

# Matthew 7:13-14

- Enter the narrow gate -

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## Introduction

- ❖ “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Mt 7:13, 14). These words of Jesus seem easy to understand. The images of the gate, the road and the destination, the many and the few don’t pose any problems. But, it becomes interesting when we some questions are being asked.
  - Why is the gate wide or small (narrow)?
  - Why is the road broad or narrow?
    - In addition, why did Jesus use a word in Greek for “narrow” which is related to a word referring to “**trouble that inflicts distress, oppression, affliction, tribulation**”?<sup>1</sup>
  - What is the relation with the preceding verse, Matthew 7:12?
    - “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”
  - And interestingly, what is the relation with the Book of Proverbs?
  - When the final destination is “destruction,” why do so many people prefer and choose the wide gate and the broad road?
  
- ❖ The context, form, and structure as well as the theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap somewhat with other sermon outlines taken from the

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<sup>1</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 457).

Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). This makes it possible to use this outline as a “stand-alone” or as part of a series.

## Context

- ❖ To understand the teachings of Jesus, a brief summary of the historical background is necessary.
- ❖ The baptism of Jesus (Mt 3:13-17):
  - Before Jesus was baptized by John, he said: “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this **to fulfill all righteousness.**”
  - And afterwards: “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw **the Spirit of God** descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’”
    - The Sermon on the Mount teaches this **fulfillment of all righteousness.** <> “For I tell you that unless **your righteousness surpasses** that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law...” (Mt 5:20).
- ❖ The preaching of Jesus:
  - Jesus had already been preaching in the synagogues in Galilee for some time before he delivered his sermon on the mount. Matthew summarized these sermons as follows:
    - “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near**’” (Mt 4:17).
  - Jesus continued and took over the ministry of John the Baptist:
    - “In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, ‘**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near**’” (Mt 3:1–2).
  - And later on, when Jesus sent out his twelve disciples:
    - “As you go, preach this message: ‘**The kingdom of heaven is near**’” (Mt 10:7).
  - These two themes, repentance and the kingdom, are prominent in the Sermon on the Mount.
- ❖ The life of Jesus Christ:
  - Jesus taught the Law and the Prophets, and he lived according to the Law and the Prophets. The Sermon on the Mount reflects his life. He lived according to his own teachings and by doing so set an example for his followers, the disciples. A clear example is found in Matthew 5:39: “Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” When Jesus was arrested, he didn’t strike back.

- ❖ The future of the kingdom:
  - After his resurrection, Jesus summoned his eleven disciples to go back to the mount: “**All authority in heaven and on earth** has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations (...) and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**” (Mt 28:18-20).
    - This authority is reflected in expressions like: “**But I tell you** that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment” (Mt 5:22).
    - And in: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘**Lord, Lord,**’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but...” (Mt 7:20).

## Form and structure

### Matthew 7:13, 14 as part of the Sermon on the Mount

- ❖ The Sermon on the Mount consists of five main parts:
  - 1. General calling to repentance and the promise of the kingdom: Matthew 5:3-10, characterized by: “Blessed are...”
    - 2. Then Jesus turns to his disciples and all who want to learn from him: “Blessed are you...” The main theme is “**the prophets**” (Mt 5:11-16).
      - 3. The central part is an exposition of the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5:17-7:12):
        - “Do not think that I have come to abolish **the Law or the Prophets**; I have not come to abolish them but to **fulfil** them” (Mt 5:17)...
          - The Lord’s Prayer is found at the very centre of the sermon!
        - “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the **Law and the Prophets**” (Mt 7:12).
      - 4. After his exposition of the Law and the Prophets, he returns to the theme of the Prophets and warns against “**the false prophets**” (Mt 7:13-23). This contrasts with the second part of the sermon.
    - 5. He concludes his sermon again with a general call to choose: “**Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine...**”(Mt 7:24-27).
- ❖ In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus summons his hearers to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, by listening to his words and putting them into practice (Mt 7:24). At the same time, he is clear about the response of the hearers. Many will be like the foolish builders, who will build their house on the

sand, who will choose the wide gate and the broad road, which will lead to their destruction. Only a few will take his words to heart and live by them.

#### The structure of Matthew 7:13, 14

- ❖ The structure of Matthew 7:13-14 is as follows.

