

Luke 13:22 - 30 Pt. 2 Are There Just a Few Who are being Saved?

22 And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem. 23 And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' 26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; 27 and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.' 28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out. 29 "And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. 30 "And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."

The last time we met before our picnic last week, we began to study this passage where Jesus is asked the question, *"Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"*

The very idea was diametrically opposed to what the Jews expected God to do. They were waiting for a messiah who would reign on David's throne and subject the entire world under His judgement.

Israel would be the pinnacle, the mountain, and all of the plains of the earth would spread out in every direction from the one Supreme ruler who dwells at Jerusalem and who inhabits David's throne forever.

And to a point, they were right. They were interpreting the prophets and the promises and the covenants of God with Israel correctly. But where they failed was in scope. They were actually thinking far too small.

Because in the Davidic covenant the promise is that Messiah will reign forever and ever. 16 “*And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.*”” 2Sam. 7:16

How does a man, with flesh like you and me, rule forever. And Jesus was that Messiah. Is that Messiah, but He was 100% God and 100% Man. Men die. How does Messiah reign forever.

What Israel was looking for was completely temporal. We want this man who will ascend to David's throne and subject the whole earth beneath his feet. Particularly Rome. Rome had occupied Israel. Israel was chafing under the rule and reign of foreign Godless evil occupiers.

The desire of the multitude in Israel was self centered and it was political. They had flags in their yards waving madly, M. I. G. A. Make Israel Great Again! It was on their baseball caps. There was a hopeful excitement. If only. IF ONLY this is the messiah and He makes Israel great again, then our lives will be perfect.

It was the same fool's errand then as now. Nothing's new under the sun. We get all worked up into a lather over this guy or that guy. Life as we know it will end if we get this guy. But if the other guy is elected, life will be good. Better than good. Great!

It's a foolish worldly lie that the ruler of this world propogates in order to advance chaos and dis-content. One of many of his dead end streets that we run down helter sketlter. The world is still looking for a messiah along the same lines that Israel was looking for. And they're about to get one.

Israel actually did get the real Messiah, and they rejected Him. They didn't want God's version of Messiah. They wanted this world's political make us great right now kind of a messiah. They had the messiah they had invented all worked out in their minds and they rejected God's Messiah.

The problem they completely missed is that in order for God to return to an

Edenic paradise type world, where He dwells with and fellowships with His people forever, sin must go. Sin has to be eradicated before God will dwell with men.

Israel was short sighted. But at least they were consistent in their short sightedness. They actually had fooled themselves into thinking the sin problem was solved. Follow these rules. Do this stuff. Jump through these religious hoops. We can fix the sin problem ourselves. We're not that bad.

That's the groundwork for the situation we find ourselves in, in our passage this morning. Jesus is about a million miles from being the messiah in their dreams. He has come to call a people to belong to Him who will be made clean and whose sin will be forgiven and who will have a righteousness, acceptable to God, a righteousness, not their own, but the righteousness of God, given to them.

There's a huge multitude listening to Him, but He's obviously not the messiah they were looking for. And He's very demanding. Come out of this world to follow Him. Come out of their culture and their comfort, their world system, their religion, to follow Him.

Leave family and religion and culture and country and riches behind in order to follow Him. Who does that? All He seems to attract is losers. He's got this little rag tag band of nobodies following Him. Hicks and fishermen and tax collectors. A harlot or two. A former terrorist. Some people who had demons. I should leave everything behind to join that group??

Well, there **is** the problem of the miracles. He commands the wind and it obeys. He commands the demons and they obey. He commands death and it obeys. He walks on water. And His teaching is with power and authority they've never experienced before. It's like the author of the Book telling you what He meant when He wrote it. So there's that. Never a man spoke like this Man speaks.

So the question in the midst of this confusion is a good one. Suppose the

evidence, the miracles, the teaching, is right. Suppose He is the messiah. We thought the promises were for ALL Israel. But it appears that's not the case. Because the rulers and increasingly the rest of the people are rejecting Jesus.

Are we then to believe that only a few are being saved. How does this add up Jesus. How does this work. *are there just a few who are being saved?*”

The question may have actually been derisive. It may have been asked in derision. You're the Messiah? Really? You and your little group of rejects? This is it? If that's the case, apparently there's only a few who are being saved? Because nobody of any importance is paying any attention to you.

And Jesus answer, as always, is spectacular. It's an answer that only God in human flesh could have ever known or come up with. Note that He doesn't give his questioner a yes or no answer.

And He said to them, Notice that He doesn't directly address the guy who throws out the question. The question is a good one, whether it was asked in derision or not, and Jesus uses the opportunity to give the answer to the full multitude.

