

GOD'S GLORY IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST

“Our Struggle Is Not Against Flesh and Blood”

by Kevin M. Jones Sr.

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God's glory is revealed in many ways. One way in which His glory is revealed is through the softening of hearts and the writing of the laws and commands on our hearts. God's Spirit dwells in us. This imparting of His Spirit brings us from death to life. Because God is with us, we should have faith in Him. Yet placing faith in God does not free us from conflict from the world and actually frustrates Satan. Satan's desire is to kill, steal, and destroy. God's desire is to give us life and peace.

KNOWING GOD AND HIS GLORY

Personal knowledge of God should cause us to want to know more of Him. The more we know of Him, the deeper the roots of love and knowledge grow. The more we know of Him, the more we want to serve Him. The more we know of Him the more we should hate our sin and fight for righteousness. We do all of this by faith. Ephesians 2:1-2 tells us that we were once dead in our sins, in which we walked according to the ways of this world. But this new way of life in God is different than the way we previously walked. The old, sinful ways in us should be daily put to death as the new, Christ-filled way flourishes.

All glory belongs to God, yet 2 Corinthians 2:18 reminds us that we

are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into His image. Believers get to experience the glory of the Lord now and later. The world was opposed to Christ because Christ's glory revealed the sinfulness and hostility of the human heart toward God. The world opposes believers today because as we walk by the Spirit, we reveal the ways and truth of God and the sinfulness bound in the human heart. We must remember when we are speaking the words of Christ that it is He who is being rejected, not us.

FIGHTING THE GREATEST BATTLE

Did you know we are in the middle of the greatest battle ever? Historians will point to the Civil War fought in the United States, WWI, and WWII as battles that devastated the world, and these historians are correct. Yet there is a cosmic battle that preceded all earthly wars, a battle between God and Satan. Although we cannot see this battle, it is happening around us. God is busy trying to prompt us by the power of the Spirit to walk in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control, and Satan is trying to get us to walk in darkness, hate, ungodliness, sexual immorality,

and division. We must remember that there is a battle we cannot see. Forgetting this can cause us to place attention and emphasis on the wrong things.

Unfortunately, we do forget that we are fighting this invisible fight. I love camp games. Whether tug-o-war, soccer, tag, or other relays, it is usually easy to know who is on what team. Why? It's because each team usually has a color scheme associated with their team. These color schemes may include bandannas, ribbons, silly string, T-shirts, and face paint. Camp teams are easily identifiable. Sadly, Satan, others who reject Christ, and the work that they're doing are not usually as clearly identifiable. It's sometimes difficult to see the spiritual battles going on in the world and around us. So we need to be alert and on the lookout for activities that are in opposition to God's Word and way. We need to be aware of the underlying evils that attempt to dethrone God as sovereign.

Since we are free from the penalty of sin and death, we should, with ambitious affection, seek to serve and snatch others from the fire as well.

But all is not lost. It's a bizarre yet comforting reality to have an active enemy that is already defeated. But that is the truth we live by. Derwin Gray reminds us: "Jesus resoundingly won the battle against humanity's great enemy, the dark powers of sin and death. Sin and death are invasive species that do not belong in God's good creation. Messiah Jesus triumphed over and disarmed these dark powers with his death and resurrection."¹ So although we have an enemy, the enemy is already defeated. We further defeat the enemy by placing our faith in God and not ourselves.

BRINGING OTHERS FROM DEATH TO LIFE

In response then, because Jesus is triumphant and the kingdom is already here though not yet fully complete, we are called to tell others of the good news of Christ.

It is healthy for us as believers to remember we also once walked in sin as we try to bring others from death to life. We once were unable to break free from the snares of this world, but we now have been born again.

We must remember, though, that we now have life, and we did not give life to ourselves. We are victorious, but we did not win the battle ourselves. First John 5:4-5 reminds us that those born of God, those who have faith and believe that Jesus is the Son of God, have conquered the world. This is only because Christ has conquered the world and now lives in us. His power is in us.