"Enter through the narrow gate.	
For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.	But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

- ❖ Jesus uses four contradictions within these two verses:
  - Wide <> small.
  - Broad <> narrow.
  - Destruction <> life.
  - Many <> few.
    - The parallelism and these contradictions are a special a feature of the Wisdom-literature, the Book of Psalms (Psalm 1) and the Book of Proverbs.
- ❖ Note that Matthew 7:13-14 is part of four warnings and urgent calls:
  - The two gates and roads (Mt 7:13, 14).
  - The two trees (Mt 7:15-20).
  - The two claims (Mt 7:19-23).
  - The two builders (Mt 7:24-25).

### **Technical and hermeneutical notes**

- ❖ It is important to realize that Jesus preached this sermon around 30 AD in Galilee:
  - to Jews living in a country
    - which was part of the Roman Empire;
    - who had contact with the Hellenistic (Greek) and Roman culture; this culture was prominent in a city like Tiberias (Lake of Tiberias = Sea of Galilee) and the Decapolis, nowadays Jordan;
  - to Jews
    - who frequented the synagogues and were used to listening to the teaching of the Pharisees and scribes, their spiritual leaders at that time;

- who were expecting the promised One (according to Dt 18:15-18; Mal 4:4-5; Mt 11:3);
  - who were longing for the restoration of the kingdom of God (Mt 11:12), which was the main theme of the teaching of Jesus.
  - who were familiar with the prophetic word of the Old Testament.
- ❖ This background is needed to understand some passages of the sermon, especially those that speak of persecution (Mt 5:10-12), pagans (Mt 6:7, 32) and of hypocrites.
- The selection of topics found in the Sermon on the Mount reflects some debated issues among first-century Jews, such as divorce (Mt 5:31-32; Mt 19:3-9). Jesus didn't cover all aspects of the Law, for instance, the fourth commandment (Sabbath Day) is not found here, although it was hotly debated between the Pharisees and Jesus (Mt 12:1-8). Neither did he refer to the greatest commandment (Mt 22:37-40).
  - He especially confronted the teaching of the Pharisees and Scribes. Some of the topics found in the sermon are also found in Matthew 23, where he condemned them for their hypocritical stance.
  - Jesus didn't give a new set of rules or applications but showed a different mindset. This mindset is governed by (see application):
    - the blessings of the kingdom (Mt 5:3-10);
    - the Lord's prayer (Mt 6:9-13), the central part of the sermon.
- ❖ The Old Testament background is especially important. Jesus taught the Law and the Prophets.
- The blessings are also found in the Book of Psalms. Especially Psalm 1 is important: "**Blessed** is the man .... his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night" (Ps 1:1,2; Ps 32:1-2; Ps 106:3; Ps 119:1-2).
  - The parallels between Isaiah 61:1-4 and the first blessings are striking:
    - "The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me (*The baptism of the Lord*)

to preach good news to the poor. (*Mt 5:3*)  
 He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, (*Mt 5:4*)  
 to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God,  
 to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (*Mt 5:4*)

They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor” (Mt 5:6).

- Jesus referred to the persecution of the prophets:
  - “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted **the prophets who were before you**” (Mt 5:11–12).
- As is shown below, the latter part of the Sermon on the Mount draws heavily from the Book of Proverbs.

### Words

- ❖ “Seek” and “find.” Although the verb “seek” is not used in these verses, it is implied by the use of “find.” This is supported by the fact that “seek” is used in the preceding verses and especially in Matthew 6:33.
  - Seek (Mt 6:33; 7:7) = “ζητέω”:
    - **2. to seek information, investigate, examine, consider, deliberate;**
    - **3. to devote serious effort to realize one’s desire or objective, strive for, aim (at), try to obtain, desire, wish (for).**<sup>2</sup>
    - To seek is equivalent to “to enter.”
      - “But **seek** first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt 6:33).
      - “Ask and it will be given to you; **seek** and you will **find**; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Mt 7:7).
  - Find = “εὕρισκω”:
    - **1. to come upon something either through purposeful search or accidentally, find.**<sup>3</sup>
    - **2. to discover intellectually through reflection, observation, examination, or investigation, find, discover.**<sup>4</sup>
  - Both aspects of “to find” must be taken into account. The discovery of the small gate, the narrow road, and life, is not by accident but through purposeful intellectual search and reflection on the words of Jesus.

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<sup>2</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 428).

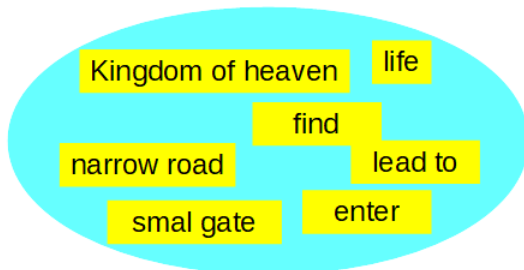
<sup>3</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 411).

