

Seekers At The Gate of Heaven Who Fail

- They Seek Casually Instead of Striving
- They Are Unprepared When the Door Closes
- Pride and Refusal to Submit to God's Will
- They Delay Obedience Until It Is Too Late

The Bible speaks of a strait gate and a narrow way, that lead unto life ([Matt.7:13–14](#)).
Jesus warns that many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able ([Lk.13:24](#)).

This is not because, God is unwilling to save, for He “**will have all men to be saved**” ([1Tim.2:4](#)),
but because, many seekers come, without submitting to God’s way.

- Some treat spiritual things, casually.
- Some are unprepared, when the door finally closes.
- Some are lifted up with pride, and refuse to bow to God’s will.
- Others intend to obey “someday,” but delay, until it is too late.

In this lesson, we will consider why some seekers fail, at the very gate of heaven,
and how we can learn, examine ourselves, and make sure that we strive to enter,
while the door of mercy is still open.

With this solemn picture before us, let’s first consider how some will fail, at heaven’s gate because...

I. They Seek Casually, Instead of Striving

To understand this danger, we must begin with Jesus’ own words, about...

A. The Narrow Gate, Requiring Earnest Striving

As Jesus travels toward Jerusalem, teaching in cities and villages, someone asked,

- “**Lord, are there few that be saved?**”

Jesus answers, by urging each hearer, to...

- “**Strive to enter in, at the strait gate:**
for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” ([Lk.13:24](#))

Explanation:

- “**Strive**” means, to agonize, to struggle with serious effort.
- “**Seek**” means, to desire or wish for.
- Many will wish to be saved, but only those who strive in obedience, will enter the strait gate.

Paul uses the picture of a competitor in a contest,
showing that effort must be according to the rules.

- He said, “**And if a man also strive for masteries,**
yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.” ([2Tim.2:5](#))

Explanation:

- “**Strive for masteries**” means, to compete in a contest.
- “**Strive lawfully**” means, to follow the rules.
- In spiritual things, we must seek salvation, according to God’s revealed will, not our own ideas.

If a child goes missing, a loving parent does not search casually or part-time.
Every energy, is poured into finding that child.

In the same way, those who truly desire heaven, will not be casual seekers.
Many will fail at the gate, because they never move, from wishing to striving.

Having seen the Lord's call to earnest striving,
Let's now consider how...

B. Casual Seeking, Leads to Spiritual Neglect and Divided Loyalty

At the close of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasts two builders:

- He said, "And every one that **heareth** these sayings of mine, **and doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:
²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." ([Matt.7:26-27](#))

Explanation:

- "Heareth... and doeth them not" means, listening without obeying.
- A casual hearer builds on sand; when trial and judgment come, his\her life collapses.

The writer of Hebrews, warns against drifting away, from the word that has been heard.

- He said, "Therefore we ought to give the more **earnest heed** to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should **let them slip**.² For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;
³ How shall we escape, if we **neglect so great salvation**...?" ([Heb.2:1-3](#))

Explanation:

- "Earnest heed" means, careful attention.
- "Let them slip" means, drift past, like a ship passing a safe harbor.
- "Neglect so great salvation" means, not openly fighting against, but failing to give proper attention.

A garden that is never weeded, will not remain healthy.

In the same way, a soul that hears truth, but never tends to it, will soon be overrun with sin and forgetfulness.

Casual seekers neglect their souls and will find themselves, unprepared at the gate of heaven.

Having considered the danger of casual seeking,
let's now look at a second great reason, why some seekers will fail, because...

II. They Are Unprepared, When the Door Closes

The Bible plainly confirms that,

A. The Door Will Surely Close, and No Preparation Is Possible Afterward

From Jesus' words in [Luke 13](#), He warns,

- "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door...
²⁶ Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. ²⁷ But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." ([Lk.13:25-27](#))

Explanation:

- These people had contact with the Lord's teaching, yet the door closed while they remained workers of iniquity.
- Knowing about Jesus, is not the same as obeying Him.

The inspired writer, reminds us of what comes after death.

- He said, “it is appointed unto men **once to die**, but **after this the judgment**.” ([Heb.9:27](#))

Explanation:

- “**Once to die**” means, one earthly life (no do overs).
- “**After this the judgment**” means, not another chance, but a reckoning.

A student cannot take the test, after the exam is over.

In the same way, no one can “catch up” on obedience, after death or after the Lord’s return.

Many seekers will fail, because they plan to prepare later, not realizing that later, may never come.

Unpreparedness often comes, because people hear God’s word, but do not do it.

B. Hearing Without Obeying, Leaves the Soul Unprepared

Jesus clearly states,

- “Not every one that **saith unto me, Lord, Lord**, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will** of My Father which is in heaven.” ([Matt.7:21](#))

Explanation:

- “**Saith unto me, Lord, Lord**” means, confession without obedience.
- “**He that doeth the will**” means, the obedient one will enter.

Jesus said,

- “**He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words**, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him, in the last day.” ([Jn.12:48](#))

Explanation:

- “**Receiveth not my words**” means, refuses or ignores His teaching.
- His word will be the standard in judgment.

A person may collect many recipes, yet never cook a meal.

Likewise, one may hear many sermons, know many verses, and still be unprepared, because he never does the will of God. **Many will fail at the gate of heaven, for this reason.**

Having seen the danger of unpreparedness,

let’s now consider a third reason, that seekers fail, because of...

