

# Persistence in Prayer & the Narrow Gate

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MATTHEW 7:7-23

## *Prayer to the Holy Spirit*

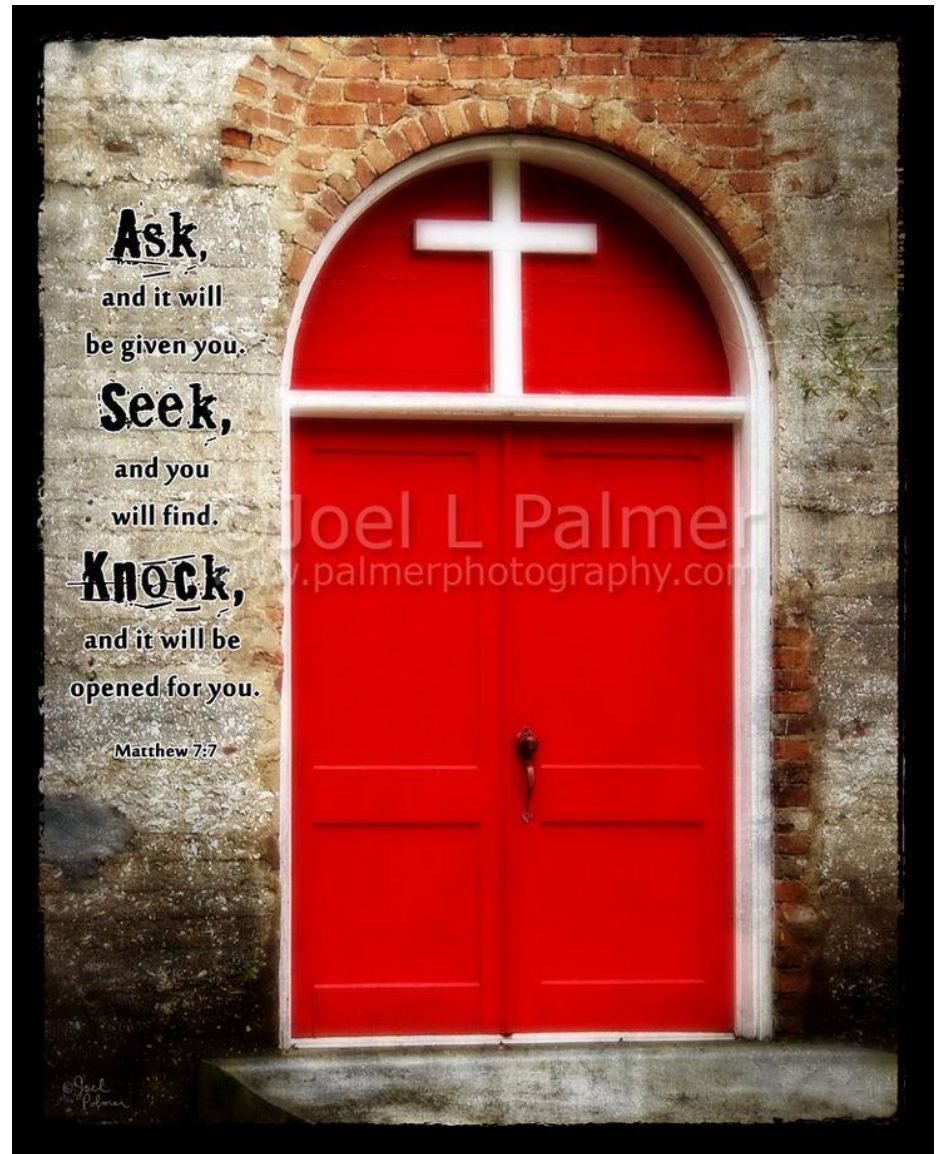
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**Heavenly King,**  
Advocate, Spirit of Truth,  
Who are everywhere present and fill all things,  
Treasury of Blessings, Bestower of Life,  
Come, and dwell within us;  
Cleanse us of all that defiles us,  
And, O Good One, save our souls.

