

A Narrow Door Offered to All

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Preacher: Pastor Dave Thompson

[0 : 00] Chapter 13. Luke 13. U.S. astronaut Sharon Lucid desperately wanted to go home.

! She had spent six months on the Russian Mir space station from March to September of 1996. Her ride home was delayed by six weeks by two hurricanes and assorted mechanical problems with the shutter booster rockets, making her stay in space at that time, the longest of any American astronaut, man, or woman.

Nevertheless, she faced each setback with patient, good cheer, and a stiff upper lip. But as the days went on, she knew where she would rather be.

Eventually, she admitted she wanted to return home to see her family, to feel the sun and wind on her face, and to check out the new books published in the last six months.

Prior to being picked up for her return to Earth by the space shuttle Atlantis, Shannon Lucid quipped, There's another important door in Shannon Lucid's future.

[1 : 45] And in each of ours as well. The door of heaven. If our heart is set on going home to heaven, we will do whatever is necessary to ensure that we're on the right side of heaven's door when it shuts for the last time.

Let me read from Luke chapter 13, starting in verse 22. He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem.

And someone said to him, Lord, will those who are saved be few? And he said to them, strive to enter through the narrow 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 to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us.

Then he will answer you, I do not know where you are from. Then you will begin to say, we ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.

[3 : 01] But he will say, I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of 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. And people will come from east and west and from north and south and 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. Let's pray together. Father, I thank you for your word.

And I thank you, Father, that this passage comes before the next passage. Lord, I know that's just a simple statement. But the heart of Christ, as he's traveling to his crucifixion, he's concerned about his disciples.

But, Father, he's very concerned about the people he's meeting. And so, Father, as he gives this warning, I pray that you would be with us today. That we would hear this warning, not just to people who lived over 2,000 years ago.

[4 : 16] May Christ's voice be heard today in all its earnestness, in its love and its desire and its warning. May it be to us today.

May it be to us today. And I pray that we would be people, if we've not already, who will have entered through that door. And then, Father, help us as Christians to see what we should do in relation to that door.

And I pray that you would be with us and bless your word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. So, as we look at this passage, the first thing I think we ought to ask is, what is Jesus doing?

Now, Luke is doing something particular here when he makes this first statement. He's giving us things that are tying things together. He said back in chapter 9, verse 51, that he set his face

towards Jerusalem.

Luke is reminding us that he is heading still towards Jerusalem. And so, he's journeying towards Jerusalem. Now, he's been in Jerusalem many times.

[5 : 22] Luke doesn't mention many of them. If you go to other Gospels, you will see that Jesus had been to Jerusalem many times. He would have been amongst those who would have gone yearly for the three, I think it was, different feasts or celebrations that had to take place in Jerusalem.

He certainly would have been to all those. So, he would have been to Jerusalem many times. Even sometime probably within this time period, he's traveling to Jerusalem.

But Luke is framing for us this understanding that Jesus is heading to Jerusalem for this particular purpose. He's not just there to be there for one of the feast days or one of the holy days.

This is Jesus making his way to Jerusalem to suffer at the hands of religious rulers and Romans. He's going to Jerusalem to be crucified.

He's going to Jerusalem to die and to be buried and to rise again. He's making his journey to Jerusalem. But notice Luke mentions that this journey to Jerusalem was through towns and villages.

[6 : 37] This journey he took from Galilee to Jerusalem could have been something that only took a few days. Three or four probably at the most if he was in earnest. But Jesus took probably weeks or even months to travel from Galilee to Jerusalem.

All this time, he's taking time to teach his disciples. But he's also going from town and village. And we don't know all the towns.

But he, having gone out of Galilee, crossed the Jordan, went into the eastern side of Israel and traveled through all kinds of towns.

Actually, even crossing back over probably at times. But he went to town and to village. And we'll get into this, Lord willing, next week. This was a trip.

I mean, there were all kinds of things involved in it. But this was a trip of mercy. This was a trip of love. This is a trip he did because he loved people.

[7 : 46] Loved them enough to go die for them. But also loved them and wanted to tell them what they needed to hear. We have an instance here that gives us a clue of some of what he was talking about when he went from town and village to town and village.

In the midst of traveling, it says that there was someone who said to them, Lord, will those who are saved be few? Now, this was a question that circulated in Jewish religious circles.

It was a question that Jews asked about Jews only. The religious leaders had no sense that anyone but Jews would be saved.

By the way, they should have had a sense that others besides Jews would be saved. There are many verses in the Old Testament that point to this.

But in this question, this man was basically asking, will it be that many Jews were saved? Or will it be that few Jews were saved?

[9 : 02] And amongst the religious leaders at that time, there were those who thought that all Jews would be saved except the really bad ones. And then there were also people who thought that, well, you know, no, it'll only be the groups who are really intent on serving the Lord that will be saved.

You can see there's the same kind of mentality around today. Oh, everyone's going to be saved. Or, no, it's only going to be people who are really in earnest about going to church and really in earnest about keeping commands.

Same thing was happening then, has happened now. And so this question is posed to Jesus, and Jesus does not answer it directly.

At least he doesn't answer it in relation to what they're thinking concerning the Jews. Jesus warns that salvation is not a matter of who you are.

Some of the Jews thought that salvation was based on just being related to Abraham. That would have been the group who said that everybody except the really bad ones will be saved.

[10 : 13] It's not a matter of who you are. Some Jews thought that salvation was based on the practices you kept, so only the really good people would be saved. Again, it's a thinking that happens today.

For whatever reason, we may think we're born into this class, and, well, that makes us Christians. Sometimes people think, well, you're an American, you're a Christian. Or you're this, you're a

Christian. Or even today, people think, I'm born into a Christian family, therefore I am a Christian. I don't have to do anything. I'm just one because I'm born into this family. And Jesus doesn't, he doesn't fall for their bait.

Now this is not necessarily, it could be a trick question in that they might have gotten Jesus in trouble with certain parts of the Jewish group, but this is more an opportunity that Jesus just takes. And Jesus, he doesn't answer their question according to what they're asking. He says salvation is for those who are careful to enter the narrow door.

[11 : 21] Those who are careful to enter the narrow door. He uses the word strive, strive to enter. It's not the idea, it is the idea that salvation is not just something you just fall into.

It isn't something that happens automatically to someone who's born in a certain nation or a certain family. Salvation is not something that just happens and everybody doesn't even know they need it. But rather, salvation is something that you have to know you need. Salvation is that which you have to have. And so, as this person asks this question and says, will it be few or many?

Jesus is saying, this is not something you just fall into. This is something you have to make a decision about. This is something you have to think through.

He mentions the narrow door. In other gospels, he talks about a gate. It's not exactly the same teaching. This is a little different, but the narrow door.

[12 : 42] And speaking about the narrow door, Jesus is saying that he is the only way of salvation. Coming to him is the only way of salvation. John 14, 6.

Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. And so, he says you need to strive to come through the narrow door.

And he is that narrow door. He is the way of salvation. He's been going around preaching concerning the kingdom of God. He's been preaching about coming to himself. He's the one who's bringing the kingdom of God.

And he's telling them that this is not a matter of something you fall into because you are a Jew. It is something you choose to be a part of because Jesus is the way of salvation. This narrow door is a door that you go through by repentance and faith.

It is a door you go through by repentance and faith. What is repentance and faith? My wife and I were talking about this this week.

[13 : 49] The idea of so often we say, oh, you need to repent and believe. And sometimes we say words and we don't explain what we're meaning. And so, what is this idea of repentance and faith?

When we speak of repentance, one of the things that we're talking about is turning from trying to earn your own salvation. All of us come into this world thinking we're almost good enough.

If we do just a little bit more. Or maybe we think we're not very good. If we do a lot more. We can earn our way to salvation. And so many of us born into this world live thinking, if I can just be over 50% righteous, God will accept me.

If I can just do enough, then God will be happy with me and he'll let me into heaven. Part of repentance is recognizing that there's not one thing I can do.

To be right before God. When I repent, I'm saying, God, I know I can never be good enough. I know I can never be good enough to pay for the sin that I've committed against a holy God.

[15 : 15] And so part of repentance is that idea of stopping or ceasing trying to earn your salvation.

Repentance also has the idea of turning from wanting to live a sinful, rebellious life against God. Of times, salvation is offered saying, oh, yes, yes, just trust Christ.

And certainly trust Christ. But those who want Christ know that they're a sinner. They want to stop trying to earn their own salvation. And they also are people who want to please God.

Now, they can't do it in their own self. But they turn from saying, I'm just going to live however I want. They turn to saying, I want to live for Christ.

And then, not only repentance is important, but faith. They trust in the work that Jesus does.

[16 : 18] He was on his way to Jerusalem to provide salvation for his people. And these people, in entering that narrow door, needed to turn from trying to earn their own salvation, turn from living however they wanted, to living for Christ, and trust in the work that he was to do for them in dying for their sins and making them righteous before God.

He was wanting these people to know these things. And he goes on and talks about, in this verse, he says, strive to enter the narrow door.

For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able to. Why? Because the door won't always be open. Now, Jesus turns to the picture of a banquet.

And when they had a banquet, the master of the house was in charge of everything. And he would open the door for his guests. And whatever time he chose, it was appropriate for the door to be closed, he would close the door.

No one else would be able to enter. And Jesus here is pointing to this idea that the door is not open forever.

[17 : 40] Okay? There's coming a time when the door will be closed and no one else will be able to enter. When will that be? When will God close the door?

The door will be closed when each of us ends our life. There's no more getting into heaven once our life is done.

Your decision is set. He goes on to talk about the situation and will make reference to one where people think that maybe after death, I can still make things right.

I can live how I want now. But someday after death, I can just make things right. And he's saying, no, the door will be shut. When you die, the door is shut.

Or maybe the Lord will return before you die. The Lord returns before you die. The door is shut. And so Jesus warns these people, strive to enter while the door is open.

[18 : 52] Now, when all has come to the end, those who are on the outside will indeed desire with all their hearts to be inside the door.

Jesus goes on in his illustration to talk about how after the door is closed, people will be knocking. Let us in. Let us in.

They will knock. But the Lord will answer, I do not know where you are from. And the people on the outside will say, oh, yes, you do.

You know where we are from. Remember, we ate and drank in your presence. You taught in our streets. I mean, we came to church.

We heard the word. We hung around Christians. You know us. You know, we were people who came every week or most every week.

[19 : 54] We heard the gospel. I love it when that preacher or this preacher preaches the gospel. I so enjoy it. We heard you preach. And they followed Jesus for months.

We know from the book of John, there comes to this point where the crowds have been huge. And we've already talked about how they were in the thousands. And Jesus lays before them that they must trust him.

And he uses the illustration of eat my flesh and drink my blood. And that offends people. And they go away. And so many go away, Jesus says, to the twelve, will you also go away?

They said, no, you're the one who has eternal life. And so there are people who are hearing, who are thinking that hearing is enough.

that being here is enough. The Lord will answer, I do not know where you are from.

[21 : 03] Depart from me, all you who work iniquity. Now, I think Jesus is drawing this picture of people after the door is closed, after death, wanting still to know the Lord.

And he says, depart from me to a place outside the door that the master of the house calls, there's a place outside the door that the master of the house calls them to depart to.

He says, it's a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. A place where people realize the mistake that they have made in not entering that door.

You say, will people after death really wish that they could enter that door? Will people really wish that they could make that decision then?

Jesus uses an illustration, or he gives us an illustration later, not directly in relation to this, but it fits in relation to this. In Luke chapter 16, we have the situation with the rich man and Lazarus.

[22 : 20] Rich man was in his house, Lazarus sat at his gate covered with sores, the dogs licked his sores, he only ate the food that came from the rich man's gate, none of that got him into heaven, none of that earned him a righteousness that made any difference before God, it was a matter of Lazarus trusting, this is not the Lazarus who was raised from the dead, but Lazarus trusted in the Messiah because he was in a place of comfort afterwards, and it says, and the poor man died and was carried by angels to Abraham's side, the rich man also died and was buried and in Hades being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off, and Lazarus at his side and he called out, Father Abraham have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in

water and cool my tongue for I am in anguish in this flame.

Now read this for a couple reasons, one, it points to the fact that people wish things were different, wanted things to be different, you could see how people could be calling out to the Lord, yes we knew you, let us in, let us in, but all that has to take place before a person dies, but it also pointed this out because remember it says and it speaks of a little later here in the passage that those outside will look in and see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob sitting down with all the prophets and they'll want to be there.

and I read from Luke to point out that indeed Lazarus or the rich man did indeed see those who had made the right choice and wished that he had made that right choice.

It's a place where they will see people come from the east and west and from the north and south and these people will also recline at the table in the kingdom of God.

Jesus uses an allusion to Psalm 107 here where he says and gather in from the lands the east and from the west from the north and from the south and Jesus uses that illustration to allude to people gathering his people from all nations.

[24 : 59] Now some might say well he's just talking about the Jews but we can go to Isaiah 25 6 and 7 and see that it's not just the Jews. On the mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples all peoples not his people all peoples a feast of rich food of a well aged wine of rich food full of marrow and of aged wine well refined and he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples the veil that is spread over all nations.

What's going on here? Jesus has gone back to answer a part of that initial question will there be few that will be saved?

They thought and they were asking that in relation to the Jews. I want you to remember that we're reading a gospel that was written by a Gentile and we're reading a gospel that is written to Gentiles and so as Luke is assembling he's not changed the word of God Jesus did indeed teach this this is the only gospel that this account is in but Luke is saying will there be few that are saved?

And Luke's answer is Jesus' answer no. Jesus will save people from all the nations. He's offering hope looking forward through months ahead until the gospel goes out to the Gentiles and he's saying it's for you.

Now that's good news because if Jesus had never said that if the Bible had never said that we're wasting our time most of us I don't know if any of us are of Jewish descent here. If this hadn't been true we would be wasting our time because why?

[27 : 10] Only the Jews know from the beginning of time the gospel has been offered to the whole world.

Will it be a few? John or Revelation John 7 John in Revelation 7 says after this I looked and behold a great multitude that no one could number from every nation from all tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb that passage comes after it says that 144,000 are sealed from Israel I don't know if that number is specific to the number of Jews I'm sure that it's not I'm positive that it's not it's representative but a limited number is spoken about for Israel an unlimited number from the world of course

God knows that number will there be a few that will be saved only those who strove to enter the narrow door will be part of those who will be saved so brothers and sisters what should we do I know I mean Jesus preaches an excellent evangelistic message here and we'll see from our next section that this was not a cold hearted evangelistic message Jesus loved these people he agonized that they would come to know him and so he preached this evangelistic message to these people taking time instead of the three or four days from Galilee to Jerusalem weeks or even months going from town to village saying the kingdom of God is near repent how does that you and I here who trust Christ how does this this passage affect us what affects affects us in several important ways I think first of all it's important that the gospel be clear our friends and loved ones brothers and sisters for any who are here who do not know Christ you don't just fall into the kingdom the gospel has to be clear our friends and loved ones cannot enter the kingdom just because they have been to church and hear the word they need to repent and they need to trust Christ brothers and sisters our evangelism needs to be clear I don't imagine I know a lot of what Jesus said didn't go over well but he loved these people enough to be clear let's be clear in telling people the truth there is a narrow door and it's not something you fall through because you're born

in a family or because you've been to church it's something you choose to do it is the desire that consumes you

I'm a sinner I must have my sin dealt with I need salvation we need to make that clear brothers and sisters we also need to let our prayers and our evangelism be earnest for our friends and our loved ones for our neighbors there will come a time when the opportunity of salvation the door will be shut we think of our children who don't know the Lord we can't make them come to know the Lord we can't we can't connive them to know the Lord we can only pray for them and we can share the gospel but let our prayers and our evangelism be wise but earnest there is coming a time by which that child must make a decision our hearts ought to be coming before the Lord constantly Lord save my children save my children

[31 : 55] Lord save my friends save my neighbors Jesus took all this extra time now granted he was he was teaching his disciples but he took all this extra time to share the gospel to let people know because there will be a time individually when the door is shut and there's no more opportunity but I want us to also rejoice that it has always been God's will and intent that the gospel was intended for the whole world and that if you know Christ this what Jesus teaches here ought to make you rejoice because he offered it to you and if you're here and don't know Christ you should also see that he's offering it to you so friend what should you do first of all ask yourself on what are you basing your relationship with Christ or you're standing in the kingdom of God are you going for

I just hope I'm better my good outweighs my bad and that I'm better than 50% of the people in the world is that all you're hoping for that's not entering the door that's not trusting Christ that's not turning from your sin do you feel that since you are present regularly in church and are moved by the word of God oh pastor that was a good sermon or I know the word of God better than that he could have done better than that do those kind of things make you feel like you're a Christian many of the people who hear Christ could claim the same in his day but Jesus stated that just hearing him and hearing him preach and eating with him did not make you one who was his it made you responsible more responsible but it didn't make you one who was his friend if you don't know Christ a Christian is one who knows that they're a sinner and that they've got to have that sin dealt with they know that sin will take them to hell because they have offended a holy

God but a Christian is one who's trusting the work of Christ on the cross to pay for their sin and trusting that the life of Christ makes them righteous before God I'm a sinner I'm a wicked sinner but Jesus has died and I'm trusting that I'm trusting him for my hope of heaven friend is that what you're standing on today are you standing on the fact that you said a prayer saying a prayer isn't what saves you trusting a savior now saying a prayer can be a way that you show that you're trusting him I'm not demeaning saying a prayer I prayed a prayer and what was common in my day to what was called the sinner's prayer and it was good that I called out to the Lord but salvation comes by trusting in the

Lord make sure today lest you someday be found standing outside the kingdom of God weeping gnashing your teeth with sorrow and regret for not striving to enter that door of salvation before it was too late I'll just close with one thing and that is if you're here and you you are always struggling with am I a Christian am I not a Christian it comes down to that who are you trusting what are you trusting have you given yourself to him let's close in prayer father I thank you for your word and I thank you for part of the piece of the picture of our savior that we've looked at today thank you for what he was careful to let people know

I pray that we be careful to mind what he says is important here I pray that if there's any here who don't know you today they would see their need of coming turning from their sin turning from trusting in themselves trusting in a savior who's done it all for them and I pray that you would be with them I pray that you would be with us father may it be our heart's desire to make the gospel clear may it be our heart's desire to pray earnestly!

[37 : 15] for those who don't know our savior whether it be our children our family our friends our neighbors and I pray Father that you would grow your church you would glorify yourself we pray in Jesus name amen