It is wonderful to know that God is perfect, omnipotent, righteous, holy, loving, worthy, and is in pursuit of us and our best interest. So we should place our faith in Him and not in things of the world.

To know God is to know that the blood of Christ powerfully purifies us from pride, profaneness, falling in love with perishable things, and the penalty of sin. Since we are free from the penalty of sin and death, we should, with ambitious affection, seek to serve and snatch others from the fire as well. This is a delightful fragrance, pleasing to our Father, and is faith in action that is commanded by Christ.

1. Derwin Gray, *God, Do You Hear Me?* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2021), 2.



JESUS IS THE WAY

+ SESSION OUTLINE

1. The Narrow Door (Luke 13:22-30)
2. The Coming Death (Luke 13:31-33)
3. The Future Adoration (Luke 13:34-35)

Background Passage: Luke 13

+ WHAT WILL MY GROUP LEARN?

Jesus taught that entrance into His kingdom is difficult and only comes through Him.

+ HOW WILL MY GROUP SEE CHRIST?

While all may come to Jesus in faith for salvation, many will not, choosing to trust in some other way to be saved. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

+ HOW SHOULD MY GROUP RESPOND?

Because the way of salvation is narrow, we keep Jesus central in all we do, helping others fix their gaze on Him and trust in Him alone for salvation.

GROUP TIME

NOTES



SCRIPTURE HANDOUT

Scan this QR code for a reproducible handout of this session's Scripture passages.



INTRODUCTION

SETTING: The Gospel of Luke is a literary masterpiece, beautifully depicting the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The climax of Luke's Gospel is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, but the heart is the "travel narrative" (Luke 9:51–19:27), where Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). While journeying from Galilee to Jerusalem, Jesus performed miracles and taught about the kingdom of God and the way of salvation. In Luke 13:22-35, Jesus portrayed Himself as the narrow door of salvation who saves sinners through His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection, which would be accomplished in Jerusalem.

EXPLAIN: Almost everyone has been "lost" at some point in life. Sometimes children wander away from their parents. Sometimes a hiker gets turned around in the woods. Sometimes a driver takes a wrong turn and winds up in unfamiliar territory.

DISCUSS: **When have you been lost and had to find your way back to a familiar person or place?** (wait for a group member to respond first; only share your response as a conclusion to the discussion)

TRANSITION: Every person is born a sinner, spiritually "lost" and separated from God by sin. The only way to be reconciled to God and enter His kingdom is through Jesus, the narrow door (Luke 13:24). No other way of salvation exists—Jesus is the way! Yet Jesus reminded His listeners that not everyone would be saved. Some would refuse to enter through the narrow door and participate in God's kingdom. Despite proximity to and familiarity with Jesus, they would be "cast out" of God's kingdom (Luke 13:28). Therefore, Jesus exhorted His listeners to "strive to enter through the narrow door" (Luke 13:24).



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POINT 1

THE NARROW DOOR (LUKE 13:22-30)

22 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.”

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 13:22-30** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 22-27** commentary to highlight the following point (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

Jesus is the **narrow** door, the only way to **salvation**.

DISCUSS: Why do people seem to bristle at “exclusivity”—the biblical claim that Jesus is the only way of salvation? (our culture elevates tolerance and inclusivity; we like to have options in our beliefs; our culture tends to reject narrow truth claims; we are prone to pride and seek other ways to be saved)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 28-30** commentary to emphasize that the God of the Old and New Testaments is the same God, and God is one (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

KEY DOCTRINE #9: God Is One: The Bible affirms that God is one, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, otherwise known as the *Shema*. In both Old and New Testament times, the advocacy of **monotheism** (belief in one God) was contrary to the surrounding culture. Where most cultures practiced polytheism (belief in multiple gods) or henotheism (the worship of one god with the belief in multiple gods), the people of God knew, based upon God's self-revelation, that **Yahweh**, the Lord, is the only one **true** God.

