

# Luke 13:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

## Analysis

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Jesus warns: 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' The word 'strive' (Greek 'agōnizesthe,' ἀγωνίζεσθε) means agonize, fight, exert intense effort—where we get 'agonize.' The 'strait gate' (Greek 'stenēs,' στενῆς, narrow) contrasts the wide gate leading to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). Salvation requires earnest pursuit, not casual interest. The warning 'many...will seek to enter in, and shall not be able' indicates external religious activity without genuine faith fails. Seeking without striving, desiring without committing, won't save. Salvation is by grace through faith, but genuine faith strives to enter.

## Historical Context

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This answered the question 'Lord, are there few that be saved?' (v. 23). Jewish assumption was that all Israel would be saved except apostates. Jesus shatters this presumption—many seeking salvation won't attain it because they seek wrong things or in wrong ways. The narrow gate requires humble repentance and faith, which pride resists. The wider religious path—ritual observance without heart transformation—is crowded but leads to death. Early Christian preaching emphasized 'strive'—Paul used athletic metaphors (1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 3:12-14). The striving isn't to earn salvation but to genuinely pursue and embrace it, fighting unbelief and sin.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What does 'strive to enter' teach about the intensity and seriousness required in pursuing salvation?
2. How does the warning that many will seek but not be able enter correct presumption about automatic salvation?

## Interlinear Text

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Ἄγωνίζεσθε εἰσελθεῖν διὰ τῆς στενῆς πύλης· ὅτι πολλοί

Strive to enter in at the strait gate for many  
G75 G1525 G1223 G3588 G4728 G4439 G3754 G4183

λέγω ὑμῖν ζητήσουσιν εἰσελθεῖν καὶ οὐκ ισχύσουσιν

I say unto you will seek to enter in and not be able  
G3004 G5213 G2212 G1525 G2532 G3756 G2480

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Peter 1:10** (Parallel theme): Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

**Hebrews 4:11** (Parallel theme): Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

**Ezekiel 33:31** (Parallel theme): And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

**Luke 21:36** (Parallel theme): Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

**Proverbs 21:25** (Parallel theme): The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

**John 6:27** (Parallel theme): Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

**Romans 10:3** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Ecclesiastes 10:15** (Parallel theme): The labour of the foolish wearieh every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.

**John 7:34** (Parallel theme): Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

**Colossians 1:29** (Parallel theme): Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.