something greater and more perfect than myself? Not just an environment, not just a hello brother and, you know, Shambhala and all the rest of that, but something with meaning and purpose, something with creative power, something with restorative and healing power, something with a genuine future and the limitless power of God at its core.

Without that, it's a shell. Wouldn't it be fun to go walk into a two-dimensional painting and get stuck there? And in order to arrive at the fulfillment of that ideal, you have to accept the source. Why does salvation work the way that it does? Why does God, in a sense, hide himself and give a fairly balanced choice? You can make a case that it's all evolution and science and materialism and there's nothing beyond ourselves.

Or you can believe in the testimony of the heavens that declare the glory of God and the firmament that shows His handiwork and our innate sense that where there is design, there is a designer. And God has put eternity in our hearts. Well, who is going to respond to that idea and who is going to pursue purely materialistic, mechanistic, physical explanations? It divides us.

Jesus said, I've not come to bring peace but a sword and I'll divide families. I'll divide people into those who have the son and have life and those who have not the son of God and have not life because it's accepting the son that comes with all of those benefits. Dr. Griswold tells a story.

I'm not big on stories, but it is interesting in that this illustration focuses on that principle. There was a guy that had one of the greatest collections of fine paintings in the world. And so they had an auction and they couldn't wait for this collection to come up.

There was just delectable choice paintings all through it. And this elderly gentleman had finally decided he was going to make it available to the public. And so it's a huge crowd of art collectors and museums and everybody from all over the world seated there.

And so when they opened the auction, they said, first up for auction is this painting of so-and-so's son. And it wasn't particularly attractive. It was just kind of ordinary.

They wanted the Picassos and the Mona Lisa or something is in their stuff that you would see hanging in the Louvre. And so the guy said, I'll start the bidding at a thousand dollars. No takers.

You know, they're all looking behind him. You know, where's the good stuff? Brought it down to five hundred, brought it down to a hundred. But can I get somebody to give me anything for this painting? Nobody would bid on it.

And finally, a guy said, look, I'll give you I'll give you ten dollars for it. And he said, sold for ten dollars to the gentleman in the front row. And then he said, that concludes our auction.

Thank you for coming. And everybody was shocked and horrified. And they said, what do you mean? What about the rest of the collection? Well, it's a condition of the seller that whoever buys the painting of his son gets the whole thing.

If you love the son, you get the whole thing. That's the idea here. It isn't enough to look for spec removal or even plank removal.

It's not enough to look for a better environment. And couldn't we all just be kind one to another? It is the means that is in view. And that is what is going to be suggested now as we move to verse 13.

Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction. And there are many who go in by it, because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life. And there are few who find it.

There have actually been those who have tried to correct some of the ancient manuscripts. The Codex Sinaiticus had a had a correcting hand who took out the word gate. And the reason is that when it says enter by the narrow gate for wide is the gate, the word wide is one that is used of roads and great thoroughfares.

And they didn't say, well, it's a narrow gate and a wide gate. This word is only used of things that are much bigger than a gate. And they said, well, that can't be right because that's not a word that's used for gates.

But Jesus used it or it's Aramaic equivalent. And the translation reflects it, that this is just an almost amazingly wide gate. This gate is as wide as a six lane highway.

It's a highway size gate is the idea that leads to destruction. This destruction is Apollia and that's ruined. If you've ever left something out in the rain and it got ruined, it's irrecoverable.

You can't dry it and paint it. You can't stain it. The wood has delaminated the interior parts.

I was working on a clock that was made in about 1960 and the insides are plastic and the plastic has just crumbled. It is ruined. There's no fixing it.

There's no epoxy. I tried JB Weld. I tried all kinds of things.

I tried four different kinds of glue, but it's Apollia. It is not recoverable. It's irretrievably no longer usable or functional.

Actually, I'm going to fix the clock, but not with that part. That part is ruined. The little electric motor in there that cannot be saved.

It's not fixable. So wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction. And there are many who go in by it.

So narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life. And there are few who find it. Why is this? Why didn't God make a great big wide six lane gate that leads to life? And why didn't he make the gate narrow for destruction? And you really have to be a hardcore ingrate evildoer to go through.

The gate is fixed. So why did God make one big and one small? These are not man-made gates. These are gates that people, well, if you look at a turnpike or you look at anything else, you look at highway construction that goes on all around us.

Why do they do that? It's built to accommodate the traffic, right? Why do you build a wide road? Because there's so many people trying to get down it. Why do you just have a little narrow side street? Why put money into a road that nobody travels? Those are a response to what people have already chosen to do. God is not saying, I want most people to go to destruction.

I just only want a few people to come to life. It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all come to repentance. Well, why didn't he make the gate bigger? It's just no need.

I might as well make it small and easy to find and walk through if you're looking. But he says, few there be that find it. It's not difficult to find.

There's just so few looking for it. What did he say just previously? Ask, seek, knock. There are so few that are genuinely asking, genuinely seeking, and genuinely knocking that it doesn't have to be a very big gate.

But the people that have chosen to go their own way, it's six lanes. That's the idea. Now, it parallels a little bit Luke 13, 24, where Jesus says, strive to enter through the narrow gate.

And this is obviously the same gate. It's a different time, a different occasion, maybe where Jesus is talking about it. But he says, strive to enter through the narrow gate, Luke 13, 24.