<sup>4</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 412).

- ❖ Destruction = “ἀπώλεια”:
  - 1. **the destruction that one causes, destruction, waste** (Mk 14:4; compare Mt 26:8.)
  - 2. **the destruction that one experiences, annihilation** both complete and in process, *ruin*. Especially of eternal destruction as punishment for the wicked (Mt 7:13).<sup>5</sup>
- ❖ Narrow = “τεθλιμμένη”: *a narrow, confined road* and therefore a source of trouble or difficulty to those using it.<sup>6</sup> This might involve persecution. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Mt 5:11, 12).
- ❖ Life = “ζωή”: “2. **transcendent life, life,**” of God and Christ and source of life. “God’s commandment is eternal life” (Jn 12:50).<sup>7</sup>
  - This is life in communion with God (Jn 17:3).

#### Word fields

- ❖ The following two word-fields are important for the understanding of Matthew 7:13, 14:
  - Kingdom of God & life (left),
  - And Kingdom of God & wisdom (right).



#### Matthew 7:13, 14 and the Book of Proverbs

- ❖ Compare:
  - “There **is a way that seems right** to a man, **but in the end it leads to death**” (Prov 16:25).
  - “**broad is the road** that **leads to destruction**” (Mt 7:13).
    - The words “way,” “road,” and “path” are very often used in the Proverbs, in the same sense as they are used by Jesus in Matthew 7:13, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 127).

<sup>6</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 457).

<sup>7</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 430).

- ❖ John Stott commented: “First, there are two ways. This concept is found already in the Old Testament. Psalm 1, for example, contrasts ‘the way of the righteous’ who delight in God’s law, bear fruit and prosper, with ‘the way of the wicked’ who are driven like chaff before the wind and perish. Now Jesus elaborates the picture.”<sup>8</sup>

## Exposition

### Verse 12

- ❖ **“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”**

- This verse is the conclusion of the main part of the Sermon on the Mount, which deals with the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and the Law and the Prophets.
- Barclay comments: “This is probably the most universally famous thing that Jesus ever said. With this commandment, the Sermon on the Mount reaches its summit. This saying of Jesus has been called ‘the capstone of the whole discourse’. It is the topmost peak of social ethics, and the Everest of all ethical teaching.”<sup>9</sup>  
“Further, the negative form of the rule involves nothing more than *not* doing certain things; it means refraining from certain actions. It is never very difficult *not* to do things. That we must not do injury to other people is not a specially religious principle; it is, rather, a legal principle. It is the kind of principle that could well be kept by those who have no belief and no interest in religion at all. Such people might always refrain from doing any injury to anyone else, and yet be quite useless citizens to their neighbors. They could satisfy the negative form of the rule by simple inaction; if they consistently did nothing, they would never break the rule. And a goodness which consists in doing nothing would be a contradiction of everything that Christian goodness means.

When this rule is put positively, when we are told that we must actively do to others what we would have them do to us, a new principle enters into life, and a new attitude to others. It is one thing to say: ‘I must not injure people; I must not do to them what I would object to their doing to me.’ That, the law can compel us to do. It is quite another thing to say: ‘I must go out of my way to help other people and to be kind to them, as I would wish them to help and to be kind to me.’ That, only love can compel us to do. The attitude which says: ‘I must do no harm to people’ is quite different from the attitude which says: ‘I must do my best to help people.’<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Stott, J. R. W. (1985, p. 194).

<sup>9</sup> Barclay, W. (2001, p. 314-315).

<sup>10</sup> Barclay, W. (2001, p. 317-318).



- These apt remarks of Barclay summarize the meaning of the narrow gate and the narrow quite well!
  - The Kingdom of God and his righteousness, the Law and the Prophets mean life:
    - “I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say” (Jn 12:50).