# Ask, Knock, Seek

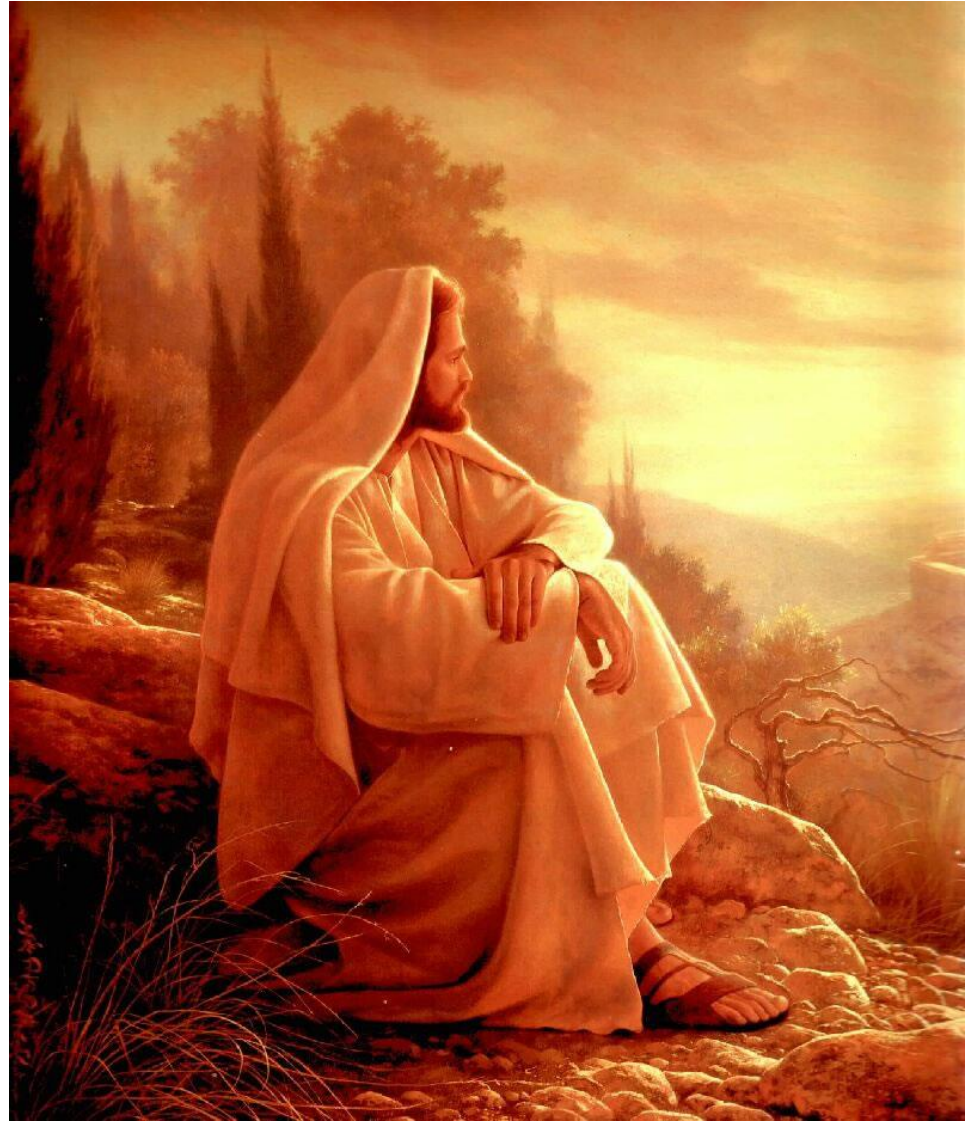
Mt 7:7-12

- ❑ Continual action implied
- ❑ God does not need to be convinced or nagged into a response.
- ❑ We persist because God has promised to answer. It's a matter of time.



# Every good father gives what is best

- ❑ Earthy fathers will not refuse their children the things they need
- ❑ How much greater is our Heavenly Father – he will not refuse to give what we need
- ❑ God always answers in His way, at the right time
- ❑ God gives what is best
- ❑ *Life examples?*





# What do we need?

- ❑ Food, shelter, work, friendship, community, security, health, peace, joy, strength and consolation
- ❑ To pray for the needs of others
- ❑ Prayer, meditation, reflection, Holy Scripture, Eucharist – the Bread of Life
- ❑ Need a relationship with God
- ❑ **The greatest gift of persistent prayer is GOD HIMSELF**



# The Golden Rule

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**“So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets” (Mt 7:12)**

While normally a negative statement (based upon not doing to others), **Jesus states it positively**



*“Do not do to others what you would not like yourself. Then there will be no resentment against you, either in the family or in the state.”*

*“Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”*

*“This is the sum of duty; do naught onto others what you would not have them do unto you.”*

*“No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.”*

*“What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellowman. This is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.”*

*“Regard your neighbor’s gain as your gain, and your neighbor’s loss as your own loss.”*





