

# Luke 13:22-30

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Date: 06 January 2015

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[0:00] I've got my own glasses. Well, let me add my welcome, and it's a pleasure to be here today. I think I was here about maybe about the first year that you actually started this,! Three or four years ago now? Something like that?

They've been going a while. But it's a pleasure to be here, and you might want to keep your Bibles open there to page 105, because I'll refer back to the Scripture as we go along. That way you can make sure that I'm not making it up and it's really coming out of your Bibles.

You know, as I was listening, as we were reading this, so often when I hear passages like this, I am absolutely amazed at the way Jesus can teach such eternal truths in the simplest of ways.

I mean, His analogies are powerful. His metaphors are illuminating without exception. And as we look at this passage here in Luke 13, I think we should note that this is a period of time when Jesus' ministry was at its most popular.

In fact, back in chapter 12, verse 1, we're told that the crowds who were gathering to hear Him preach were so large you couldn't put a number on them. We're also told that as people moved around in the crowds to hear Him speak or to see Him better, they trampled on one another.

[1:16] And also, to put this into context, we should note that the first line of our text says that Jesus was making His way to Jerusalem. This is referring to an earlier verse back in Luke 9, which says that when the days grew near for Jesus to be taken up to heaven, He set His face toward Jerusalem.

And that statement back there in Luke 9 marks the beginning of the last six months of Jesus' life. Jesus knows that He is on His way to Calvary.

And it's important because it tells us that He does know that as He travels and teaches, that it's only a few short weeks before He will be hanging on the cross and dying. So this is the context in which we start our passage here in verse 22, where we have this wonderful picture of Jesus moving to the towns and the villages, teaching and healing and people flooding in from all over the countryside to hear Him and to see Him.

Now, as Jesus talks, it was not unusual for people to ask Him questions. And here in verse 23 is one of them, Now, this is an understandable question and probably not an uncommon thought to have.

And there may be several reasons why this person actually asked this question. I mean, for one, the two previous parables suggested that the kingdom of God would be small. This would have made a Jewish person very uncomfortable.

[2:42] They had been taught from the start that all Jews would be in the kingdom of heaven. And as Jesus talked, it was obvious that this was not the case. Or maybe they heard Jesus' teaching and thought He demands so much of us that no man or woman could ever accomplish this.

Will there actually be anybody at all in heaven? But still, whatever the person's motives were, Jesus focuses on the question at hand. And note that it says, Someone asked, and He said to them.

Jesus wants to address the whole group who is there, and not just the one person who asked the question. And what He does for us here is He takes a speculative question on the nature of salvation, and He turns it into a very pointed challenge about personal salvation.

And Jesus begins His response to the question with His challenge. Make every effort, He says, to enter through the narrow door. Now this is interesting, but anyone who wants to know the number of the saved only needs to refer to the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus says, For the gate is narrow, and the way is hard, that leads to life.

And those who find it are few. And Jesus is saying there in Matthew, that to follow Me is not an easy option. In fact, it is the hard option. And you will not see many people on the narrow road that leads

to eternal life, but you will see many, many people on the wide road that leads to destruction.  
[ 4 : 14 ] And what Jesus is saying here in Luke, in our passage, is strive. Make every effort to enter the narrow door, because whatever the number of those who are saved in the end are, there's no concern of yours.

Your concern is to be sure that you are a part of that number. Make sure that you are one of those few who are taking the narrow road that leads to life.

Now this word here for strive, and we have translated it as strive or make every effort, is the same word that Paul uses later on to talk about an Olympic athlete who puts all his effort into his events to make sure that he wins.

And in that context, some might say it sounds like we can earn our way through the door by the things we do. However, we're told that it is by grace alone that we are saved, and Ephesians 2 tells us that we're not saved by good works, but that we're saved for good works.

And we also know the only basis that we have for salvation is what the Lord Jesus accomplished for us on the cross. So, when Jesus issues this challenge to strive, he's not saying that we can earn salvation.

[ 5 : 24 ] Jesus is saying that salvation is not always easy. And we have to resist the pressures of the world that are all around us, that are trying to hold us back. You see, everything in this world lies to us.

Even our own very natures lie to us. Our nature tells us that to love God will take away our happiness and rob us of our joy. Now you see, Jesus is simply laying down a challenge to strive against a sinful heart while everything in this world stands against a pure heart.

Everything is working towards my taking on all those things which are unkind and untrue and unnecessary. And as awful as it may seem, our natural inclination, mine, yours, everyone's, is to turn away from God, is to turn away from His Word, but it is His Word that makes us wise for salvation.

And you see, the thing we should all be thinking is that salvation, to the utmost degree, is offered to all men and women.

You see, everything on God's part is ready. The plan is in place. Jesus is ready, He is willing, and He is able to receive sinners, but sadly, sinners are not willing to come to Christ.

[ 6 : 43 ] So in the end, it is few who are saved. So the Lord exhorts us here to strive, to agonize, to enter through the narrow door.

You see, there is a door that God has opened to humanity. It is the door to enter into God's presence, and He has made a way for men and women to have eternal life and share eternity with Him.

And Jesus says that it is the responsibility of all mankind, the responsibility of every individual man and woman to make sure that they are inside the door. See, this picture of the narrow door is entry into God's presence.

It's the way of salvation that God has opened up to humanity. It's a door that only opens from the inside, and Jesus says we must strive to enter through it.

So Jesus begins His response with a command. But there is also a warning here in the second half of verse 24. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter that they will not be able.

[ 7 : 45 ] It's kind of an anomaly to our thoughts. Why is that? That people will seek God, but they will not be able. Well, the answer is there in verse 25.

It's because when the master of the house rises to shut the door, the time for salvation will be over. The Lord Jesus is telling us here that there is a time coming in the future when the door will close, never to be reopened again.

Now, it is true that when you die, the door closes, but what Jesus is referring to here is the second coming, what is known as the end of the age. And Jesus is saying that there is an event coming in everyone's future that will shut the door once and for all, and it will never be reopened again.

You see, there is a day coming when the long-suffering of the patience of the Lord will have ended. The day of salvation will be over, the door of mercy will be closed, and all the people of God are going to be shut in, and everyone else is going to be shut out.

You see, the meaning of these words is really impossible to misunderstand. Once the door is shut, there is no possibility of a second chance for those who are not on the inside of the door when it's shut.

[ 9 : 03 ] And anyone who is under the illusion that God is so forgiving or so loving or that Jesus is so kind or compassionate that will be offered a second chance needs to look seriously here at these words.

If Jesus had wanted to teach that there would be a second chance, this would have been a perfect opportunity for him to do it. But he does it, does he instead? He says exactly the opposite, that many will want to get in, but on that day they will not be able to get in.

Many of his heroes would have been Jewish. They would have been well-versed in the Old Testament stories, and I'm sure some, if not many, of them thought, man, this sounds an awful lot like Noah and the Ark, because it does.

You remember, Noah was a preacher of righteousness. He told the people over and over and over again. And the people could always say, Moses, you're, I mean, Noah, you're crazy.

Just leave us alone. And they mocked and they scoffed and they turned their back on him and finally the day came when the Lord shut the door to the Ark and the rain began.

[ 10 : 09 ] And as the rains lashed down upon their heads, they beat and they pounded on the side of the Ark begging to be let in, but their cries went unheeded.

They were too late. And notice here in verse 25 that those who are shut out they too were expecting to be let in. Open the door, sir, they say.

No, says the master of the house, I don't know you and I don't know where you've come from. But hold on a second, sir, you preached in our streets. Don't you remember we ate and we drank with you?

Well, maybe you did, says the master of the house, but I still don't know you. Away from here, you doers of evil. See, ultimately, there are only going to be two classes of people.

Those who are on the inside and those who are on the outside. And for those on the inside, we see here it's going to be a time of joy and happiness and feasting.

[ 11 : 10 ] They're going to be reclining at the tables with generations of believers from all times. You see, the true offspring of Abraham are those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's not about your family tree or your status or whether you go to church or not. It's about believing in and trusting in the Lord Jesus. And in verse 29, we see that in the kingdom of God, there are going to be people from everywhere.

They're going to come from the east, the west, the north, the south, Jew, Gentile, slave, free, men, women, all living together in perfect harmony. All brothers and sisters living together in Christ and they will all be reclining around the table enjoying their time.

The Lord's people are going to be shut in for eternity with Christ and with the saints and with the angels all together in the kingdom of God never ever having to deal with sin again.

Can you imagine the conversations we're going to have or the questions we'll be able to have answered. If you like music, can you imagine the songs we're going to sing together? But for those who are still on the outside, Jesus says there in verses 25 and 26 that they will plead earnestly!

[ 12 : 31 ] But their pleas will be answered with this solemn rejection, I do not know you. Depart from me, you doers of evil. That command to depart from me is exclusion from the presence of God.

And the Bible tells us that it is in the presence of God where all pleasures are found. And the presence of God is where all joy is located.

And the presence of God is the ultimate and the eternal experience of joy and pleasure and to be excluded from that will be the ultimate experience of separation and isolation.

And verse 28 says that for those people who are still on the outside and when the door is shut, there will be weeping and wailing as an expression of their grief. They will gnash and grind their teeth as an expression of their anger and their rage.

You see, we must note here that Jesus never saw dying in this life as the end. He never saw us lying in a hole in the ground rotting away. No, Jesus always sees us after death in this life as alive with thoughts and with feelings and with emotions in heaven or in hell for better or for worse.

[ 13 : 54 ] And here in verse 28 we have one of the most horrific and tragic statements of eternal frustration and eternal loss found anywhere in the Bible. Personally, just note how those who are still shut out call him Lord.

That's surprising me at first but that at the moment of the return of the Lord Jesus, no one will be in any doubt that he is anything but Lord God.

And those who said that he was only a moral teacher or a prophet or a religious leader or just a man will realize on that day that they never honored him for who he was as the Lord God. We're told too that on that day, the day of the Lord's return, that every eye is going to see him and every knee will bow to him and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. So it shouldn't surprise us when we see these people here calling him Lord. But you see what this is saying to us, this is a revelation of the awful fact that men and women will see on that day what is right.

[ 15 : 05 ] But it's going to be too late for them to be saved. You see, there is a time coming when sinners will repent. There's a time coming when sinners are going to believe in Jesus.

They're going to feel sorry for their sins. They will pray. They will even long for heaven. But it's going to be too late. There will be many people who wake up on that morning and realize that their homespun, self-made ideas about God and eternity and reality were all wrong.

And as they wake up, they will find too that they are now believers in the Lord Jesus. But it's going to be too late. The door will have been shut. Because you see, on that day, they will know him as Lord, but they will never know him as Lord, the Savior.

They will only ever know him as Lord, the Judge. And you know, as we look at this passage, I think it should help us set straight in our minds some of the things around us.

Money, pleasure, importance, status, they're all held in great value. While praying, striving to enter the narrow door in the love of Christ, are despised and ridiculed and held very, very cheaply.

[ 16 : 29 ] But you see, the salvation is really an issue of God's grace. salvation is a gift.

And it has nothing to do with your status in this life. From the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, the invitation to receive salvation is open to everyone.

And the door, the narrow door, it is open right now, but someday it will close. If you can hear my voice, then I can assure you that the door is still open.

But it may close tonight or tomorrow or ten years or a hundred years. Well, we do not know, but it will close. And as I began, I pointed out that these words that we are looking at are actually the words of Jesus himself.

And you know, the one person who talks so often about hell and about judgment is Jesus. The other Bible writers use it and they write about it, but the one person who expands on it, who expounds and who preaches it to us and warns us over and over and over again is the Lord Jesus.

[ 17 : 50 ] And I think this is because Jesus knew that one day he was going to return in the twinkling of an eye. And on that day, he has been appointed by God to be the judge of all humanity.

And Jesus wants us to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that he has already come. And the reason that he came the first time was to prepare us for that day of judgment by coming the first time to be our Savior.

You see, Jesus loves you. Jesus loves mankind. In fact, Jesus is the most loving person who has ever walked the face of the earth. And it is because of this great love for you that he is so emphatic, that he is so clear when he teaches about the consequences for the person who finishes this life on the outside of the door.

Because you see, if you trust in the Lord Jesus as your Savior, he will save you from that judgment to come. So in closing, I just want to urge you, really, hear and listen, heed the words of the Lord Jesus.

Strive. Agonize. Make every effort. Be sure to be sure that you enter through the narrow door.

[ 19 : 19 ] Let me pray for us. Let me pray. Thank you.