#### Verse 13-14

- ❖ After Jesus has finished the main body of the Sermon on the Mount, he ushered this urgent call.
- ❖ **“Enter”** the Kingdom of God and live according to the law and the prophets. The small gate and the narrow road is the “Law and the Prophets.” It is the Golden Rule put into practice (Mt 7:12).
  - Newman and Stine comment: “In many languages one cannot simply say *enter* but must specify what one is to enter. In these cases translators can say ‘Enter life’ or ‘When you look for a path to follow for life, go through the narrow gate.’ Another way is to say ‘When you go into life, go in through the narrow gate.’”<sup>11</sup>
    - “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:20).
    - **“Enter through the narrow gate”** (Mt 7:13).
    - “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Mt 7:21).
      - The will of the Father = the Law & the Prophets.
- ❖ **“wide gate and the broad road”**
  - John Stott commented: “There is plenty of room on it for diversity of opinions and laxity of morals. It is the road of tolerance and permissiveness. It has no curbs, no boundaries of either thought or conduct. Travellers on this road follow their own inclinations, that is, the desires of the human heart in its fallenness. Superficiality, self-love, hypocrisy, mechanical religion, false ambition, censoriousness—these things do not have to be learnt or cultivated. Effort is needed to resist them. No effort is required to practise them. That is why the broad road is easy.”<sup>12</sup>
    - It is Christianity made easy.
  - An example of widening the gate and broadening the road is found in Matthew 19:3-9 and Matthew 5:27-32 about divorce and the certificate of divorce. This certificate was

<sup>11</sup> Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992, p. 203).

<sup>12</sup> Stott, J. R. W. (1985, p. 194).

used to break the seventh commandment and to annul the value of marriage as instituted by God. More examples will be given the paragraph about the application.

❖ **“Destruction.”** This equals to “not entering the Kingdom of Heaven.” The same thought is expressed in the final part of the Sermon on the Mount about the wise and foolish builders. “But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and **it fell with a great crash.**”

○ Jesus warned several times about the destruction:

▪ “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ **will be in danger of the fire of hell**” (Mt 5:22).

▪ “If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than **for your whole body to be thrown into hell**” (5:29, 30).

○ When the wide gate and the broad road is leading to destruction, why do so many people choose this way?

▪ Psalm 73 summarizes this well.

• “But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits. They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. They say, “How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?” This is what the wicked are like— always carefree, they increase in wealth” (Ps 73:2-12).

“If I had said, ‘I will speak thus,’ I would have betrayed your children. When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies” (Ps 73:15-20).

▪ The wide gate and the broad road are deceitful:

- “The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful” (Mt 13:22).
  - “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires” (Eph 4:22).
- ❖ **“The small gate and the narrow road.”** This is the Law and the Prophets, and the Golden Rule (Mt 7:12).
    - It is listening to the words of Jesus and putting them into practice (Mt 7:24).
    - This might involve persecution (Mt 5:11, 12; 5:44; 10:16–39; 11:11–12; 24:4–13).<sup>13</sup> “See also Mt 13:21; 24:9, 21, and 29.”<sup>14</sup>
  - ❖ **“Few.”** Christ is already preparing his disciples for the reality of the “making disciples.” Not many, but few will follow Jesus.
  - ❖ **“Life.”** Means eternal life and contrasts destruction. Life is not a reward but inherently connected with the small gate and the narrow road. Treading in the footsteps of Jesus is equal to finding life.
    - “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:6).

## Application

### General

- ❖ Praise Jesus Christ because he urged us to enter the narrow gate. He opened up the road to life, the communion with God. He will protect his disciples when they experience hardships and persecution.
- ❖ Praise our heavenly Father for he has given us wisdom.
- ❖ Praise God for the gift of the Holy Spirit who will guide us, while we are on the narrow road.

### Verse 12

- ❖ There are people, who are confident that they live a respectable life, not injuring and bothering others, and therefore they are confident that God will admit them into heaven.
  - Barclay commented: “It is perfectly possible for people to observe the negative form of the Golden Rule. They could without very serious difficulty so discipline their lives that they would not do to others what they did not wish others to do to them; but the only

<sup>13</sup> Carson, D. A. (2010, p. 225).

<sup>14</sup> Davies, W. D., & Allison, D. C., Jr. (2004, p. 700).

people who can even begin to satisfy the positive form of the rule are those men and women who have the love of Christ within their hearts.”<sup>15</sup>

Verse 13-14

- ❖ Barclay compares two attitudes (broad – narrow):
  - 1) It is the difference between *the hard and the easy way*.<sup>16</sup>
  - (2) It is the difference between *the long and the short way*.<sup>17</sup>
  - (3) It is the difference between *the disciplined and the undisciplined way*.<sup>18</sup>
  - (4) It is the difference between *the thoughtful and the thoughtless way*.<sup>19</sup>
- ❖ Within the context of the Sermon on the Mount the following observations can be made (examples):

<b>Wide gate &amp; broad road</b>	<b>Small gate &amp; narrow road</b>
“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery’ (Mt 5:27).	“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mt 5:28).
“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery’ (Mt 5:38).	“But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Mt 5:39).
“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy’” (Mt 5:43).	“But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (Mt 5:44, 45).
<i>You can serve both God and Money.</i>	“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (Mt 6:24).
“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to	“First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck

<sup>15</sup> Barclay, W. (2001, p. 319).

