

The Exclusive Doorway of Salvation

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[0:00] Let us pray. Lord, I pray that you will help me this morning to proclaim your word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

! Holy Spirit, open the hearts of every hearer gathered under the preaching of your word today. That you may cause us to hear the gospel of Jesus, the very words of life, and that you will write your holy laws on our hearts.

All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, the incarnate word. Amen. We are again in the gospel of Luke this morning.

In fact, our primary gospel text will be in Luke from now through Lent all the way to Easter. And it might seem like we're jumping from one section of Luke to another.

For example, this week we're going to be in chapter 13, verse 22, beginning in verse 22. But next week we'll actually be in the same chapter, but we'll be going through the earlier verses.

[1:12] But I want you to remember this about Luke's goal in writing this gospel. His goal is that his readers will understand the gospel and come to know that it is for all people, not only Jews.

And that the gospel of Jesus Christ is a trustworthy account on which we can stake our lives and eternity. So we are going to be this morning in Luke chapter 13.

I encourage you to open your Bibles. If you don't have one, there should be a Bible in your pew. We're actually going to just be in verse 22 to 30 this morning.

Time will not allow us to cover verse 31 to 35. In this section of Luke, this part of the gospel, what I mean by in this section, I actually mean beginning in chapter 13 all the way to chapter 17.

This section, Jesus is mostly interacting with the Pharisees and the religious leaders of Israel. But through these interactions, he's teaching his disciples about his kingdom.

[2:32] These interactions happened as Jesus was moving towards the end of his mission. He's traveling now at this point to Jerusalem to be the lamb who was slain.

And such is the case here in this passage. This interlocutor, this person that came up to Jesus, we're told, we're not told who he is. We're not told what camp he comes from.

But he asks Jesus this. Lord, will those who are saved be few? Now that is an important question for the religious community of that age.

In fact, it's a question that religious communities of every age ponder. And many today ask the same question.

Who will be saved? On what basis will they be saved? How many will be in heaven? And just as we don't know the identity of this questioner, we also don't know his motivation for asking.

[3:40] He might be one of those people who would like to engage in theoretical debates, speculating about the end times, as a hobby. He might consider himself as one with a passport to heaven already.

Or maybe he's one on the outside looking in, wondering how he might get his passport stamped. So he might get access. No matter the motive of this questioner, one thing is undeniable.

The question he asks is an important one. So much so that Jesus, in answering, addresses everyone within his hearing when he gives the answer.

But notice that Jesus seems to bypass the question entirely in answering it.

He seems to be going deeper than the questioner was even willing to go. Jesus says to the man, The word strive there, in the Greek, the word is agonizomai.

[5:11] From which our English word agony comes from. The word means to contend, to fight, to struggle. As one in an athletic competition.

Straining with every last energy to win the prize. Or as one wrestling an adversary. You've seen the Olympics.

You've seen the race. You know, any competition. At the end. Just about to finish. They've already been spending the energy.

But even at the end. It seems like they don't have any more to give. They are striving. Agonizing. Straining. Striving. To make it. That's the picture that Jesus wants us to see here.

That's the picture the word evokes. Strive to enter through the narrow door. The emphasis in Jesus' command.

[6:12] It's being painted for us here. About who may enter into this kingdom. Remember that Jesus in the Sermon of the Mount. Touched on this very topic. When he said in Matthew 7 verse 14.

For the gate is narrow. And the way is hard. That leads to life. And those who find it are few. The gate.

Or the door. Is narrow. And many seek. Many. Seek to enter. And will not be able. Here.

In this. Statement of our Lord. And in this answer. Here is the summary. Of the exclusivity of the gospel. That gospel speaks of one way.

To enter into God's kingdom. Jesus says. I am the way. The truth. And the life. No one. No one.

[7:11] Comes to the Father. Except through me. Jesus also says in John 14. Jesus also says in John 10. He says. I am the door. If anyone enters.