And He said to them, 24 “Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

Think back to Noah. Noah is the picture that Jesus uses over and over to describe judgement and the narrow door to safety. There's a boat. Water is coming. The offer of safety and security is tendered. No one is interested.

Who was it that sealed the door to the ark? Do you remember, from Sunday School. 60 years ago, if you're me. Who shut and sealed the door to the single vessel to safe passage? God did. God sealed up the door to the ark.

Now then for the purposes of Jesus illustration He's about to give, suppose the water wasn't a tidal wave. Suppose it's a normal rain. They had never experienced rain before. This is new. Water's coming down in drops from the

sky. But in a couple of day's time there's no place for all the water to go any more and it begins to rise.

Then the water lifts the ark up off of it's moorings. It's floating on the water. The ramp that used to go up to the door is now 6 inches under water and the door is rising up with the water. Do you suppose that all of those good freinds of Noah's are beating on the door of that boat trying to get into it.

Why if they had known ahead of time, they would have journeyed from the far corners of the earth to get to THAT door and they would have fought to get inside. Isn't that kind of what Jesus says here in answer to this man?

And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

Jesus is the door to safety. And the offer is wide open. Come to safety. The door is open. The ship hasn't sailed. Yes, you have to leave this world with it's comfort and family and riches and culture and religions and anything else that is part of the cosmos, the world systems that belong to the ruler of this world, behind. But the offer is open. Anyone can come. There will be cost. You can't bring all this world's junk through the narrow door, but it'll be worth the effort.

Strive to enter. Agonize to enter. Because the offer isn't good forever. The door will be closed and sealed shut and the ship, the only way to righteousness before God, will sail, with you or without you. *for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*

25 "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'

This offer of grace has a beginning and an end. For most of us it ends at death. We have this lifetime to go through the narrow door and cling to Jesus.

That was true for His listeners that day. Earlier in His sermon He spoke of a tower that collapsed and killed some people, and other people who Pilate murdered. He made it clear. You don't know when death will call you out of this world. A tower could collapse on you before lunch today.

it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.: Hebrews 9:27
That's how the door of grace closes for most of us. But there were some listening to Him who would physically reject Him that day, and the door would be shut.

There are some alive, I believe, today who will reject this message and just like the people in Noah's day, the door will be closed and they'll realize, uh oh. That preacher was right. The Christians have vanished. The world is going to pieces. Evil is unrestrained. The door is closed.

And Jesus launches into this conversation that is frankly, about the scariest stuff in the entire Bible. This is a horrific situation. Jesus, I was there. We were buds. I thought we were buds. I did this. I did that. But; you stopped short of giving your whole self to Him, to belong to Him, no matter what the cost.

26 “Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets’; 27 and He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from;’

The four scariest words in the entire Bible. From Matthew 7. The parallel to this passage. 22 “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 “And then I will declare to them, ‘**I never knew you;** DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’

The four scariest words in the Bible are; *I never knew you*. If you hear Jesus say those words to you, the next stop for you is eternity in hell.

Jesus, I was at the potluck's??! I came when it was convenient. I always sat

in my same spot. You've got to remember me.

The point of demarcation here is relational. The claimant is saying, I was there. I was part of the multitude. I listened to you teach. I was there when you made the fish and loaves. I was familiar. I hung out where you were present.

And Jesus is saying, maybe so, but I didn't know you. The point of rejection here is because of no personal intimate relationship. In Matthew's nearly identical account, Jesus says, I never knew you.

Knowing all about Jesus and hanging with His people and joining in the feast is all possible without knowing Him. And that relationship is the dividing line between those who go into the kingdom and those who are locked out.

In John 17 in His high priestly prayer, Jesus says; 3 *“And this is eternal life, that they may **know Thee**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.* Jn. 17:3

Entrance into eternal life or being locked outside the door is dependent on one thing. Knowing God. Knowing the Lord Jesus. Intimately and personally knowing Him.

Paul says; 7 *But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of **knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung in order that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,* Ppn. 3:7 - 9

And Paul gives us our next clue in those words we just read. The dividing line between the kingdom and being locked outside the kingdom is because of righteousness. The righteous go in and the unrighteous are locked out.

But Paul says, it's a righteousness not my own. The righteousness is in the relationship. We are in Him. And His righteousness is given to us.

Those who know Him, those who are found IN HIM, are those who have a righteousness, not their own, it is the perfect righteousness of the perfect life of Christ, accounted to my account. Given to me.

Listen to an obscure verse from an obscure minor prophet. This is from Zephaniah 2:3

3 *Seek the LORD,*

All you humble of the earth

Who have carried out His ordinances;

Seek righteousness, seek humility.

Perhaps you will be hidden

In the day of the LORD's anger. Zephaniah 2:3

Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger. Is that not the perfect definition of the concept of being found "In Christ." Hidden and safe In Christ.