TRANSITION: Any person who desires to enter God's kingdom must do so through Jesus. We will see that He sacrificed all for us.

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“He died to take away our sins for the simple reason that we cannot remove them ourselves. If we could, his atoning death would be unnecessary.”¹

—John Stott (1921–2011)

COMMENTARY

VERSES 22-27 / Jesus traveled to Jerusalem (v. 22), where He would be crucified, buried in a borrowed tomb, and raised from the dead on the third day (cf. Luke 23–24). On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus was asked a significant question: **“Lord, will those who are saved be few?”** (v. 23). The parables in the previous section (cf. Luke 13:18-20) prompted the question. The inquirer was likely captivated by the size of the mustard seed and the small amount of leaven, leading to his question about the number of those who would be saved.

In response, Jesus exhorted listeners to **“strive to enter through the narrow door”** (v. 24). Jesus was not suggesting sinners were saved by human effort—this would go against the New Testament’s teaching on salvation by grace through faith (cf. Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:21-26). Rather, He emphasized the earnestness with which we should seek God’s kingdom, which can only be entered through faith in Jesus. No other way of salvation exists. Jesus is the narrow door, and all who desire to enter God’s kingdom must come through Him.

There is an urgency though. The opportunity for salvation will eventually disappear. Jesus said many people **“will seek to enter and will not be able”** because the owner of the house **“has risen and shut the door”** (vv. 24-25). At some point, either through physical death or at the end times, the door of salvation will be closed to them. Once closed, a person will be unable to enter God’s kingdom. They might **“begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’”** (v. 25), but the Lord will say, **“I do not know where you come from”** (v. 25). They may have eaten meals with Him and listened to His teaching, but they did not receive Him or possess a relationship with Him. Therefore, He will say, **“Depart from me, all you workers of evil”** (v. 27).

The interaction between Jesus and those who cannot enter God’s kingdom teaches a powerful lesson: familiarity with Jesus

is not a substitute for faith in Jesus. These “seekers” are turned away because they failed to enter through the narrow door while it was open.

VERSES 28-30 / Jesus described the destination of the wicked: a place where **“there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”** (v. 28). Jesus used this language to paint a vivid picture of the grief and anguish of those who cannot enter the kingdom of God. Rather than enjoy a meal in the kingdom of God, the wicked will experience pain and sorrow and anger. Those who ate meals with Jesus and heard Him teach are left outside the kingdom of God if they do not trust in Him.

Their despair is compounded by the fact that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets participate in God’s kingdom while they are left out (v. 28). The God in the Old Testament is the same God here in the New. But through Jesus, the narrow door and the only way, we see more clearly that the one God is triune—one God in three Persons. Those who don’t believe are outside, looking into the kingdom of God where the patriarchs and prophets enjoy a meal at God’s table, while they are excluded.

Yet the exclusion of the wicked does not mean only a few people will enter God’s kingdom. Jesus described people **“from east and west, and from north and south”** (v. 29) who would enter God’s kingdom. The kingdom of God is not reserved for Jews alone. People from all over the world will enter God’s kingdom and **“recline at table in the kingdom of God”** (v. 29).

The Gentile inclusion indicates an eschatological, or end times, reversal, which is why Jesus said, **“Behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last”** (v. 30). The Gentiles, whom Paul described as being “strangers to the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12), are sharing the banquet in the kingdom of God. Though the door is narrow, it is available for anyone to enter.

POINT 2

THE COMING DEATH (LUKE 13:31-33)

NOTES

31 At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” **32** And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. **33** Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’”

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 13:31-33** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSE 31** commentary to highlight the following point (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Jesus faced **opposition** from Herod and the religious leaders, but He refused to **abandon** His mission of salvation.

DISCUSS: What are some ways obedience to God’s mission might lead to opposition for Christians? (believing in one man and one woman in marriage leads to being called intolerant; affirming a pro-life position on abortion can lead to persecution from the world; sharing the gospel can lead to opposition)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 32-33** commentary to emphasize the following idea (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Jesus announced His upcoming death, revealing His **sovereignty** and **commitment** to His mission.