For many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Many will seek to enter and will not be able. And that's at a future time when that gate gets shut.

But I will direct your attention to the first word in Luke 13, 24, which is strive, work hard. The Greek there is agonizomai. Agonizomai, this was a word that was used of a runner that is expending all remaining to run as fast as he can and as far as he can to hit the finish line.

And that's where we get our word agony from is the buildup of lactic acid in your muscles or whatever it is that makes you feel so terrible. Agonize, strive, work. This is not throw yourself on the stretcher of God's grace.

Therefore, it is not talking about salvation. If this is something you can strive to do, and we know that salvation by works is not a biblical teaching, this gate is not the gate of salvation. What is it? The gate that leads to life.

Jesus said, I've come that they may have life and have it more abundantly. This is back to that idea of the wonderful environment. Why is it that in the eternal future kingdom of God, you've got an entire kingdom and wide realms and a river that runs to a great distance and trees that line it with leaves for healing.

But there is a city and the city has got walls and gates and the privilege of living in the new Jerusalem. It's the city that is built for square, but all the people of all history are going to, the faithful who qualify are going to fit in this city that is built for square. And it's not a big city.

It's big, but it's not, it can't contain anywhere near all the believers who are going to be raised. And why is that? Strive to enter. Many will come to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not do these acts in your name? And he says, I never knew you.

You never knew me. You didn't love the son. And because you didn't love the son, those things that are reserved for those who love the son don't belong to you.

You've got eternal life. You have been raised. It's not a bad thing to be raised and to be in God's kingdom, but the privileges and the opportunities and the things that are past comprehension that are reserved for those who love God are in the city.

And those who love the son are going to have a passkey, are going to have a gate entrance. And when Jesus sits down at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom, there are others who will be cast out. Many will come from the east, west, north, and south and sit down.

But you yourselves, Jesus says to the religious types of his day, will be cast out. They have to be raised to be cast out. They're not in the lake of fire.

They're in the kingdom. But when he's sitting down at the table, they're not allowed in. That's why there's weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

That's why there are those who are outside looking at their inheritance burning up in the lake of fire that has already consumed those who weren't written in the book. Agonizeste, fight, struggle, make every effort. This is similar to Paul's use of the word in other contexts like 1 Timothy 4.10. To this end, we both labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God who is the savior of all men, especially of those who trust.

He's the savior of all, but especially those who are believing. It's a potential until faith comes in. 1 Timothy 6.11.12. You, O man of God, flee these things, this list of faults and shortcomings, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life. He's talking to Timothy, who's been a believer since his youth, raised by his mother and grandmother in the faith.

But he says you've got to fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life. It's one thing to be granted it.

It's something else to have it abundantly. Lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. You've confessed that you believe and you're trusting Christ for your salvation, but you've got to fight the good fight and lay hold on eternal life.

Strive to enter the narrow gate. Going to be a lot of believers in the eternal future, but how many have entered the narrow gate that leads to life? Few find it. And you look around in the Christian world today and you can believe that.

Paul's concluding exhortation to Timothy, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.

There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give to me on that day, not to me only, but also to all who have loved the future paradise. He's going to give the crown of righteousness not only to me, but all of those who have loved the lack of war and the free food and the brotherhood of man and the wonderful shiny environment. What does he say? The righteous judge will give the crown of righteousness not only to me on that day, but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Those who love the son, those who appreciate the son, those who are willing to invest their lives in the son and what the son preached. I am the way to the father. That's

striving to enter by the narrow gate, enter by the narrow gate.

Wide is the gate, broad is the way that leads to loss, ruin, lack of having. Many there are who go in by it. Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life.

There are few who find it, but it's a simple matter of choice. It's a matter of commitment. It's a matter of recognizing that if you find the way, if you ask and seek and knock, if you're looking to God, God supplies the strength, God supplies the wisdom, God supplies the insight, God supplies the power.

And it is a matter of grabbing that power and in the same way that any device that runs on batteries, you've got to grab the battery and put it in there or that thing is just a hunk of plastic. We are the same. Without divine enablement and divine power, we are powerless to do these things that Jesus commands and exhorts.

But with that power and knowing that it is available by request, make it the pattern of the life to look to God for it, all of these things are possible. Things that are impossible with man are possible with God and God's power. Well, this is going to bring us now to verse 15, beware of false prophets.

And we'll look at that next time. There is a lot of alternative medicine. There is a lot of human invention on how to solve life's problems and it is proclaimed and Jesus is going to say, beware of those who look like they are preaching benefits, sheep's clothing, but it's actually something that is going to bite you like a ravening wolf.

We'll enter into that next time, but let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for your grace. Thank you that you have not only created an environment of righteousness in which you yourself dwell, but you have made it possible for us to be there and to experience it, to appreciate it, and that that access is through the Lord Jesus Christ, your son.

We thank you for him. We thank you for his love for you and his obedience and his love for us that sent him to the cross. And because of that, he is now highly exalted and has been given the name that is above every name.

And it is at his name that we bow. We thank you for his ongoing ministry of intercession at your right hand. And we pray that we too can be those who have a heart of intercession for one another, of humility, of the true love that reflects a love for you.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will illuminate our hearts and illuminate this truth as it pertains to us. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.