# The Narrow Gate

- ❑ Matthew 7:13-14
- ❑ Cities – surrounded by walls
- ❑ **Main Gates** – large and wide; with a wide road (level and smooth) leading up to them; used by merchants, travellers with animals and carts, the rich and wealthy
- ❑ **Narrow Gates** – for pedestrians and poor; roads leading up to them narrow and difficult (up and down)
- ❑ *Most people used main road and gates – easier*
- ❑ *What is Jesus trying to say?*





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# Enter by the narrow gate

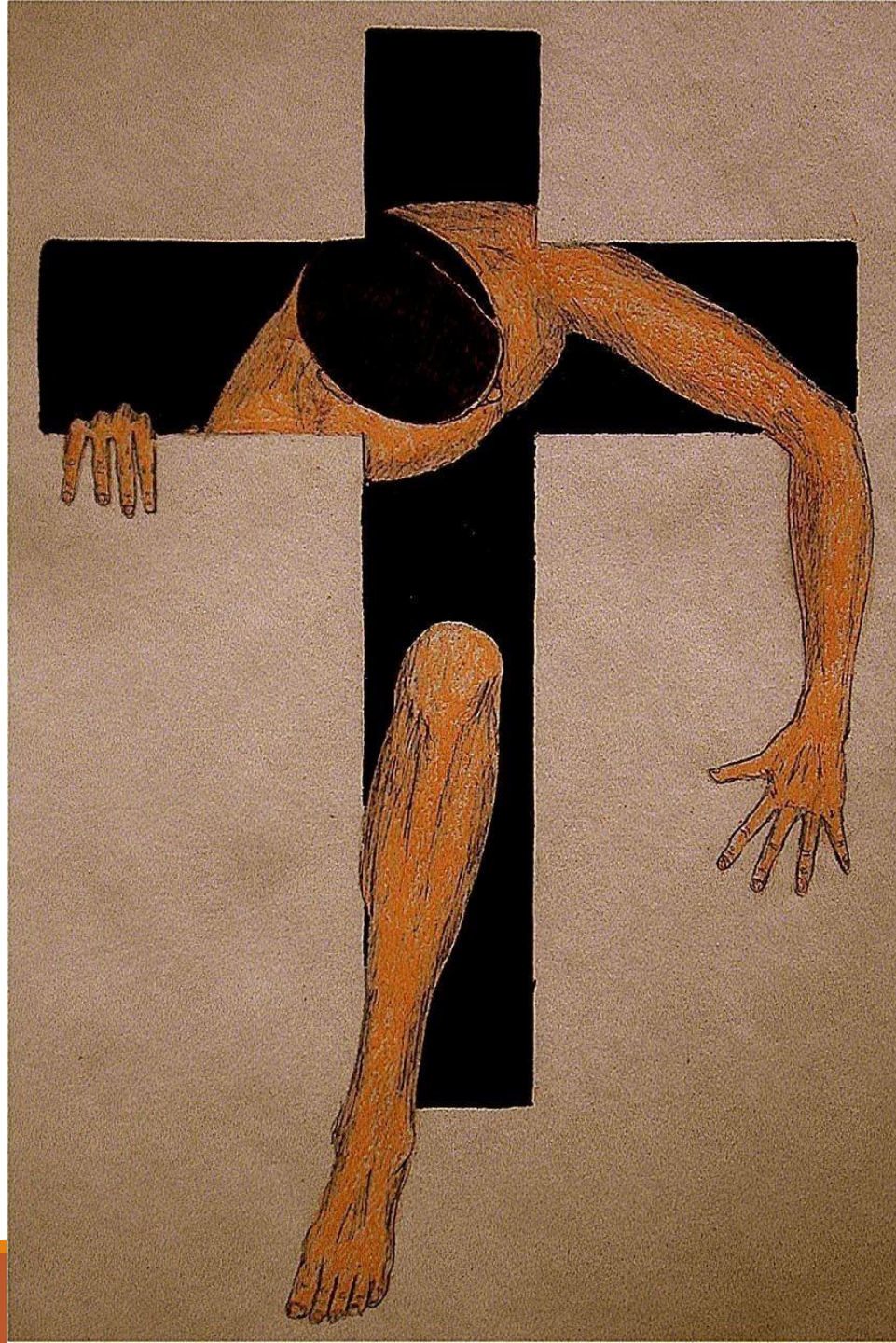
- ❑ **“ENTER”** – is an invitation. Jesus is inviting us into His kingdom.
- ❑ However, the road is difficult and the entrance is narrow. What is Jesus speaking about?
- ❑ **The road of discipleship is not easy.** Requires self-denial and carrying the cross. (See Mt 16:24). Need to be free from attachments.