III. Pride and Refusal, to Submit to God’s Will

First, we must notice how plainly the Bible warns that,

A. “Pride Goeth Before Destruction

- **and an haughty spirit before a fall.**” ([Prov.16:18](#))

Explanation:

- “**Pride**” means, self-exaltation, thinking more highly of self, than we ought.
- “**Destruction**” and “**fall**” means, ruin, downfall.

Jesus teaches that the humble will be exalted, and the proud humbled.

- He said, “the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner.
¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other: for every one that **exalteth himself** shall be abased; and he that **humbleth himself** shall be exalted.” ([Lk.18:13-14](#))

Explanation:

- “**Exalteth himself**” means, lifts himself up.
- “**Humbleth himself**” means, lowers himself before God.
- God justifies the humble, not the self-righteous.

Pride not only exalts itself—it also keeps people, from submitting to God’s way.

We must see that,

B. Pride Refuses, to Submit to God’s Righteousness

Paul speaks of Israel’s failure to be saved, because of pride.

- “For I bear them record that they have a **zeal** of God, but **not according to knowledge**.
³ For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves, unto the righteousness of God.” ([Rom.10:2-3](#))

Explanation:

- “**Zeal... not according to knowledge**” – means, enthusiasm without truth.
- “**Establish their own righteousness**” – means, trusting their own way, instead of God’s way.
- Pride keeps them, from submitting to God’s plan.

Peter speaks plainly, about God’s attitude.

- He said, “...and **be clothed with humility**: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.
⁶ **Humble yourselves** therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you, in due time.” ([1Pet.5:5-6](#))

Explanation:

- “**Be clothed with humility**” – means, wrap yourselves in lowliness of mind.
- “**Humble yourselves**” – means, willingly bow under God’s rule.

A full cup cannot receive more water.

Likewise, a heart full of pride, has no room for God’s grace.

We come now to a fourth and final reason, of why seekers will fail, because...

IV. They Delay Obedience, Until It Is Too Late

We must see how dangerous it is to delay, as...

A. Planning to Obey “Later”, Hardens the Heart

When Paul reasoned with Felix, he put off obedience.

- The Bible says, “as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix **trembled**, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a **convenient season**, I will call for thee.” ([Acts 24:25](#))

Explanation:

- “**Trembled**” – means, he was deeply moved.
- “**Convenient season**” – means, a time that would suit him better.
- Scripture does not record that this “convenient season” ever came.

The Hebrew writer urges, immediate response.

- “While it is said, **To day** if ye will hear His voice, **harden not your hearts...**” ([Heb.3:15](#))

Explanation:

- “**To day**” – means, this present time.
- “**Harden not your hearts**” – means, do not resist, delay, or ignore God’s call.

Like a hand that forms calluses, a heart that keeps resisting, grows less sensitive to God’s call.

We should remember that,

B. The Lord’s Coming is Sudden, and Today Is the Day of Salvation

Jesus compares His coming, to a thief in the night.

- He said, “**Watch** therefore: for ye know not what hour, your Lord doth come. ... ⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour, as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.” ([Matt.24:42-44](#))

Explanation:

- “**Watch**” – means, be spiritually awake and alert.
- We do not know the hour; so therefore, delay is foolish.

Paul quotes this same idea and applies it to salvation.

- “...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” ([2Cor.6:2](#))

Explanation:

- “**Accepted time**” and “**day of salvation**” – means, the present opportunity God gives.
- We are never told to obey “tomorrow.”

The wise man urges quick obedience.

- “Remember **now**, thy Creator, in the days of thy youth...” ([Ecc.12:1](#))

Explanation:

- “**Now**” – means, not after a life of sin, but while strength and opportunity remain.

A traveler who reaches a gate after it closes may knock, but cannot enter.

So it will be with all who delay obedience.

V. Some Closing Thoughts

We have considered seekers at the gate of heaven who will fail.

From Scripture, we have seen:

- Some will fail because, they seek casually, instead of striving.
- Some will fail because, they are unprepared, when the door closes.
- Some will fail because, of pride and a refusal to submit to God's will.
- And others will fail, because they delay obedience, until it is too late.

In each case, the tragedy is not that God was unwilling to save, but that people did not respond to His word, in the way He has revealed.

We learn that entrance into the strait gate is:

- For those who strive according to God's will.
- For those who prepare now, not later.
- For those who humble themselves, accepting God's way of righteousness in Christ.
- For those who act today, not waiting for a more "convenient season."

Even a child can understand this simple truth: God wants us to listen, to trust, and to obey—now. The same Lord who warns of the shut door, also invites us lovingly, to come in while there is time.

- "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." ([Matt.11:28](#))
- "the Spirit and the bride say, Come... And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." ([Rev.22:17](#))

The Bible teaches that saving faith is shown in obedient response:

- Hearing the gospel of Christ ([Rom.10:17](#)).
- Believing that Jesus is the Son of God ([Jn.8:24](#)).
- Repenting of sins ([Acts 17:30](#)).
- Confessing Him before men ([Rom.10:9–10](#)).
- Being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins ([Acts 2:38](#); [Gal.3:26-27](#); [Acts 22:16](#)).
- Walking faithfully with Him ([Rev.2:10](#)).

The Lord is still saying "Come".

- The gate is still open.
- The only safe time to obey is today.