DISCUSS: From Day 4 in the DDG: How can Christians take comfort in the truth that God is in control of everything? (no matter how chaotic life gets, Christians can remember God is always at work, even when we don’t see it, and He is working for His glory and our good; when Christians feel unseen or alone, God’s omniscience and omnipresence provide encouragement; God is not blind to our struggles nor ignorant of our situation)

TRANSITION: Jesus faced opposition from religious leaders and political leaders during His ministry. Yet He refused to be distracted from His mission to redeem sinners by dying on the cross. As the next point demonstrates, Jesus knew there would be mixed responses to Him and His mission.

HEROD

Herod is a family name, so many Herods existed. Herod Antipas, mentioned here, was a tetrarch, one of four rulers. He governed over Galilee and Perea and was known to be sly and deceitful in his rule. Though married, he eloped with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother. He beheaded John the Baptist.²

COMMENTARY

VERSE 31 / After Jesus's teaching on how some will be cast out and some will be invited into the kingdom, some Pharisees came and warned Him: **"Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you"** (v. 31).

The Gospel writers often portray the Pharisees as enemies of Jesus who challenge His authority, question His miracles, and oppose His teaching (cf. Mark 8:11; 10:2; 12:13-14; Matt. 12:38; 16:1). Yet here the Pharisees' motivation is unclear. The Pharisees may have been looking for a way to get Jesus to move on and leave quickly, or they could simply be delivering a message. Regardless, the chief antagonist in the passage was Herod Antipas.

Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. His father, Herod the Great, was reigning when Christ was born and unsuccessfully attempted to kill Jesus (cf. Matt. 2:1-18). Like his father, Herod Antipas wanted to kill Jesus and threatened to accomplish what his father could not in verse 1. Eventually, Herod Antipas, in concert with Pontius Pilate, succeeded in killing Jesus (Luke 23:8-12), but here Luke simply recorded the threat, which was intended to intimidate Jesus and deter Him from accomplishing His mission.

VERSES 32-33 / Jesus was not intimidated however. He replied, **"Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course'"** (v. 32).

The exact meaning of the fox imagery is unclear. Jesus could be highlighting the craftiness of Herod, or He could be mocking Herod as a fox rather than a lion.

Regardless, Jesus would not be deterred by Herod's threats. Jesus continued performing miracles as He traveled to Jerusalem, specifically casting out demons and healing people. Jesus's miracles demonstrated He was the Messiah who had come to save His people. Jesus would not be shaken from accomplishing His mission.

Ultimately, Jesus knew His mission would result in His death. The Pharisees hoped Jesus would not continue traveling to Jerusalem. Yet Jesus knew He would die in Jerusalem because He told the Pharisees, **"It cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem"** (v. 33). Jesus's response reveals that His death was part of God's providential plan and that He was going to fulfill that plan no matter the cost.

While Herod and the religious leaders conspired to put Christ to death and were responsible for their actions, God was sovereignly working through them to redeem sinful humanity. Peter noted their responsibility and God's sovereignty in his prayer in Acts 4:27-28:

For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

The death of Jesus was not accidental; it happened according to plan. Jesus knew He had to die for the sins of the world. He knew where He would die: Jerusalem. He knew how He would die: by being lifted up, or crucified. He knew these details because He is the Son of God and had set out on a mission to do exactly this for the salvation of humankind. His love and faithfulness to His people set Him out on a seemingly impossible task where He sacrificed and suffered not only in His death but in His life. He was opposed, mocked, persecuted, abandoned, and betrayed—finally resulting in His torture and death. And He continued on this journey for you and for me to give us life.

POINT 3

THE FUTURE ADORATION (LUKE 13:34-35)

NOTES

34 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! **35** Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 13:34-35** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSE 34** commentary to highlight the following point (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

Jesus **laments** over Jerusalem, expressing His desire to **care** for the people of Israel, yet they were **unwilling** to come to Him.

