

## **The Right Road and Prayer for Others to Find and Follow it Matthew 7:7-14**

A Vision has consumed and overtaken me this week as I have pondered and meditated these words of Jesus from his sermon on the mount. Now, for you to be able to picture in your own mind what it is that has been consuming me, simply think of every single person that you may have known or come across, or even seen, including on TV or any kind of media, newspaper, magazine, electronic or otherwise. With this in mind now, consider Jesus' word's when He said that only a few are going to find him, discover his way, enter it and follow him all the way through what he said was the narrow gate and along and all the way to the end of the narrow road that leads to life, eternal life that is – but only a few find it. Now think about that growing mass of people in the picture of your own mind whether you know them personally or not – few of them are destined for heaven, an eternity where every single being will have the ability to know one another!

There is a great seething mass of humanity being swept away in the great torrent heading for the wide gate and flooded with people broad road that leads to their eternal destruction. And there within the crowd are some of those who we know and love, spouses, children, grandchildren, other family, friends and loved ones- caught up with the great majority of people. And if this does not tug and pull mightily on your own heartstrings as a Christian believer, a dedicated follower and committed servant of Jesus Christ- then I don't know what ever will! Beginning with your nearest and dearest approaching a most destructive end- a Christ-less eternity!

Perhaps we would like to question even challenge Jesus on this one. "But...but my loved one my friend my dearest family member and neighbour, they are such 'Good People'. They've worked hard all their lives, made money, educated the kid's and given them many experiences of life. Good careers, jobs or business and investments. They've even given some away and volunteered in the community and served freely for no return to benefit others. They might even have been to church or the odd Church related activity.

I ran these words of Jesus past two such persons yesterday, the narrow and wide gate scenario along with the broad and narrow road that leads to life and one of them replied, "Well s%#t, I haven't found it yet." Which is due to no lack of trying by me.

So what can I do about this? Is there no hope?

Especially when any such individual is a willing part of this mass of humanity pouring through the wide gate out onto and along the broad road leading to destruction because, along with all the others in the majority it is by their own willingness, beliefs and doubt in Jesus that they are there and seemingly enjoying the trip in the rip because there are no restrictions, no moral standards, no absolute truth. Instead, feeling safe in the big crowd because there is an abundance of self-gratification and for all intents and purposes there is only one real God for the average kiwi atheist, and that is, themselves. And when you're God you believe you are free to live according to the nature of your own flesh, therefore, having no time for the things of the Spirit and in complete ignorance of the fact that you are really caused to move along with the masses, through the wide gate and along the broad road by the ruler of the air, the god of this world, the ultimate liar, thief, deceiver and destroyer himself, Satan.

How do we get someone out of the seething mass of people being swept toward the wide gate with the majority to move against the current and get out of that lifestyle and make a serious change, as in, "Look out, coming through. Get out of my way sinners, I'm making a break and heading for the narrow gate"?

It is never easy because it is like you only went for a paddle in the little waves at the beach you find yourself caught in the most powerful rip with everyone else who chose to ignore the warning signs and swim outside of the flags and so get caught in a mercilessly rip with a large crowd of others that sucks you way out into the sea, a rip that eventually spits you out to drown in the vast deep ocean. But even in a rip there is a way out if your willing to try paddling across the current. But you have to know and be willing how to do that and many don't or for whatever reason can't or unable. Hence, that is why we have surf life-savers at the beach. And do you know God has placed his very own life saving squad here on the earth to live and look out for each and every generation of people being swept out by a strong current en masse in the rip to their certain death.

Just like a life-saver sitting up high in one of those talk seat stands we too keep a watch on the crowd. And as we do we are often lead to begin wanting to help the ones we see in trouble. But not everyone wants to be rescued, especially when they go with the

crowd outside the flags. As self-confident and ignorant individuals who don't want to know you the life saver with Jesus' life saving words and how you've been saved yourself and trained by his surf life saving sainthood- the church. Due to their pride they would rather suffer and drown according to their own foolishness than be saved by Christ's Life-Saving Words and Power.

In spite of such persons not wanting to be rescued and saved- in our hearts we are to be and remain as life-savers, even in the face of such rejection.

So fellow members of the life-saving sainthood, this is how we do it according to Jesus' Word for us today. You start knock, knock, knocking on heaven's door (7:7). And when we ask, seek knock- we are to do it with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength of desire. We must really want what we pray for, says Jesus, and not only that. Knock, ask, seek means that we 'keep on at it' and never stop until we receive an answer.

Jesus says it twice, in two verses (7&8), to make his point of keep on asking, or better still, never stop asking, never stop seeking, never stop knocking but persist in prayer- never give up!

In these words Jesus has set before his hearers the way of life and the way of death. There is no other way, no midway approach or middle path you can travel because either it is the Highway to Hell you are on with the majority, or, the Road to heaven with the few- two ways, two destinations and two groups of travellers/swimmers! Jesus' words are here to confront us today -it's decision time. I say, firstly choose Jesus and then secondly decide to pray for others in this persistence persevering way.

To encourage you, who prayed and nurtured you into the kingdom of God when you were younger, or unknowing, even lost and on the wrong path? Who was it or who were they?

When we are personally saved, when we come to believe in Jesus Christ as our LORD and Saviour and are born again by the Holy Spirit. We then are commanded (v.12) to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, or in this case what they've already done, which is pray the next sinner into the kingdom of God.

I stand before you today as one who was prayed into the kingdom of God [and even specifically prayed into a particular church.] Amazing because like most unbelievers in the crowd you're not seeking after God. The last thing on earth you want to know, let

alone hear, is that you need to stop what you're doing and the way your living in order to lay your life down and follow Christ, especially as kiwi male trying to keep up your world-wide reputation of ignorance and unbelief. You don't want to let your side down. But that didn't stop various Christian Life-Savers specifically praying for both my family as a whole and for me as an individual to be saved- different people for over two decades.

These Christians went asking, seeking knocking on heaven's door for me, on my behalf. And what were they praying? That I should complete my education, enter a great career or find a good job, make lots of money to be able to continue travelling, or to buy a house and settle down, get married and have a family, fulfil my dreams and become an achiever in society and the world. No! The people who knew the truth prayed that I might be saved. Christians praying for unbelievers to be saved, just as they are, makes a difference in the life of the person or family they're praying for whether they choose to eventually respond and make a break for the kingdom of God through narrow gate or not. You do not stop praying for an unbeliever until either they are dead or you are.

So again, Who prayed for you? And now, who are you specifically praying for, or going to pray for. From today I would expect we will each have at least one more person to add to our prayer list or to put back on it because we have forgotten, been discouraged or become too busy. And as a result we have stopped interceding on their behalf to God through Jesus by the Holy Spirit's power - asking, seeking, knocking on heaven's door. God the father's heart is that all would turn to him. A loving heavenly Parent who is ready to receive any wayward man, woman, youth or child at any time up until their death.

Personally, in my own life in applying this I have found it helpful to pray with another for anything and everything, but also specifically for the unsaved whether it has been with my spouse KJ, a fellow elder and prayer partner Eoin, the Tuesday prayer group or the Wednesday Study Group. There is power in the prayers of a righteousness person that is multiplied when 2 or more gather together in the presence of God to agree on something on earth as it is in heaven. I will close with the words of the Apostle Paul. Brothers and Sisters, my hearts desire and prayer to God for... insert the person's name(s)...is that they may be saved. Rom 10:1