And that aligns perfectly with what Jesus says next in His scenario of people outside the door trying to get in; *DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.*'

The righteous go in. The unrighteous are locked out. And the answer comes from inside. *DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.*' The kingdom is for the righteous. And the righteous have white clothing, bright and clean given to them to wear to the wedding feast. We who know Jesus, relationally and intimately, are given His righteousness as our clothing. All else, depart.

In our culture, more and more as I have grown to be a mature christian, I cringe when I hear christians first, and the rest of the world to a lesser extent, talk about my life. This is my life. I'm living my life.

In America to even begin to question whether we own our own lives to live in the way that we decide and work towards is heresy. Our goals. Our accomplishments. This life is mine and I will remain king of, if nothing else, my own self. This life is mine to live and decide, even if I make bad decisions, I reserve the right to live MY life MY way.

Our mantra, our marching orders are written into poetry By William Ernest Henley in his poem that states the case for us; Invictus

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.*

I was there Jesus. I was hanging out. I watched the spectacle of the miracles and the authoritative teaching. I followed the mob from place to place. I watched over and over as you taught and healed.

But in the end, this is my life and I have to retain ownership. Even with the overwhelming evidence, I have soldiered through untouched. My life still

belongs to me. *I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.*

I am, I am, I am. There's a ton of theology in that man's poem. We could spend a good morning just breaking down all of his thoughts and comparing his claims to the word of God. In the end, it's not so different from Satan's claims that got him removed from heaven.

Isaiah 14:13b *“I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the far reaches of the north. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” 15 But you will be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit....*

And then the door is shut and the horrors begin and you beg Jesus to let you in and it's too late. The door is sealed.

Listen again to the 2 parables in Matthew 13. I've repeated these so often you should know them by heart.

44 *“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.*

The kingdom of heaven is synonymous with knowing Jesus. Having Jesus. Jesus is the treasure. The difference between those who go into the kingdom and those who are outside the door in our passage this morning is this;

Some, or should we say most people, look at Jesus, find out about Jesus, consider Jesus and the cost to have Him is all that they are, all that they own, and they say, no, I like Jesus, He's amazing, but I'm not going to give up ME in order to have Him.

For most people the treasure of owning yourself is greater than the treasure you perceive Jesus to be. Thank you very much Jesus, you're great, you're an awesome teacher, a fine example of love, a prophet, a this or a that, the world

loves to give Him excellent titles; but not enough that I'm going to sell the treasure of *my life* to have You.

It all comes down to the perceived value of Jesus. What will you sell in order to have Jesus. This fellow in the parable recognized that the treasure of having Jesus was more valuable than anything else. He traded everything he had in order to own Jesus.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

The second parable is identical in meaning to the former. In both parables there is the discovery. A field that has a treasure that surpasses everything. You sell everything in order to buy that field and possess that treasure. In this parable the merchant discovers a pearl. *finding one pearl of great value*
Discovery.

Now I don't want to go all John Calvin on you, but in every case the difference between those safely inside and those in horror on the outside is discovery and the perception of a value greater than anything else.

Discovery. Value. Purchase at the cost of all else because the value is surpassing. Paul explains this phenomenon in the most interesting terminology. In Ephesians 2

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ Ephesians 2:1 - 5a

We were dead. Spiritually dead. Spiritual corpses walking around living OUR lives. Dead people do not perceive the value of a life with Christ. Nobody see's the treasure except the quickening from the dead part in vs. 5 happens first. Most of us get it backwards. We think we decided to let Christ in.

After years of reflection and study and learning the order of salvation according to this book, I reflect on my own experience exactly 50 years ago this time next month. August 26th 1970.

I'm at a youth retreat. Yes, believe it or not I once upon a time was a youth. And John Mac was teaching about how to know the will of God. And he gets to his 5th point. You have to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9b *But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*

I can't tell you anything else after that point. The lights came on. Who's the Holy Spirit. I didn't even know there was a Holy Spirit. I must not be a christian at all. I don't have what all these other kids seem to enjoy and have because I'm actually not a christian.

Well, I waited for the very last hand shaker to leave and had a little interview with the pastor. I said I must not be a christian because I never even heard of the Holy Spirit and that verse says if I don't have the Holy Spirit I'm not a christian, so I must not be a christian.

And John simply said, do you want to be? And in my heart I already knew, whatever it is these folks have, I want that! No matter the cost. What they all have is better than anything else. Yes, I want to be a christian.

Most of us hear that simple story and we say, yes, that's how it happened. I heard, and I decided and I prayed and I invited Jesus into my heart and I became a christian. I, I, I, I, I.

