

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. We sincerely hope you will be especially aware of God's presence as we worship. If this is your first time to worship with us, here is what you can expect:

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship, you are free to connect with God in whatever biblical way that expresses your heart's adoration. Some may remain seated, others stand, kneel, clap or lift their hands.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

"Fruit or the Prune" Matthew 7:7-23

1. **ASK, SEEK, KNOCK** Matthew 7:7-11

- To **ask** means to **admit** we have need of God; admit we are poor and helpless without Him.
- To **seek** means we are **willing** to put into action a quest for His blessings.
- To **knock** means we are **ready** to be close to Him.

Revelation 3:20 "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me."

- God knocks at our door, and He wants us to knock on His!
- God gives only good gifts.

2. **THE GOLDEN RULE** Matthew 7:12

- Since Jesus added the Golden Rule at the end of His lesson on prayer, perhaps He is also saying, "*treat others the way I treat you.*"
- Serving God really is a huge treat!

3. **THE TWO GATES** Matthew 7:13-14

- Examples of our two choices in life ...
- The wide gate leads to a wide and well-worn path that many have traveled.
- The skinny gate is hard to find -- you must be seeking for it.

John 14:6 "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

4. **TWO TYPES OF FRUIT** Matthew 7:15-23

- Untrue servants of God can produce only bad fruit.
- Some try to fool people with "fake fruit", but God knows their true heart.

- Branches or trees that don't produce good fruit are cut down (pruned) and thrown into the fire!
- A true good servant of God produces only good fruit.
- Only those who do the will of the Father will enter heaven.
- Doing the will of the Father apparently is NOT doing good works or even great works (i.e. prophecy, casting out demons, performing miracles). It is not in small or great achievements. It must refer to something else ...

The answer is ... the **only** thing that matters ...
the **only** thing you need to do is know God well!

How do we do that?

Ask, seek, knock.

You will find Him because He is waiting for you!

"You are as close to God as you want to be"

WHAT WILL YOUR ACTION PLAN BE?

In order to keep from being pruned or cut down when we face God someday, we must realize knowing Him and growing in Him is our only worthwhile aim in this life. That is His will and the reason we exist. It is why He made us.

The sermon notes from June 22 and today stated, "*You are as close to God as you want to be.*" This is a very serious thought.

1. Where are you right now in your relationship to Christ?
2. What are you doing to know Him and be close to him?

It is up to you ... He is waiting to be more to you than ever before!

"DIGGING DEEPER"

For personal or small group study

Week of July 20, 2008

QUICK REVIEW: Which point or scripture from Matthew 7:7-23 most challenged, confused, or caught your attention in this week's message? Why?

TODAY'S FOCUS

1. How do you spend your prayer time? Are you only asking for things, or are you seeking to know God by knocking on His door several times a week or every day? What differences do you see between asking and seeking and knocking?
2. Royal Rangers and Boy Scouts know Matthew 7:12, The Golden Rule, which essentially states ... *treat others the way you want to be treated*. What kind of treatment have you had this week that you did not like?

According to this scripture, do you think it is okay to keep bad feelings for someone who has harmed you? Does this make it hard to follow the narrow way?

3. What types of "fake fruit" can you identify in your life? What good things do you do that are out of habit only, but don't engage your heart for Jesus?

GETTING THE POINT

1. Do you sometimes confuse good works with good fruits? Do you agree, the only "good work" that matters is the work of knowing God intimately?

What good things do you do that are a true reflection of the heart of Christ in you?
2. Matthew 7:21 seems to be a very key verse to this whole passage. It indicates that there will be many who think they know the Lord, but in fact, do not. How do we keep from making this same scary mistake?
3. The key answer to the question ... *how do we not make the same mistake?* ... is also found in verse 21 -- only those who do the will of the Father. But if the will of the Father has little to do with good works, or even great ones, to what is Jesus referring?