

Left Outside Forever

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Date: 15 April 2018

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn together now to Luke chapter 13, looking mainly at verses 22 to 30, but we'll also take in the next passage from verse 31 to the end of the chapter because they're very much connected in the theme as the theme runs through these two passages.

There are some passages in the Bible that sometimes we wish we didn't have to preach on because they're not easy to preach on, neither are they easy to hear the message that is given to us in them.

And this is certainly one of them because our topic for today, as it comes from this passage, is the topic of being left outside and left outside forever.

In other words, the state of the lost as against being found inside the safety that Jesus and salvation brings to us. I remember a couple of years ago or so in Livingston picking up some items that were quite heavy and having to go underneath the area the shops are in.

In other words, from outside into the doors that are used for the delivery of goods to the shops. And once you get in there, all it really is is a whole mass of concrete corridors, passages, and you can get to the various shops through that in order to deliver goods to them without having to go through the actual shopping center upstairs.

[1 : 3 3] And as I was trying to find the shop that I was going to pick this stuff up from, having been given some directions by those in the shop, and I'd parked the car outside of the shopping center, all of a sudden the fire alarm went off.

And safety doors started to close within those passages. And I can tell you, I was in a real panic. Because in my mind, I didn't know whether this was real or not, whether the fire alarm was a fire alarm for a real fire or just a drill, but the doors were closing.

And the panic and my state of mind, I immediately thought, what if I'm trapped in here and there's a real fire and not many people know I'm in here?

And then I tried a few doors that were closed and then I came to one, double doors that actually opened, and fortunately made my way up the steps and outside.

Now, it was actually not a real fire. I wish somebody had told me in advance, but I didn't know that. And just imagine if that kind of situation was intensified and it was real, and it couldn't get out, and it lasted forever.

[2 : 5 4] And that's what this passage is dealing with. Jesus actually saying to people who heard him preach, who saw his miracles, who were with him as he traveled from place to place.

And yet he's saying to them, to some of them, this is how it will be for some. They will come to the door and it will be shut, and they will plead for the door to be opened, and it will never open.

It's shut forever. Now, the door isn't specified in this passage, but we can take it for sure that it means the door into salvation.

The whole passage is about salvation and Jesus offering salvation and being the Savior. And the door into salvation is one that he urges us to strive to enter, because it's going to come to some that they will want to enter one day, and it will be closed, and it will never open again.

So, the door is really central to the passage, and so we can look at it in three ways. It talks first about the narrow door.

[4 : 09] And it talks secondly about the closed door. And thirdly, I want to speak a little about the open door, in the sense in which the entrance to salvation is still open, and it's particularly open to you today who are hearing the gospel.

The narrow door, first of all. Now, here's a man who came to Jesus as he was on his way through these towns and villages and teaching people. Someone said to him, Lord, will those who are saved be few?

And Jesus said to them, Strive to enter through the narrow door. Now, you notice there, one said to him, Will those who are saved be few? And then Jesus said to them. He didn't just answer this man, this individual himself.

He answered in a way that took account of everyone who was listening. This was actually the wrong question to ask at that moment. And the answer of Jesus shows that this was the wrong question to ask.

And sometimes that's what we're like. We sometimes ask the wrong question. Sometimes by way of evading the real issue, we ask the wrong questions. We may be interested in certain things that are on the periphery of what is really important and fail to ask the most important questions.

[5 : 29] So here's a man who came with the wrong question. We don't know what his motives were. Maybe he'd been listening. Maybe he was responding to what Jesus was saying in the previous verses where he spoke about the kingdom of God being like this mustard seed that was sown and then grew into a large, large tree.

Maybe took his question from there. Will those who are saved be few? And Jesus is saying, that's not the question you should be asking. So Jesus replies and says, strive to enter through the narrow door.

He asked the wrong question, but he got the right answer from Jesus. And the right answer of Jesus very often just alters the perspective in such a way that the person answering the question realizes, oh, that's not the right thing to ask, and now I'm being corrected.

That's how it is for this man. That's how it is for the crowd that are listening to him. Because he's saying, strive to enter into this, through this narrow door. This door into salvation, you have to strive to enter it.

It's a narrow door. You know what it's like when you come to, if you go through a turnstile, especially the kind you find at a football stadium, for example, where you've got a revolving kind of gate, and you have to actually push it, or it opens to let you through one at a time, after you've paid your entrance fee, whatever it is, and you haven't paid, if you don't have the right way, it won't open.

[6 : 59] It actually stays stuck. It stays locked. Now, you try and go through one of these very narrow turnstiles with a large backpack. You can't do it. It's too narrow. You need to drop the backpack.

You need to go through with as little as possible if you want to get through successfully. And the Bible is full of that sort of emphasis, where it's saying, strive to enter through the narrow door.

It's saying, really, in other places, there are things that you've simply got to let go of. There are things that you can't carry with you through the door into salvation. You can't carry your unforgiven sins.

You can't carry your self, your pride, your insistence that you want to live life you want to live. All that sort of stuff that belongs to our natural state of thinking.

What he's saying is, strive to enter through the narrow door. He's really saying, remember the door is narrow. You can't carry the baggage of your unsaved life with you.

[8 : 02] And it is saying, strive to enter. In other words, he's really emphasizing for these people who are listening to him. This is so important. He's saying, you've got to strive to get through that.

You've got to do everything possible to get through that narrow door, to get through the access to salvation. You have to give it to the issue. You have to give it to the issue. You have to give it to the issue. You have to give it to the issue.

You have to give it to the issue. It's just too important otherwise to lose out on. And so he's saying, strive.

Make every effort. That doesn't mean that it's the striving and it's the effort itself that wins us salvation or entrance into heaven.

That's not what he's saying. He's not saying that by our own deeds and by the amount of effort we put into it, God will accept us and that will be us through the door and we'll be safely on the other side.

[9 : 02] He's not saying that at all. The Bible is quite clear, of course, that your entrance into salvation and ultimately to heaven does not depend on how much effort you put into it depends on the work of Christ.

That's the effort that bought the salvation into which this door leads us. But that's not to say that because Christ has done that and because Christ has achieved salvation, that little effort is required on our part to enter through that narrow door.

This is Jesus, remember. This is the Lord himself who knows the situation best of all. And when he's saying, strive, when he says to me, strive to do this, then I have to think, that is the Lord who's telling me something so important that I cannot ignore it or if I do, I do it at my peril.

Strive to enter the narrow door. Which brings us to the closed door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door saying, Lord, open to us. Then he will answer you, I do not know where you come from.

[10 : 22] Then you will begin to say, we ate and drank in your presence and taught in our streets. But he will say, I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me.

The door, the narrow door, the entrance to salvation is going to be closed. When will it be closed? What is the point at which the door will close?

Well, it closes when the master gets up, when the owner of the house gets up and shuts the door. And that's really an image of Christ's return, an image of Jesus, as it were, getting up from the state that he's now in, in heaven and coming back to this world, as the Bible amply says elsewhere, to judge the world.

And at that point, the door will shut. And it will not be a fire drill or a practice session such as it was in Livingston that day.

This is the real thing. When he actually gets up, when he comes back to this world, when he comes as the judge, when he comes as the king, when he returns, the door to salvation will be shut.

[11 : 36] The door that's presently open, as we'll see in a moment through the gospel, that door is going to be firmly shut. And it's going to be shut when he himself comes.

And the pleading that you see there is pointless. That's one of the very sad things about it, isn't it? That this pleading from the other side of this closed door once he has risen and shut the door, then you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door saying, Lord, open to us.

Just imagine if I'd been left in that place in Livingston underneath the shops and all these doors closed and it was really an emergency. Just imagine the panic with which I had banged on those doors.

And if they hadn't opened, then that would be it. Well, that's very small scale compared to the panic and to the grief of heart that will be experienced by people when the entrance to salvation is shut and they realize my opportunity is gone.

The door is now closed. I can't get in, but I will try and I'll plead. And so what they're saying is, Lord, open to us. Lord, open to us.

[12 : 51] There is panic on their part. They're pleading with the person on the other side of the door. The Lord who has come and shut this door, they're pleading to be allowed entrance. The Lord is saying, I do not know where you come from.

Of course, He knew where they came from, literally. He knew exactly where they were from. He knew what they were like. He knew the kind of people they were. What this is really saying to us is, the Lord, by saying this, is saying, you don't belong to my people.

I have no kinship with you. You're not in my family. It's my family that come to be with me on the safe side of this door. I don't know you. You don't belong to them. And so they actually turn and use another argument.

But we ate and drank in your presence and you taught in our streets. But He will say, I tell you, I do not know where you come from.

That's really very significant and very solemn too. What they're saying is perfectly true. He did teach in their streets. That's what He was doing actually at the moment that He was telling of this closed door.

[14 : 12] There were people listening to it, listening to His teaching. And what He was saying to them was, the fact that you hear my teaching does not of itself guarantee your salvation.

The fact that you recognize my teaching doesn't actually in any way give you a ground of salvation. You see, these were people who had so many privileges.

They heard Jesus. They saw Jesus with their own eyes. They listened to what He had to say. They saw Him working miracles. They had these huge privileges.

But not even these privileges great as they were actually provided salvation of themselves. You're a privileged people today. What a privilege to belong to a gospel church.

What a privilege to have the gospel freely available to you. What a privilege to have access to your Bible anytime you wanted. What a privilege to know God's people in your community.

[15 : 12] What a privilege to know the history that you have as a congregation, as a church. What a privilege to know people who can guide you on the way through life. Look at the privileges in your lives, the gospel privileges, the covenant privileges we have.

Do they themselves provide us with certainty of salvation? No, Jesus is saying, they don't. They're great to have. They're good to know. They're beneficial. They're absolutely crucial in many ways.

But they are not themselves the entrance into salvation. You have to use the privileges He's given you and actually go through the door by accepting Christ Himself for who He is, by giving your life to Him, by trusting in Him, by receiving Him as He's offered in the gospel, by exercising that faith which is nothing less than full commitment to Him to be your Savior, by just getting rid of the baggage of this world and instead going through the narrow gate and coming safely into the salvation that Jesus provides.

So our qualification is not in the privileges themselves. Here were people who had all of these privileges and the Lord is saying to them, you know, many of you will actually come to this closed door, the door to salvation, when I return, when the master of the house gets up and the door will be closed and you will not get in, despite all the privileges you had.

So ask yourself, please, this question today, what am I doing with the privileges I've got? What have I done with them? Where am I in relation to Jesus, in relation to the return of Jesus, in relation to salvation, in relation to what is through that door that the gospel shows me is still open?

[17 : 06] What am I doing with the privileges that I have? Am I saved? Do I know Christ as my own Savior? Am I just looking through the door and happy enough to leave it at that?

Or surely not? Because if you remain like that and you come to this particular day in your experience when Christ returns and you've not gone through that door, you will have an eternity to regret it.

That's what he's saying. The pain of endless regret. See what he's saying? Depart from me all you workers who have evil in that place 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 cast out.

very, very solemn words. I have to address them to myself today though I preach the gospel. That doesn't secure me a place in salvation. I could preach the gospel all of my working life and still not be saved and will never be saved if that's what I'm depending on.

If I'm just using that privilege great as it is in such a way as would think it would give me acceptance with God. That doesn't matter how many people might be benefiting from the preaching or have been converted under my preaching.

[18 : 35] It doesn't matter really at the end of the day. If that's what I'm depending on I'm going to be lost. And in the same way you can't depend upon the fact that you belong to such a great congregation as this.

That you had all of this in your life to hear the gospel to know Jesus in the gospel to know the Lord's people in your course with them through this life. Make sure please friends that you've gone through that door.

That you're saved. That you're not depending on anything less than a living relationship with Christ. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It's very difficult to understand really in any sense at all the grief and the anguish of the lost in hell. And you know there are plenty of people today who would say that they're Christians but would say this is not something you actually treat literally.

You must think there's such a literal place as a place of anguish and of regret and of gnashing of teeth frustration and anger. Really?

[19 : 52] What else did Jesus mean? Was he joking? Was he out of touch with reality? Was the Jesus who is God not aware of what he was really saying?

Are we just to say but we modern people know better than that nowadays? Yes. people can choose to say you have to reinterpret this to suit our modern minds you can say people can say that if they like you do that at your peril you do that at the danger of risking your soul to a lost eternity and we take it that this description by Jesus of weeping and gnashing of teeth means that the lost in the frustration of their lostness and in the knowledge that that door is forever closed to them now having been opened while they listened to the gospel and heard Jesus preach the frustration of that the anguish of that and indeed the anger against God which in many ways is unabated in hell who would want to live a whole eternity like that?

Surely not you or I or I? So there's the narrow door and he's urging us today to strive to enter it everything possible to enter through that narrow door get through it don't stand outside it don't admire things from outside don't just stare looking into it go through it enter into it strive to enter into it do everything possible everything lawful to get through that door because that door is going to be shut very firmly shut when the master returns but I want to emphasize in closing that that door is very much still open it's open because that's the gospel call to you and to me today that the door to salvation is presently open to you and to me the door to salvation will remain open until the Lord returns until he gets up and comes and closes it and so that's the appeal you see of the lament that Jesus has later in the chapter that's where the connection is between that and the passage we're looking at mainly the door is still open and you can see the way the Pharisees came in verse 31 and said get away from here for Herod wants to kill you well maybe that was because the Pharisees wanted him removed from the jurisdiction of Herod in this area back to Jerusalem where they had real influence wasn't that they were concerned for his safety they just wanted rid of him but in order to do so they had to get out of Herod's jurisdiction something like that and he said to them go and tell that fox behold I cast out demons and pay for cures today and tomorrow and finish my course nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following now Jesus is saying from that go and tell that fox and when when he used the word fox although Herod had great pretensions of being an important person he was really in many ways a puppet of the Roman Empire and Jesus in using the word fox is just using a term which then meant an animal such as the fox was regarded as pretty worthless so he's really saying you go and tell that worthless person that this is what

I'm committed to and nothing he can do will actually stand in the way of what I have to accomplish that's what the passage is saying to us Jesus is the real king not Herod and for all of Herod's efforts and the efforts of the Pharisees themselves the outcome is not in their hands the outcome is in the hands of God in the hands of Jesus himself when he's saying this I must go on my way today and tomorrow I'm going to go to Jerusalem I'm going to accomplish something there that will be a lasting salvation for my people that's what he's really saying his unswerving commitment and then he says something very poignant as soon as he's mentioned Jerusalem of course that stands at many places for the Jewish people themselves oh Jerusalem Jerusalem the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent out how often would I have gathered your chicken together your children together as a hen or a chicken gathers her brood under her wings and you would not now you see the contrast it's a very important contrast it's a contrast between two wills because Jesus is saying how often

I would have it's the desire of Jesus that they would all come to be saved that they would all come through this open door and find salvation on the other side that's his heart's desire how often would I have done this like a hen gathers her brood under her wings for safety for security I would have done this with you that's my desire for you but here's the other side but you would not you willed it not to be so it does not mean that our will is superior or triumphs over the will of Christ but it does mean this that nobody is left outside through any fault of Christ's nobody is left outside because Jesus is unwilling to receive them in anybody left outside will be outside because they have willed it themselves because that's been their preference that's been their choice you know today nobody really cares about your salvation and mine as much as Jesus does why else would he say such a thing why else did he show such commitment to go through with the death he knew he had to die on the cross at

[26 : 25] Jerusalem because he is committed to salvation committed to saving his people because his desire is that they would come to be saved all of them would come to be saved even though he knew many of them would not choose that for themselves no one is as caring today or as desirous over your salvation as the Lord himself you know that itself should make us think if Jesus really cares that much that you and I are saved how can we not be saved how can we not go through that door if the Son of God is saying this about himself so you see he's turned the question that was at the beginning all the way around hasn't he Lord will those who are saved be many and from listening to what Jesus said in reply and everything there in the passage down to the end of the chapter

Jesus has turned that question around it's no longer Lord will those who are saved be few it's now will you be saved will you be among them will you be inside when he comes to shut the door that's the question that's the great question only you and I can answer it for ourselves nobody can answer it for you I can't answer it for you I can't go through for you nobody else can go through that door for you in your place but please please go through it yourself and don't leave it for another day don't say there's time enough yet if Jesus returns tonight and this door is shut where will you be on which side of it will you be strive to enter that narrow door let's pray

Lord we give thanks that you have not hidden from us such serious matters as have been before our minds today we thank you that you have been honest and real with us in revealing to us the destiny of the lost as well as of the saved we give thanks for the way that you have brought us to know the limitations of time and the way in which we have such a short space of time in the history of this world even compared to eternity today to step into the safety of your kingdom if we have not already done so and for all of you people who have already gone through that door into salvation Lord strengthen them today and give them further confirmation and assurance that on the inside they are truly safe safe in the provision that you have made for them receive our thanks and our prayers now for

Jesus sake Amen Let's now conclude this morning service singing Psalm 118 Psalm 118 page 156 and that's verses 19 to 26 Throw wide the gates of righteousness I'll enter and give thanks to God this is the gate of God through which the righteous come before the Lord through to verse 26 save us O Lord we humbly pray O Lord we pray grant us success he's blessed who comes in God's great name you from the Lord's house we will bless to thee tune before the throne we'll sing these four verses lose Amen.

Salvation comes from you alone. The stone the builders had refused has now become the cornerstone.

[31 : 38] Has now become the cornerstone. The Lord himself has done all this.

It is a marvel in our sight. This is the day the Lord has made.

In it let us take great delight. Save us, O Lord, we humbly pray.

O Lord, we pray, grant us success. He is blessed who comes in God's great name.

You from the Lord's house we will bless. You from the Lord's house we will bless.

[32 : 37] If you allow me to get to the main door, please, after the benediction. Amen. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

Amen.