

“What IS Your Path?”

08-21-16

You see them every Sunday as they respectfully make their way into the worship service. They read the responses, greet one another, put their little bit into the offering plate, and listen to another sermon. When the service is over, they leave and some tell the Pastor he did a good job. Then they return home, and forget about God for another week!

Somehow, this routine seems to fill their need for reassurance. And because they've been *“faithful”* to come to church on occasion, they feel that they're all right, and have secured a place in heaven! Really?

Open to Luke 13. What a distortion of the message that Jesus delivered! Jesus told the religious crowd that even those who appeared the most dedicated, were at best last in the kingdom and probably wouldn't get in at all! Look at verses 23-24, *“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.’”*

So What is your Path to heaven? Worldly Ease? Just like we talked about at the beginning of this message, do you think heaven comes by what you do every week because you've put church and worship in your planner? That should count and you should be OK!

Or maybe you feel, **It must be Free?** You think of God's great love for you and He really couldn't do anything else but give you heaven!

Or maybe you think it comes from **Good Works?** Even though you look at the passage at the bottom of your sermon sheet, and shake your head in agreement, good works keep coming up and seem to get in the way! You feel it all depends on what you do!

Or maybe you feel the only way it should really happen is **On Your Own Terms?** As a human being, you want to be the decider on your life now and your future. You don't want anyone else involved. It should be your decision!

Or maybe you think it all happens **By Accident?** Jesus tells us that's not the way it happens! Look at verse 24, *“Strive to enter through the narrow door.”* You're not just going to happen to enter the Kingdom, you have to strive for it! Listen how Matthew 7:13-14 says the same thing, *“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”*

The fact is, **There's Only One Way In!** That only way doesn't depend on any of the things we've already talked about! And that's not only a difficulty with our thinking, but also with the thinking of the world! **The Door is Narrow!** Just as we can't eat super-sized portions and expect to fit into last year's clothing, we also can't expect to be spiritually undisciplined and make it through the narrow door! It's not going to be easy. We need to be in study God's Word, Prayer, and worship constantly! We need to be disciplined and stay faithful!

Jesus came along and taught over and over that God the Father offers salvation, but **It's By Grace Through Faith in Jesus!** But the world today is just as confused as the Jews of Jesus' day about how one gets to heaven.

George Barna in his research found that, *“There is a growing tendency to believe that all good people, whether or not they consider Jesus Christ to be their Savior, will live in heaven after they die on earth. An overwhelming majority of Americans continue to believe there is life after death and that heaven and hell exist. What's more, most think they are heaven-bound. Nearly two-thirds of Americans in the national survey said that they believe they will go to heaven. Only one half of 1 percent said they were hell-bound!”* Really!

It Will Take Work! Look at verses 25-27, *“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.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘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. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!”*

Doesn't that sound just like people today? Here they are standing in front of Jesus Himself and they think they've done the right things, so they think heaven is a shoe-in. But the work being talked about, is the struggle staying faithful and strong in a world that doesn't believe and doesn't feel that Jesus is being fair!

Mahatma Ghandi once said, *“There are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group; there's less competition there!”*

The Time is Slipping Away. There is coming a day soon when the wonderful invitation to salvation will be over. For one day the Lord of the house is going to get up from the throne and walk to the front door of his mansion and close the narrow door of salvation. The only opportunities for salvation are in this life. Those who seek to enter late will be told by the Lord, *“I do not know you, where you are from”* and they will be denied entrance. In other words, entry comes through the means of salvation Jesus provides or not at all!

Soon the Door Will Be Shut. The end will come, and when it does, it's all over! When the end does come, judgment is NOW! And when judgment comes, **It's Either Heaven or Hell.** Verses 28-30, *“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.”*

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth for those who miss heaven. There will be unending sorrow that can't be described for everyone that misses out on the glories of heaven and instead spends an eternity in hell. Hell is no joy. Hell is being separated from God and wishing that you weren't. It will be a place where people are fully aware of what they've lost and will be forever in despair!

This passage is a powerful warning! You need to be sure how you've responded to Jesus. The core issue is, *“knowing Jesus”* not just *“knowing about Jesus.”* The original question in verse 23 was, *“will those who are saved be few?”* Now the more important question is, *“Will you be among the saved?”*

As you look at your life and what Jesus asks of you, **“Where will you be forever?”**