

Heaven: Full or Few?

Luke 13:22-30

Key Verse: Luke 13:24 “Many...will try to enter and not be able to.

Purpose: To urge people to enter salvation’s door today.

Introduction:

1. Someone asked Jesus, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?”
2. Jesus did not answer the question, but He replied to the question.
 - a. The question was theoretical and speculative.
 - b. Jesus made the answer personal.
3. His answer jolts us and sobers us.
4. Some will not enter the kingdom of God even though they want to.
5. Seekers will be rejected (28)
 - a. In fact, some will be thrown out.
 - b. God will actively oppose some and use force against them.
6. Those rejected seekers will experience ultimate frustration— “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (28).
7. How then do we get into the kingdom of God?

I. Through a narrow doorway (24)

A. The struggle of self-surrender.

#Paul Rees, venerable spiritual spokesman at age 82, describes the problem of “self-hyphenation”—self-love, self-esteem, self-image, self-fulfillment. He fears the danger of self-preoccupation.

1. We find it difficult to let go—surrender the self.
2. We fight to hold onto the power of self-determination.
3. We are to hand back to God the self handed to us by the Creator, but it is not easy.
4. The narrow way is a hard demand unsoftened by God’s word.
 - a. If we wish to follow Christ, we must leave self behind (Luke 9:23).
 - b. Paul wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ” (Galatians 2:19).

#One lady, upon hearing God’s demand of self-surrender, worried, “Why if I did that I would be at God’s mercy.”

B. The narrow way is wide open.

1. Self-surrender is the door to freedom, not a cruel requirement.
 - a. God will not take advantage of our surrender.
 - b. He does not long to make us miserable.

Walter left home. His mother didn't know if Walter were indifferent, sick or dead. She never gave up hoping. Every night she opened the door wide open and called out into the darkness, "Come home, my boy."

2. Self-surrender frees us from sins.
 - #Why do we get angry and blow a fuse? Because someone has crossed the self.
 - #Why do we lie? Because we think it will bring some advantage to the self.
 - #Why are we impure? Because we think it will provide pleasure to the self.
 - #Why are we jealous and envious? Because someone is getting ahead of the self.
3. These are outer sins springing out of the unsundered self.

II. Before it is too late (25)

- A. A time limit; opportunity is limited.
- B. The door of opportunity will one day be closed.
- C. The door is open today.

You have heard stories of how people intended to get right with God, but died tragically without God. There is truth in those accounts. But others pass the last door of opportunity while yet living—so hardened are they to the call of God.

III. By knowing the right person (27)

- A. This is not favoritism, but relationship.
 - #People, job hunting or hoping to climb the ladder of success, say with an acknowledgment that all is not fair, "It all depends on who you know."
 1. Jesus says people of His day will try to convince God by saying, "We ate and drank with you. You taught in our streets."
 2. Acquaintance with God not proximity to God saves a person (26).
 - a. Familiarity and relationship are not the same.
 - b. Physical closeness and sympathetic understanding are different.
 3. "We know about you, God." But God says, "I don't know you," and "Where are you from?"
 4. When Jesus comes we are to be like Him—
 - a. We are to be recognizable.
 - b. Is your life recognizably like Christ's?
 5. Family relationship won't count.
 - a. The Jews wanted their heritage to count in their favor.
 - b. Jesus said, "You'll watch your relatives and the prophets go in and you'll be thrown out."
- B. "Make every effort to enter" (24).
 1. Strive = wholehearted action; agonize; great exertion of energy.
 - # The Greek word was used for competing in athletic events.
 2. Immediate action.

Greek term is in the present tense.

Conclusion:

1. Who gets into the kingdom?
2. Jesus answers: "Not whom you might think."
3. The principle of reversal.
4. Those who are last and least in the world's assessment will be first in God's thinking.
5. Not those who succeed in living life as they wish, but those who humble themselves in repentance and self-surrender.
6. God invites you to enter His kingdom now.