- ❑ **The narrow gate** is the gate of repentance, death and resurrection...
- ❑ Not possible for us to enter on our own. Holy Spirit makes it possible...
- ❑ Jesus said, “For men this is impossible, but for God all things are possible” (Mt 19:26)
- ❑ **Jesus is the Gate** – Crucified and Risen from the Dead
- ❑ In Baptism – united to his death, resurrection and ascension



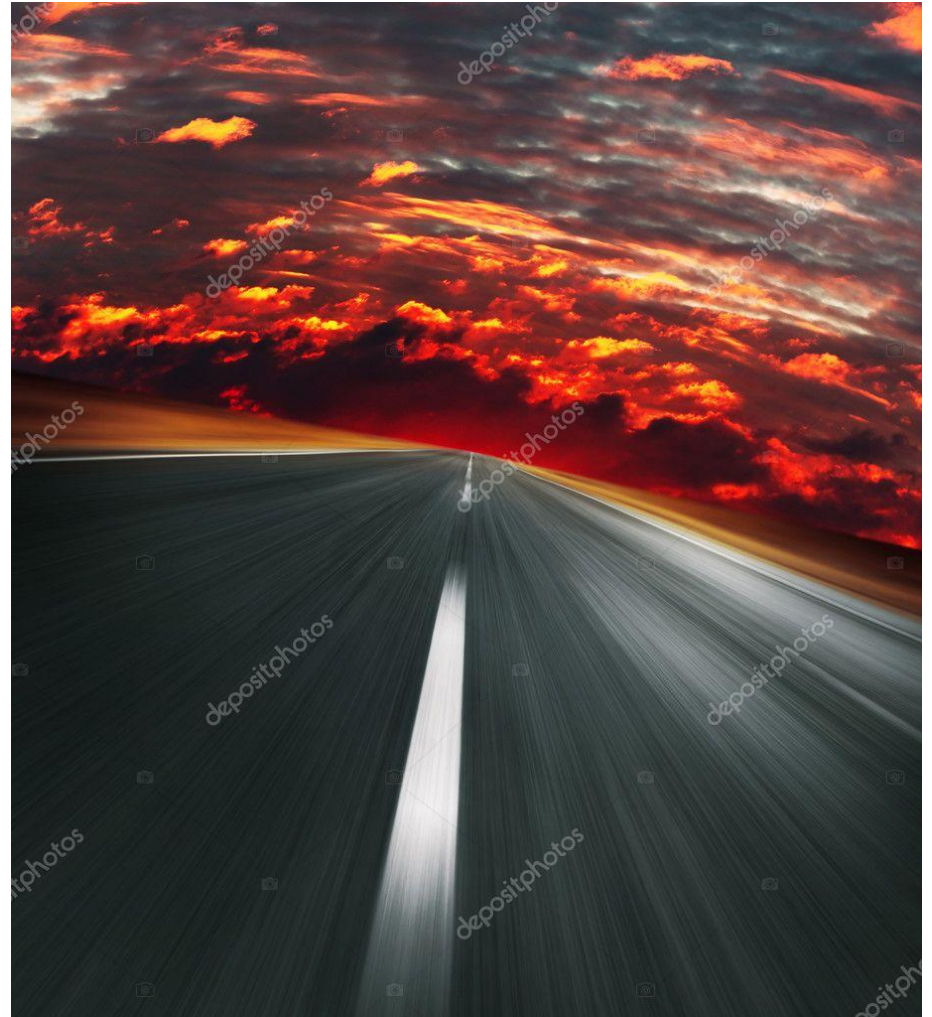






# The wide road and gate

- ❑ **Easy Road** – no self-denial required; no rules and restrictions; wealth and possessions; leisure and pleasure; power and prestige
- ❑ **Wide Gate** – Death without repentance and without God
- ❑ **Final Destination** – Hell and eternal damnation





# For reflection & consideration

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- ☐ Do I believe that God answers prayers?
- ☐ How would you rate your level of faith and confidence?
- ☐ How do I want to be treated? Can you list them?
- ☐ Based on your list, is there anything you would change with respect to you behaviour and actions? What do you need to stop doing and start doing?
- ☐ On which road are you travelling? The narrow one? The wide one? Sometimes one and sometimes the other?
- ☐ Are you ready to give an account of your life?
- ☐ Are you prepared at any moment to pass through the final gate?