By me. He will be saved. Our Lord is quite clear. About this. He's quite clear.

About the way. To heaven. It is exclusively. Only through him. And we also. Must be clear. About this gospel.

That we proclaim. The moment. That we start to say. There are other ways. To God. Or many ways. To God. We have departed.

From the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. And sometimes. The tendency. To deviate. From that.

Exclusivity. Of that message. Is very subtle. But we must never compromise.

[8:09] The exclusivity. Of Jesus. As the only way. To the Father. I know. It's hard to hear. That there is only one way. The world.

Has always. Hated. The gospel. And those who believe. And proclaim it. For that very reason. Here. In lies. The problem. Of fallen humanity.

And this is why. There are many. Who seek to enter. And will not be able to. Because they're going. By it. In the wrong way. They're going through.

The wrong door. They're trodding. On the wrong path. Verse 25 to 27. Makes. Makes this clear. It would be good. For us to understand.

Jesus is. Short parable here. In this. In these verses. It would be good. For us to understand this. In the context. Of Jesus's. Primary audience. You know.

[9:05] You see. The Jews of those days. Especially the Pharisees. They. Thought. And they taught. In their synagogues. That the Jewish nation.

Itself. Is the way to God. They. They. Look at Isaiah's prophecy. In Isaiah 25. On this mountain.

The Lord of hosts. Will make for all peoples. A feast. Of rich food. Isaiah says there. A feast. Of well aged wine. Of rich food.

Full of marrow. Of aged wine. Well refined. This feast is. As Isaiah prophesied. Is for all peoples. It will be said. On that day. Isaiah continues.

Behold. This is our God. We have waited for him. That he might save us. This is the Lord. We have waited for him. Let us be glad. And rejoice. In his salvation. So. Jewish.

[10:01] Nation. At this time. Recognized. That this. Great salvation. Of God. Is for all peoples. But they assumed. That it would be true.

The nation of Israel. They will even acknowledge. That a few Gentiles. Might make it. But they can only do so. Those few Gentiles.

That will make it. Who can only do so. By observing. Jewish. Customs. The Jewish law. The Jewish tradition. They saw that.

They thought that their lineage. And their religious. Adherence. Is the door. Through which. One may enter. Into God's kingdom.

Some of them. Have even started to teach. At this time of Jesus. The second temple. Time. They began to teach. To teach. That. Only. Unblemished Jews.

[11:02] Will be saved. So not only. Is the lineage. Important. But they started. Think to themselves. That being law keepers.

Being religiously. Faithful. Is the way. Through which. They may get into God's kingdom. So when Jesus says. Many will. Try to get in.

But few will enter. They might have agreed. When Jesus said those words. They would have agreed. But they fail to see. Jesus' meaning. Behind those words.

What Jesus is saying. Is that. I am the true Israel. I am the only righteous. And unblemished one. I am the door.

Through which you can. Through whom. You can enter into God's kingdom. And he says. He fleshes it out. So that they will understand. In verse 25 to 27.

[11:58] Jesus turned the assumptions. On its head. In these verses. Jesus describes. The day of judgment. The day of the Lord.

On this day. Many will come. Jesus says. To the door. After it has. It has. It has been shut. They will assume though. Despite the fact.

That the door has been shut. That they have VIP standing. That they can get. That can get them in anyway. They will knock at the door. Jesus says. Lord open to us. Then he will answer.

He will answer you. I do not know. Where you come from. It will be too late. The door has been shut. In this parable.

The master of the house. Is Jesus himself. When he comes. At his second coming. And he will answer. Those who assume. That they will gain entry.

[12:55] I do not know. Where you come from. And they will protest. What do you mean. You don't know us. Didn't we eat and drink. In your presence.

Didn't we hear. You teach. In our streets. Didn't we hear. Every Sunday. The word of God. Preached. Weren't we baptized.

In the church. Did we not sit. At the table of the Lord. And partake. Of his body and blood. Like the Jews.