DISCUSS: What are some ways people reject God's compassion? (atheists deny God's existence; many refuse to acknowledge God's common grace; many unbelievers reject the gospel; many professing Christians refuse to repent when sin is exposed)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSE 35** commentary to emphasize the following idea (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

Jesus pronounced **judgment** on Israel, but He also announced **hope** for a future moment when they would call Him **blessed**.

DISCUSS: How does the gospel and the coming of Christ give us hope? (we know our sins are forgiven and we will no longer be separated from God; we know our salvation is secure; we know our future is in heaven; we know Christ is returning for His people)

COMMENTARY

VERSE 34 / Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem to die, which should not have been surprising given the city's history. Jesus lamented over the city and highlighted its bloody past: **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!"** (v. 34). The Old Testament recounts the death of various prophets. Many of the Lord's prophets were killed by Jezebel (1 Kings 18:4). Uriah was killed by Jehoiakim (Jer. 26:20). Zechariah was stoned by Joash (2 Chron. 24:21; cf. Luke 11:51). The city of Jerusalem, specifically the Pharisees and religious leaders, had rejected Christ and would eventually kill Him, just as they had killed the prophets who came before Him.

Several of Jesus's parables reflect Israel's rejection of God's messengers. The parable of the wicked tenants is one example focused on the theme of rejection (Luke 20:9-19). In the parable, a man planted a vineyard and leased it to tenant farmers. When the man sent his servants three times to gather fruit from the vineyard, the tenant farmers beat the servants and sent them away. Finally, the farmer sent his son, believing the farmers would respect him. Tragically, the farmers killed the son to steal his inheritance. The parable concludes with the vineyard owner returning to punish the wicked tenants.

The message of this parable is clear: judgment awaits those who reject God's messengers. The servants represented God's prophets, who warned Israel to repent and return to God. The son represented Jesus, the Son of God who would be killed by the religious leaders and the Roman government. The wicked tenants represented the people of Israel, especially the Pharisees, scribes, and religiously leaders who rejected Jesus during His earthly ministry.

Despite the city's rejection of the prophets and Jesus in particular, Jesus displayed compassion for the city and its inhabitants. He used the imagery of a mother hen gathering her chicks under her wings to

convey His desire to protect them: **"How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings"** (v. 34). The imagery is drawn from the Old Testament, which uses zoomorphic language to describe God as a bird (cf. Deut. 32:11; Ruth 2:12; Ps. 17:8; Isa. 31:5). The point of the imagery is clear: Jesus cares for the city of Jerusalem and expresses His compassion for them. Unfortunately, the people are obstinate. They refuse to come to Jesus and find protection (Luke 13:34). The problem is the heart of the people: they refuse to enter God's kingdom through the narrow door.

VERSE 35 / Because of their rejection, Jesus pronounced judgment on Jerusalem: **"Behold, your house is forsaken"** (v. 35). This imagery is drawn from the Old Testament as well. The prophet Jeremiah warned about God's judgment on Israel and the possibility of God abandoning or forsaking the people due to sin (cf. Jer. 12:7; 22:5). The warning becomes reality, as "Jesus is more emphatic than Jeremiah's statement of the potential rejection of the nation. He states that a time of abandonment has come. Rather than being gathered under God's wings, their house is left empty and exposed. The now-empty house is the nation."³ Because they have rejected Jesus, they must face God's judgment on the nation.

While judgment was certain, Jesus did not leave them without hope. He pointed to a future time when they would see Him and say, **"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"** (Luke 13:35)! Some have read this as a reference to the triumphal entry, but in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus made this statement (Matt. 23:37-39) after the triumphal entry (Matt. 21:1-11). Jesus was referring to a future time when Israel would recognize Him as Messiah. One day, Israel will enter God's kingdom through the narrow door.

MY RESPONSE

Because the way of salvation is narrow, we keep Jesus central in all we do, helping others fix their gaze on Him and trust Him alone for salvation.