<sup>16</sup> Barclay, W. (2001, p. 321).

<sup>17</sup> Barclay, W. (2001, p. 322).

<sup>18</sup> Barclay, W. (2001, p. 323).

<sup>19</sup> Barclay, W. (2001, p. 323).

your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite" (Mt 7:3, 4).	from your brother's eye" (Mt 7:5).
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- ❖ Finding the small gate and the narrow road involves a change in character. This character is described by Jesus in Matthew 5:3-10.
  - The disciple of Jesus will be "poor in spirit," studying and listening to the word of God and to the teachings of Jesus and putting them into practice.  
The disciple of Jesus will mourn because of sin, injustice, unrighteousness, and mercilessness.  
The disciple of Jesus will be meek, especially for those who suffer (Mt 11:28-30).  
The disciple of Jesus hungers and thirsts for righteousness in the world and in personal lives of people and he will be merciful.  
The disciple of Jesus will be pure in heart (to be pure salt and a shining light).  
The disciple of Jesus longs for establishing peace, shalom, with God and among the people.  
The disciple of Jesus must be prepared to encounter persecution.
- ❖ Life means living in communion with God, in the present and the coming age.
- ❖ In applying these words, many examples can be drawn from the Book of Proverbs, which is a book of Wisdom.
  - "Wide gate and the broad road":
    - "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (Prov 16:25).
  - "The small gate and the narrow road":
    - "I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths" (Prov 4:11).
    - "The path of life leads upward for the wise to keep him from going down to the grave" (Prov 15:24).
    - "In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality" (Prov 12:28).
- ❖ The narrow road is:
  - the road of wisdom;
  - the road of the Holy Spirit;
  - Treading in the footsteps of Jesus.

Finally

- ❖ Michael Green wrote: “The *gate* and the *road*. That image (Mt 7:13–14) poses the question, ‘Have you gone through the gate? Are you on the road?’ You cannot get on to the road until you have gone through the turnstiles. And they are not roomy. No room for baggage, for pride, for irresolution. Enter! Notice how here, as so often in the teaching of Jesus, we are challenged to decide. There is no comfortable middle ground embracing most of us, and leaving on either side the very good and the very bad. How comfortable it would have been were that the case! But Christianity is not about being very good, or very bad, or very comfortable. It is about being in God’s kingdom or staying out. It is about allegiance to God, or rebellion. It is about being on the road that starts narrow but opens out into the life of heaven, or staying on the broad road of our self-centredness until it contracts to a dead halt in final destruction. An awesome choice. And we find that at the end of the Sermon we are not permitted merely to admire the teaching; we are challenged to bow to the preacher. **Have you entered in? Are you on the road?**”<sup>20</sup>
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<sup>20</sup> Green, M. (2001, p. 108-109).

Addition: The small gate, the narrow road, life, and Proverbs

### The promise of wisdom

(Proverbs 3:13-18)

- <sup>13</sup> Blessed is the man who finds wisdom,  
the man who gains understanding,  
<sup>14</sup> for she is more profitable than silver  
and yields better returns than gold.  
<sup>15</sup> She is more precious than rubies;  
nothing you desire can compare with her.  
<sup>16</sup> Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honor.  
<sup>17</sup> Her ways are pleasant ways,  
and all her paths are peace.  
<sup>18</sup> She is a tree of life to those who  
embrace her;  
those who lay hold of her will be blessed.

### The search for wisdom

(Prov 18:12-20)

- <sup>12</sup> "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;  
I possess knowledge and discretion.  
<sup>13</sup> To fear the Lord is to hate evil;  
I hate pride and arrogance,  
evil behavior and perverse speech.  
<sup>14</sup> Counsel and sound judgment are mine;  
I have understanding and power.  
<sup>15</sup> By me kings reign  
and rulers make laws that are just;  
<sup>16</sup> by me princes govern,  
and all nobles who rule on earth.  
<sup>17</sup> I love those who love me,  
and those who seek me find me.  
<sup>18</sup> With me are riches and honor,  
enduring wealth and prosperity.  
<sup>19</sup> My fruit is better than fine gold;  
what I yield surpasses choice silver.  
<sup>20</sup> I walk in the way of righteousness,  
along the paths of justice,  
<sup>21</sup> bestowing wealth on those who love me  
and making their treasuries full.

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