But then 50 years later of studying this book and you realize what the actual order of events was. A portion of one verse. Romans 8:9b. One sentence of

one verse got caught in the gray mass between my ears and it was at that point that God quickened me to life. Actually even that is backwards. The Holy Spirit quickened my spirit to life and suddenly that verse stopped me in my tracks until the matter was completed.

What caused the lights to come on? I was dead. Spiritually dead. Dead people don't quicken themselves to life. I can tell you the exact time and place and date when God quickened me to spiritual life. That verse was shouting at me. You thought you were a christian but you're not. And I wasn't going to leave that building until it was settled.

But looking back now, I understand God did the whole thing. I did nothing. He got me to that retreat. I thought it might be a good place to meet girls. The evening session was for Christians Only. Hey, I'm a christian, I can go. A lot of providence getting me to that campus 85 miles away on that evening to hear that speaker who included that little portion of God's word. God did all of that. You'd laugh if you saw the wrecks I drove around with in those days. I'm sure there were guardian angels involved just to accomplish 85 miles.

Why did I suddenly see the treasure and recognize the value far surpassed anything else? God sat me in that room. God delivered His word by His servant. God quickened me from the dead. Suddenly I was willing to sell ALL in order to have the treasure.

Now John Calvin would tell you the reason all of that providence happened that way and I'm here today 50 years later opening God's word to you was because of something called election. But John Calvin's not very popular so we'll just leave it at that. Were there 40 other kids in that room who heard the same verse and the lights didn't come on? I don't know. Here's what I do know. I'm smart enough to not ask the questions that my poor little brain is too small to answer.

Jesus spoke to a multitude of thousands, over and over, with astonishing power and authority and did miracle after miracle. The evidence to this group was astonishing. Overwhelming evidence! And only a handful were

quicken from the dead spiritually. Only a handful of those thousands with the overwhelming proof's recognized the value of following Jesus . . . at any cost.

Jesus, you're fantastic, but I think I'll just stay behind the steering wheel of MY life. Here's the problem. It isn't YOUR life. Jesus is Lord. Of all lives. And every knee will bow in worship to Him as Lord.

God spoke these words through the prophet Isaiah;
By Myself I have sworn; truth has gone out from My mouth, a word that will not be revoked: Every knee will bow before Me, every tongue will confess allegiance. Isaiah 45:23

Jesus is Lord. Those of us who recognize that now and give our lives, our everything to Him are blessed unspeakably, in this life and in the life to come. We are blessed with a love relationship that surpasses anything this earth can offer. And that's just the downpayment for what we will have in eternity.

Those who refuse Him now will bow to Him later. After the door is shut. Every knee WILL bow.

vs. 28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out.

This multitude with their false religious system were convinced that they would be feasting at table with God. The prophets are theirs. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are their fathers. They're in the family with the patriarchs and the prophets. They all have Jewish DNA. Of course the feast is for them. What a shock to see the prophets and the patriarchs going in and you're locked out.

Those words were like the most shocking, painful, horrifying possibility they had ever heard. But it gets worse;

29 “And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.

Jesus just dropped the ultimate bomb on these good zealously religious jews. They thought what He said before was the most offensive words they'd ever heard, but He just doubled down.

You folks will be locked out, and you're going to stand outside and watch the gentiles be welcomed to the feast. Those outside the commonwealth of Israel are coming to the feast, and you sons of the kingdom will be locked out.

North, South, East & West are code words for gentiles. Non jews will be enjoying the feast that was set for you. To a jew there is no more horrific possibility than God shunning the jews and inviting a bunch of unclean gentiles to sit at His table while He serves them the very feast that belonged to the jews!

Telling them they would be locked out of God's kingdom and God's feast was like opening a huge gaping flesh wound. Telling them that they would be standing outside while the gentiles were inside enjoying the feast that was supposed to be theirs, that's like pouring salt into the gaping wound.

How can this be?? How could God take away from His chosen people and give the wealth to filthy low dispicable lowlife outsiders. Gentiles. We don't get near enough to gentiles to even touch them. And if we do somehow have the misfortune of rubbing up against a gentile, we go and do a ceremonial washing to get clean again from their filth.

And you tell me God's going to lock me out and I'm going to stand outside and watch filthy gentiles enjoying my feast?? How can that be?

We have one final verse that explains this horrific phenomenon.

30 “And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last.”

Your order is not God's order. Your value system is not God's value system. God invites whom He wants to His table and arranges the values and the order according to His pleasure. He's God.

I want to leave you with two thoughts as we close.

Luke 14:23,24 *23 “And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 ‘For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.’”*

Rev. 22:17 *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

There is safety IN the Lord Jesus. I urge you to give your life, which isn't really yours, give it all to Him. Ask Him to take rightful ownership of you.