

Lk. 13:22-30 "The Narrow Door"

For the Children: A few years ago we went to the "World Expo" in China. We joined some very long lines and waited "ages" to be allowed into see the displays put on by the various countries of the world. But they would allow only a limited number to enter at any one time. Then you'd have to wait for the next group to go in. It was a long, slow process. The Lord also limits the flow into His Kingdom. There is only one Door in – through faith in Christ. That Door is only open for a while – not forever. How important it is to believe in God's Son when He gives you opportunity to do so. **Questions:** What is more important than knowing how many people will enter heaven? In what way is the entrance to heaven "narrow"? How can we "strive" to enter?

Introduction:

First Point: A Change of Question

- 1) A Question of How Many: A man asks the Lord if only a few are going to be saved. The danger in the question is that man often tries to pry into God's hidden counsel; also, sinners love to turn salvation from a personal matter into an abstract, theological question. However, the question needs to be answered, for those with a false security often like to think nearly everyone will be saved
- 2) A Question of Striving: The Lord therefore makes the issue one of *whether* one is saved, or not. He does this by stating that one must "strive" to enter through the narrow door. "Strive" implies the whole-hearted action as of a competitor in an athletic contest. It does not mean we are saved by our own striving. But we do need to be joined to Christ by faith – and faith involves a strong desire to follow Jesus
- 3) Many Saved, Many Excluded: It is also made clear that many are saved – both Jews and Gentiles from all corners of the globe. This "remnant" is uncountable, but many are also excluded. There is no ground for false security

Second Point: A Narrow Gap

- 1) The Narrow Door: The "narrow door" represents the fact that salvation is only in Christ (Jn. 10:7,9); and we benefit from Him only by faith. Faith leads us on a narrow road that many reject because it is demanding. Rejecting error and a worldly life is demanding. So is the rejection of our own works
- 2) The Narrow Time: There is also a narrow gap in time during which we may use this "Door." We have only this life. Moreover, in God's "secret will," there is also a point at which He may harden the hearts of those who reject the Gospel. We must respond "today." This is pictured by a parable in which a Householder eventually shuts the only door into His House. Those who have refused to use the door try to get in by pleading. The Householder refuses. He does not know where they have come from i.e., where have they come from, if not by the only door He allows? They must depart as "evildoers" (Ps. 6:8)
- 3) The Wrong Way: The latecomers try to appeal to a superficial contact with Christ. It is not enough. They must have been "striving" to enter through Him, not just seeking to get in some other way

Third Point: A Reversal of Expectations

- 1) In or Out: The whole passage has a sharp contrast between those who are reclining in joy at the Lamb's table in heaven, and those who are "weeping and gnashing their teeth" in torment, rage, and bitter frustration, excluded in hell. Worse, they see others in heaven on whom they had looked down e.g. the Gentiles. Similarly, those in heaven will be aware of the wicked in hell (Is. 66:24), though this will only lead to further praise and gratitude
- 2) The Great Reversal: There will be "surprises" over who is "in" and who is "out." Many who were humanly expected to be in heaven will turn out to have been hypocrites. Many who were thought unlikely candidates for heaven will receive mercy by turning to Christ. This is not said to undermine genuine assurance, but to warn against "carnal security." We must be sure that we are truly "striving" to enter through Christ

Conclusion: