

“The Scariest Verse in the Bible”

(Luke 13:22-30)

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I. Introduction

A. Last week’s sermon on death

1. The atheist’s first words after they die?
 - a. “Uh oh”
 - b. Expected the story to end at death
2. Let me introduce you to another group
 - a. They expected life after death
 - b. And they expected to be welcomed into heaven
 - c. But something shocking happens
 1. Utter surprise as they are turned away
 2. The door to heaven closed in their faces
3. What went wrong?

B. This most important hour of your week

1. I’m honored to be the one to share a message from God
2. I’m burdened by the responsibility of getting it right
3. Especially with such an important question

C. Other questions many of you wrestle with

1. Will God eventually save all people?
2. Do all religions lead to heaven?

3. How does God choose who will be saved?
4. Will there be any surprises on judgment day?
5. How many people will be saved...and how many will go to hell?
 - a. Will see some answers today

D. The background in Luke 13:22

(22) Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.

1. Jesus headed to Jerusalem and his crucifixion
 - a. Began the journey in Luke 9:51

(51) As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem

- b. Visiting the towns and villages on the way
2. Great mob of people following him
 - a. More out of curiosity than commitment
3. Jesus finally arrives in Jerusalem in Luke 19

E. Next Sunday.... “The Crisis in the Middle East”

II. Text (Luke 13:23-30)

A. The Burning Question (v. 23)

(23) Someone asked him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?”

1. Why such an odd question?
2. The Jewish expectation
 - a. They believed that when the Messiah came, He would save all of the Jews and not just a small band of fishermen from the backwoods of the Galilee.
 - b. They believed the whole nation would fall at his feet

3. And that is what will happen when Christ returns
4. But that wasn't happening right then
 - a. Only a handful were loyal to Jesus
5. Accusations thrown at Christians
 - a. Because we believe there is only one way to be saved
 - b. Are we being narrow-minded?
6. Saved from what?
 - a. Saved from the wrath of God
 - b. Saved by God...from God
7. Being saved and entering the kingdom mean the same thing here
8. Salvation is solely by grace, not by human merits.
9. But entering the narrow door is nonetheless difficult

B. The Narrow Door (v. 24)

(23) Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, (24) "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to."

1. The Fight

- a. **"Make every effort"**
 1. "agonizomai" (ag o nid' zom ahee)
 2. We get the word "agonize"
 3. Translated elsewhere to mean "fight"
- b. What is the fight over?
 1. Luke 9:23 "...let him deny himself"
 2. Taking up the cross....self-denial

3. Between you and Christ

“It’s the end of your dreams and ambitions and desires and longings. You give up your dreams. You give up your goals”

4. Galatians 2:20

(20) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

c. The high cost of a free gift

1. Counting the cost (Luke 9:62)

(62) Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

2. Philippians 2:12-13

(12) Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, (13) for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

d. Staying on the narrow path is the test of genuine trust in Christ

e. The narrow path has ruts on both sides

1. Trying to earn salvation through doing good deeds

- a. The religions of the world
- b. But...can never do enough

2. Cheap grace

- a. Accepting Christ without repentance for sins
- b. An emotional decision without a true commitment
- c. Appear to start out on the narrow path
- d. A. W. Pink in 1937

Salvation is by grace, by grace alone. Nevertheless, divine grace is not exercised at the expense of holiness.

It is also true that salvation is a free gift, but an empty hand must receive it and not a hand which still tightly grasps the world.

A heart that is steeled in rebellion against God cannot savingly believe. It must first be broken.

Those preachers who tell sinners that they may be saved without repenting are as erroneous and dangerous as others who insist that salvation is by works and that heaven must be earned by their own efforts.

f. Have you slipped into one of these ditches?

2. The Few

a. Watching “Let’s Make a Deal”

1. Three doors

2. Joy or disappointment as the door is opened

b. We need to choose between two doors

1. The narrow door leads to heavenly bliss

2. The other leads to eternal separation from God

c. Belief in Jesus is the narrow door

1. “Many” will try to enter when they face God

(24) Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.

a. Picture the scene

b. They fully expected to be admitted

2. But only a few will find it

a. Matthew 7:13-14

(13) Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. (14) But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

b. Appears to be a small number

- c. Eight in the days of Noah
- d. A handful from Sodom and Gomorrah
- e. Isaiah spoke of a “tenth” being saved
- d. Door number two leads to eternal destruction
 - 1. It looks attractive
 - 2. A broad road leads up to it
 - 3. Masses of people are moving toward it on the broad road

C. The Surprised Knockers (v. 25a)

(25) Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, “Sir, open the door for us.”

- 1. Note their surprise
 - a. “Wait a minute...there must be some mistake!”
 - b. They fully expected to be let in

They knew Jesus socially. They had been present on occasions when he preached; they knew his views and had taken some interest in his sermons. They obviously felt that was enough to gain them entry into the kingdom of God. They are astounded when they discover it is not enough.

- c. Their parents were founders of the synagogue
- d. They were baptized and confirmed
- e. Everyone assumed they were believers
- f. They didn’t act like sinners
- g. They even taught a Sunday school class
- 2. Like so many today who hang around churches
 - a. We take for granted that
 - b. They look so saved
 - c. But are they...are you?

3. The Rejection (vs. 25b-27)

(25) ...But he will answer, "I don't know you or where you come from."

(26) Then you will say, "We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets."

(27) But he will reply, "I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!"

- a. They argue that they knew him
- b. They were with Jesus....of course they would make it
- c. But Jesus didn't know them

1. Matthew 7:21-23

(21) Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (22) Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" (23) Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers."

- d. My burden for the people of this area
 - 1. Raised in the church
 - 2. Know how to act like a believer
 - 3. Think you're going to make it
 - 4. No one questions your soul
- e. But...is Jesus Christ Lord of your life?
 - 1. Will Jesus "know" you?

D. The Eternal Consequences (vs. 28-30)

(28) There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.

- 1. The primary target is the Jewish people
 - a. They were a chosen people

- b. But they slid off the narrow path
2. Into the ditch called “religion”
 - a. Thought having the right parents would open the narrow door
 - b. Thought doing a lot of good deeds would open the narrow door
 - c. Thought memorizing the Bible would open the narrow door
 - d. Thought that being a Jew would open the narrow door
 3. The shock of Gentile salvation

(29) People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

- a. The importance of that great event to the Jews
 - b. The great wedding feast
4. As they peer in on the banquet
 - a. Multitudes from every people and age
 1. Gentiles!
 - b. Standing on the outside looking in
 5. All will be equal in the kingdom

(30) Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.

6. Gentiles....last in...first to be resurrected?

III. Summary

A. Ephesians 2:8-10

(8) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—(9) not by works, so that no one can boast.

(10) For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.