Who claim. Abraham. Isaac. And Jacob. Some will join them. On that day. And say. I come from. A long line. Of Christians. My granddaddy. And daddy. Was a preacher.

My mama. Was a prayer warrior. They will say. But Jesus words. For them. All. Will be. I tell you. I do not know. Where you come from.

[13:50] Depart from me. All you. Workers of evil. This is an indictment. On all who think. The status. In God's kingdom.

Is gained. By family heritage. Or religious achievements. Notice. Notice. In. The words of protestation. Of those who were shut out.

We heard your teaching. Jesus. They will say. We had intimate fellowship. With you. Over a shared meal. They will say. Now.

These two things. Are. Seem to be important markers. For those who will be. In God's kingdom. Hearing Jesus. Is teaching. Fellowship.

At the table. Of the Lord. But the difference is. These people. Upon hearing Jesus. Have not received. The message. They heard.

[14:46] All right. But they didn't receive. His message. Hearing that does not lead. To doing. Does not get you. Entrance into God's kingdom. Remember the parable.

Of the sower. Jesus explained. That the good soil. That is representative. Of true believers. Are the ones who. Having heard.

The word. With an honest. And good heart. Hold on to it. And by enduring. Striving. Produce fruit. Later.

In the same chapter. Jesus will. Will say. To his disciples. My mother. And my brothers. Are those who. Hear. And do. The word of God. Hear.

And do. The word of God. This is the only. Family trait. That Jesus recognizes. So this day.

[15:41] Of judgment. That's described there. When the door. The day. The door. Is shut. This day. Will be a dark. And solemn day. Verse 28.

Jesus continues. There will be. Weeping. And gnashing. Of teeth. When you see. Abraham. And Isaac. And Jacob. And all the prophets. In the kingdom of God.

But you yourselves. Passed out. Just like. In the days. Of Noah. When God. Shut the remnant. Few. Into the hawk.

And destroyed. The world. The world. In the floods. Of judgment. Jesus is saying. To his hearers. That includes. You and I. This morning. Jesus is saying.

The hawk. Of salvation. Is Jesus himself. Those who have come. Into him. Will. Along with the patriarchs. And the prophets.

[16 : 37] Who spoke. Of the coming. Of their savior. Those who come. Into this hawk. Of salvation. Will be saved. But those. On the outside. Will weep. Bitterly.

And gnash. Their teeth. The language. Gnashing of teeth. Conveys. A state of rage. And despair. But it will be too late.

But remember. This morning. The warning. Of our Lord. Strive. To enter. Now. While the door. Is open. Now. Unless you think. That striving here. Means to enter. By your own power. And effort. The striving. Jesus calls us to.

Is repentance. That has always. Been the message. Of God's prophet. Remember. John the Baptist. The last of the Old Testament. Prophets. He said.

[17 : 33] Bear fruits. In keeping with repentance. And do not begin. To say to yourselves. We have Abraham. As our father. John the Baptist.

Words. Echoed. Now. To us. As well. Bear fruits. In keeping with repentance. Do not begin. To say to yourself. I have so and so.

As my father. I go to church. This many times. A year. I'm a member. I'm a member of this. Ministry. Bear fruits.

In keeping with repentance. That's the striving. That Jesus calls us to. The words of God. The words of God.

Are consistent. We have. The warning. The warning for Israel. And for you. As you sit here. Hearing.

[18 : 31] God's word today. The warning is the same. Turn to Jesus. Repent. Of your sins. Put no stock.

In the flesh. In your works. In your achievements. In your status. Put no stock in them. Come in. As a beggar.

And as one who is destitute. Because you are. I am. There is no else. In you. Any other. Door. Or way. You are trodding on. Is the way. To eternal death. The way of life. Is true. Jesus Christ alone. But here's the good news.

Brothers and sisters. The way. Is open. The door. Is wide open. In fact. Everyone. Has access.

[19 : 30] To it. That's. That's. The message. Of the gospel. God is no. Respector. Of persons. The message. Of the gospel.

Might be. Exclusive. In that. It is only. Through Jesus. That we may enter. But the invitation. To enter. Is universal. The invitation.

Is for. Everybody. Jesus says. In verse 29. And 30. People will come. From east. And west. From north.

And south. And they will. Recline. At table. In the kingdom. Of God. And behold. Some are last. Who will be first. And some are first.

Who will be last. As. As. Described. In. In. Isaiah's. Picture. Of.

[20 : 24] The end time. Feast. In Isaiah 25. All peoples. Will be at that. Banquet feast. All nations. Are welcome. To the banquet feast. Of the Lord. And all.

That will enter. On that day. Will enter. On one basis. And one only. Faith. Faith. Faith. In the person. And work. Of Jesus Christ.

So I invite you. To entrust yourself. To him today. In the words of. Bishop Ryle. He says this. That earth. This earth. This world. Is the only place. In God's creation. Where there is. Any infidelity. What he means by that. Is. Any unbelief.

He says. Hell itself. Is nothing. But truth. Known. Too late. There is no unbelief.

[21 : 25] In heaven. But you know. There is no unbelief. In hell. Either. All will know. On that day. That Jesus. Is the way.

The truth. And the life. Just as he said. But it will be too late. To make a decision. At that point. Now. Is the time.

You have. To make a decision. For Jesus. Tomorrow. Maybe too late. But. The invitation. The invitation.

Is for all. Brothers and sisters. Now. Many. Who have come. To trust in Jesus. Will be in. For surprise. On that day. As well. Jesus says.

The last. Shall be first. And the first. Shall be last. When we get to heaven. We will see. Some people. Given.

[22 : 25] Higher honors. Than others. And we. We will be surprised. That's what Jesus. Is saying here. You will see those people. You're like. I've never heard of his name. I don't know.

Who she is. But they. Have been faithful. Holding on to God. Faithful in. Proclaiming. Proclaiming the gospel. Faithful.

In living out. Their faith. In the world. Bearing witness. To who Jesus is. Without acclaim. Without notoriety. Without fame. Many that we think.

Are last. Will be first. The commendation. For us then. And I. I say this again.

In the word. Of. The words of J.C. Ryle. The recollection. Of this passage. Should help us. To set. A right. Estimate. On things. Around us.

[23 : 22] That is the warning. Money. Pleasure. Rank. And greatness. These things. Occupy.

The first place. In the world. Today. Praying. And believing. Holy living. And knowing Christ. Are the things.

That are despised. And ridiculed. And held. Very cheap. In the world. Today. There. But there is a change. Coming one day.

Jesus says. The last. Shall be first. And the first last. And the warning.

For us is. That we should be prepared. For that day. And for that change. So are you striving. Within you.

[24 : 15] To war. Against sin. Or have you given. Into the flesh. The world. And the devil. Are you ready.

For the day of the Lord. When he comes. To shut the door. On that day. Will you be shut in. In the heart of salvation.

Will you be at the banquet feast. Of the Lord. Will you be on the inside. Or will you be shut out. Let us pray.

Oh gracious father. Thank you for your son. Who is our righteousness. And safety. We thank you. That in him. We are saved.

And made citizens. Of your heavenly kingdom. Having received. Christ Jesus. As Lord. May we live. In him. Rooted. And built up.

[25 : 19] In him. Strengthened. In the faith. As we were taught. And overflowing. With thankfulness. In our hearts. Give us grace. Give us the grace.

Of your Holy Spirit. We pray. That we may believe. Your word. Proclaim to us today. We pray Lord. That if there are those. Who have yet to come. To you. In repentance.

That they may throw. Themselves. On your mercy. This morning. Knowing that you are ready. And able to save. All those who call on your name. Lord.

We pray that you will help us. To bring glory. And honor to your name. In all that we do. As you confirm us. To the image of your Son.

Jesus Christ our Lord. It is in his glorious name we pray. Amen.