**Luke 13:22-30**

He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. **23** And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them, **24**  “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. **25**  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 come from.’ **26** Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ **27** But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’ **28**  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. **29** And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. **30** And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

**“A Narrow Door None Need Miss”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. As the 2016 summer Olympics finishes up, hundreds of nations along with thousands of athletes is a momentous. Of course, the rigorous nature of it all is extreme. It can come down to a hundredth of a second. A simple mistake never expected to happen. Even the need just to finish can yield a surprising result. The U.S. women’s track team experienced this during a qualifying relay. They fumbled a baton handoff caused by a bump from a Brazilian athlete. The shock and despair could have consumed them, but they were mindful to finish, even if last. As one of the teammates said, "I knew what had happened, I knew that's not how it goes and I knew we had to finish in order to have a good shot at the appeal."[[1]](#footnote-1) Their appeal upheld, they moved on to compete for the final race, and won gold.

The achievement of Olympians is great, but short-lived. In comparison, what Christ tells us today has a far longer outcome. A person speculating whether if a few would only be saved receives a warning. Jesus says, “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.” The end of life comes down to two goals- heaven and hell. Thus at the present, two groups of people surface those heading to hell and others to heaven. C.F.W. Walther warns pastors what it means to ride the fence on this matter. He says about blurring or confusing the distinctions, “…of these two ways is an abominable mingling of Law and Gospel” (L & G 320). This i clarity is hard to miss from our text today. Many presuming entrance into the kingdom will find it shut, but God keeps gathering in the nations by the narrow door of His Son.

1. **Jesus as that narrow door removes all presumptions made by sinners**.
2. Carelessness with the times ends in shock.

* This is a kind of neglect not seeing the door of salvation has remained open. (Happened with Noah’s ark)
* Jesus depicted how the matter became a concern only after the conditions changed.
* “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 come from.’”
* Is life so full right now that I have lost focus to repent and receive what Jesus gives? Does the laws judgment bear no weight so a carefree life means no salvation needed each day by Jesus?

1. Fraudulent claims just do not cut it either.

* This is what those on the outside tried to argue with the master.
* Their case came with evidence to justify stating, “We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.”
* Yet, the emphasis made by Jesus is those standing outside never listened. The master’s response is the same and has evidence, “I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’
* False teaching hurts life, but this evil at last destroys true faith. It is a justification seeking entrance on its own terms rather than Christ for me.

1. Overconfident ways also finally go nowhere.

* The sorry outcome in hell is to witness how the tables have turned like the rich man and Lazarus.
* Jesus says, “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.”
* Jesus was calling His own Jewish people not to rely on their family heritage or to trust the glory of Israel as what would make them great in heaven.
* Whether it is church membership, the privilege of being baptized as an infant, or because I sat in this pew for fifty years, can easily miss or despise how God’s goodness calls us to repent.

Trans: If you feel yourself on the outside of that narrow door, take heart for the Father invites you in by the good news of His Son. “And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.”

1. **Jesus as the narrow door never disappoints those who God gathers to Him.**
2. Gathered to the narrow door shocks any with what falls on Jesus.

* He neglects no one, not even you, but saw your whole life with its stain of sin, sad stories, and fear of death.
* Rather than closing the door in your face, Jesus paid the full price by His sacrifice to change the conditions of judgment against you.
* You come before mount Calvary, “to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
* This better word of forgiveness does not put you out, but brings healing from Christ for His baptized.

1. Gathered to the narrow door is to enter with faithfulness worked alone by Jesus.

* There is nothing fraudulent for He who was first out love became last, even the servant.
* His way to justify you is the way He brings it by His Word and Sacrament.
* Listening to Christ never leaves us far from His care for He says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:27-28).
* False teaching and life have no place before Jesus who’s Word is truth, life faithful to justify, and salvation a gift only faith can receive.

1. Gathered to the narrow door turns into a glorious feast that comes from Jesus.

* If hell is isolation from the saints in glory, then how can the sacrament be just between Jesus and me?
* Examining ourselves before the body and blood of Christ comes not by a right or demand, but only faith in the righteous One given and shed for me.
* This joy to celebrate with the Church in heaven makes us outcasts in a world on its way to hell.
* Yet, since Christ descended to hell, we keep sharing the narrow door God widely opens for all to leave their baggage at the door and enter through Jesus.

As glorious as the Olympics are it did not take much for scandal among the U.S. swim team to overshadow everything else, so goes the way of works. Thankfully, the scandal of Christ and His cross steals the spotlight from sinners. Rather than speculating, the goal now is to live by way of repentance and faith in Him. To finish in Christ yields the surprising results for His appeal opens heaven for you. Many presuming entrance into the kingdom will find it shut, but God keeps gathering in the nations by the narrow door of His Son. Amen. The peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. https://www.yahoo.com/news/olympics-athletics-u-grasp-second-chance-4x100-relay-231202643--spt.html?ref=gs [↑](#footnote-ref-1)