NOTES

HEAD:

Jesus is the only way of salvation. No other path of salvation exists. As Peter said in Acts 4:12, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” The way of salvation is narrow, and all other “paths” of salvation are dead ends. Therefore, we must reject competing claims of salvation and cling to Christ alone. He is the narrow way of salvation that must be received by faith alone.

How can you communicate the “narrowness” of salvation in a compelling and convincing way?

HEART:

Jesus lamented over the city of Jerusalem, which demonstrates His compassion for the people in the city and His desire to save Him. Unfortunately, they were unwilling to come to Him. We do not know whether people will accept the gospel or reject the gospel, but we should have compassion on them and share the gospel with them. Our willingness to share the gospel is evidence of compassion and reflects Christ’s compassion for sinners.

In what areas can you confess to God concerning your lack of compassion for others or lack of obedience in sharing the gospel?

HANDS:

Jesus is the narrow way of salvation, which is a crucial truth for believers and unbelievers. Christians need to be reminded of the exclusiveness of the gospel and cling to Christ alone for salvation and sanctification. Security and spiritual maturity are connected to Christ, so we must remind ourselves and others of the confidence and progress in the spiritual life that come from Christ. Similarly, unbelievers need to be informed of the exclusiveness of Christ and encouraged to trust Christ, the narrow way of salvation. There is no hope apart from Him. We must communicate the gospel—with believers and unbelievers—so that God can save sinners and strengthen His people.

Who needs a reminder of the good news of the gospel this week that you can share with?

VOICES from THE CHURCH

“As we worship we celebrate our salvation through Christ who will bring us to glory, we pray for that kingdom to come, we quicken our hope by praises and anthems that direct our thoughts to the next life, and through the ministry of the Word we build our faith in this eternal hope.”⁴

—Allen Ross

POINT 1: THE NARROW DOOR (LUKE 13:22-30)

+ COMMENTARY

“Very solemnly significant is the difference between striving and seeking. It is like the difference between wishing and willing. There may be a seeking which has no real earnestness in it, and is not sufficiently determined, to do what is needful in order to find. Plenty of people would like to possess earthly good, but cannot brace themselves to needful work and sacrifice. Plenty would like to ‘go to heaven,’ as they understand the phrase, but cannot screw themselves to the surrender of self and the world. Vagrant, halfhearted seeking, such as one sees many examples of, will never win anything, either in this world or in the other. We must strive, and not only seek.”⁵

+ ILLUSTRATION

In order to drive a car in the United States, a person must obtain a driver’s license. Multiple tests are required to obtain the license, including a driving test, a vision test, and a road sign test. Some of the road signs on the test can be challenging or confusing, especially for teenagers who do not have much experience on the road. However, one road sign is significantly easier to identify than the other signs: the “one way” sign. If a person can read, they should have no trouble recognizing this sign, because “one way” is written on the sign!

The simplicity of the sign is likely intentional. Drivers need to be able to identify the road sign quickly and easily, because ignoring the sign and driving the wrong way could lead to a major accident. There is only one direction a driver can legally go on a one-way street. Similarly, Jesus is the “one way” to enter God’s kingdom. There are no other ways or routes to God. He is the narrow door, and all who enter God’s kingdom must come through Him. Failure to recognize this reality and embrace it will lead to disaster, just like drivers who ignore a “one way” sign to their own peril.

EXTRA

+ OPTIONAL TEACHING ACTIVITY

Ask your group if anyone knows anyone famous or has met anyone famous. Have that person tell how he or she knows that celebrity or how they met.

Consider one of the answers that may be just a perchance meeting (NOT one where the person actually does know the celebrity). Ask that person if he or she thought that celebrity would remember that one meeting. The answer would probably be no. Use that illustration to describe how there's a difference between meeting someone or even having dinner with someone and actually fully knowing a person. In this passage, Jesus is saying the same thing. At the end times, there will be some who will say they knew Jesus because they ate in His presence and heard Him teaching in the streets (Luke 13:26), but Jesus will say He doesn't know them and then tell them to go away (Luke 13:27). To have a relationship with Jesus is to really know Him, not just know of Him.

POINT 2: THE COMING DEATH (LUKE 13:31-33)

+ COMMENTARY

“Some claim that malevolent motives lie behind this warning. They are trying to drive him into a trap in Jerusalem where he will come under the power of the Sanhedrin, and his followers will panic. Or, they use this ruse simply because they want him out of their hair and sphere of influence. Or, perhaps they are trying to expose him as a false prophet for rejecting God's plan (7:30) by seeking to save himself. Such speculation is unwarranted. Luke is neither concerned with their motives for warning Jesus nor with Herod's motives for wanting to do away with him. The scene simply sets up Jesus' response, his acceptance of his divine mission with its attendant fate, and his lament over Jerusalem. Neither the Pharisees nor Herod direct his destiny; only God does.”⁶

+ ILLUSTRATION

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the largest funeral gathering to ever take place occurred in 1969. Conjeevaram Natarajan Annadurai, the Chief Minister of Madras (a state in India), died on February 3, 1969, and an estimated 15,000,000 people attended the funeral for the departed Chief Minister. The size of the crowd revealed his personal popularity and his political influence in the state of Madras and the nation of India. Clearly his life was impactful, and his death was a significant historical event.⁷

However, the death of Jesus Christ is the most significant event in human history. On the cross, Jesus “himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; that we might die to sin and live to righteousness” (1 Pet. 2:24). Through faith in Christ, our sins are forgiven. We are dead to sin and can live a righteous life because of Christ's death. He is the narrow door, and His death made salvation and sanctification possible. Moreover, the impact of Christ's death is global. People from every tongue, tribe, and nation will worship around the throne in heaven because Jesus, the Lamb of God, was slain (cf. Rev. 5:8-14; John 1:29).

POINT 3: THE FUTURE ADORATION (LUKE 13:34-35)

+ COMMENTARY

“Jesus’ turbulent lament over Jerusalem is the result of his compassion (‘I have longed to gather your children together’) being met by a stubborn countercurrent of human rejection (‘but you were not willing’). God is not infrequently portrayed in the OT as a protective mother bird. Jesus assumes the same image here, perhaps as a hen, ‘under whose wings you will find refuge; whose faithfulness will be your shield and rampart’ (Ps 91:4). The maternal instinct of the hen is powerful, and no less the compassion of Jesus for Jerusalem. Jerusalem spurns Jesus’ compassion, however, for Jerusalem ‘kills the prophets and stones those sent to you.’ The literal meaning of ‘apostles’ in Greek is ‘sent ones.’ Hence the reference to ‘prophets and those sent’ (v. 34) repeats Jesus’ earlier prophecy of 11:49, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill.’ Stoning can be an impulsive expression of wrath in the Bible, but it also was the prescribed form of execution for the sins of idolatry and apostasy. The stoning of v. 34 implies determination rather than impulsiveness. Those whom God sends to Jerusalem, in other words, received the ultimate religious sanction—stoning. The will of God is thus rejected by a perversion of the law of God.”⁸

+ ILLUSTRATION

Every year, children from all over the world write a letter to Santa Claus with a list of demands, also known as a wish list. They ask Santa to bring them bikes, skateboards, books, clothes, video games and gaming consoles, and a host of other toys and gadgets. They send their list off to the North Pole, and then they wait for December 25. For many of them, the time seems to drag. They are eagerly waiting for Christmas Day, and the special day cannot get here soon enough. Even adults get excited during the holiday season and look forward to Christmas Day.

In Luke 13:34-35, Jesus talked about a day in the future in which He will receive praise. Jesus was anticipating that day. He desired for people to recognize Him as Messiah and trust Him for salvation, but as long as people rejected Him, they would continue to remain under God’s judgment. Nevertheless, hope remained for Israel. Jesus anticipated a day when His people would receive Him as Messiah and worship Him as Lord.

References

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