

11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2022

Saturday, 8/20 at 4:00 | Sunday, 8/21 at 9:00

Only One Way to Heaven  
*It's Narrow!*  
Are You Striving to Enter?



Luke 13:24

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Text: Isaiah 66:18-24; Hebrews 12:4-17; Luke 13:22-30 NAS 1995

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: As recorded in **Luke 13**, “...someone said to [Jesus], ‘Lord, are there *just* a few who are being saved?’ 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’” (23-24). So, *entering heaven isn’t easy*: ♦the door is narrow, ♦striving is important, and ♦many who try to enter will be turned away.

This sermon will touch on some key passages from today’s readings to help us understand ☞*God’s blessed desire for all people* and ☞*the horrible eternity awaiting the unrepentant*.

1. **Old Testament:** **Isaiah 66:18-24**

- a. **Good News** – **declare it:** <sup>19</sup> “... [the believers] will declare My glory among the nations. <sup>20</sup> Then they shall bring all... [fellow believers] from all the nations... to the

LORD [by all possible means] ..." // Amazing! People who believe declare God's glory (1 Peter 2:9).

- b. **Bad News – for all rejectors:** The LORD said, <sup>24</sup> "...the men Who have transgressed against Me [*“lie forever under the awful sentence of [My] wrath”* (Pulpit Commentary)]. ...their worm will not die And their fire will not be quenched..." // "*Ordinarily the worm feeds upon the disorganized body, and then dies. The fire consumes the fuel, and then itself expires. But here the worm never dies; the fire never goes out*" (Pulpit Commentary). *So sad☹ and horrible☹ (Rev. 14:11)!*

## 2. **Epistle: Hebrews 12:4-17**

- a. **Good News – God loves us and disciplines us:** <sup>5</sup> ... "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; <sup>6</sup> FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." ... <sup>10</sup> ...He *disciplines us* for our good, so that we may share His holiness.... // So, let us rightly respond to the LORD's discipline; let us repent!

<sup>14</sup> Pursue... the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup> See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God... // Those verses are calling us to ▶ see the great importance, ▶ run after God's gift of holiness, and ▶ make sure we do not come up short! How? The HS, *who makes us holy*, works through God's word; therefore, let us be serious, diligent, faithful to ♥read, ♥think, ♥believe, and ♥apply!

- b. **Bad News – false repentance condemns:** <sup>17</sup> ...when [Esau] desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected,

for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears. // What does that mean? Dr. Luther wrote: **God... has offered His mercy to all men who truly repent... But there is another repentance that is ... false ... namely, when I repent in such a way that I am not ashamed of having offended God but am ashamed because I have done harm to myself** (AE 5:151–52) (TLSB). // Think about Judas and Peter: The sorrow of Judas *led to death and hell*; the sorrow of Peter *led to forgiveness and heaven* (2 Cor. 7:10)!

### 3. **Gospel:** **Luke 13:22-30**

- a. **Good News – *repent and live*:** <sup>24</sup> “Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.... // Lenski: “Our effort is not to... push open the door; it is open to begin with, but it is shut and locked after a time. So, we are to let nothing deter us from entering while it is open.... We are to exert ourselves to the utmost to enter the kingdom by true repentance” (747).

<sup>29</sup> And they [*the repentant ones*] will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline *at the table* in the kingdom of God.... // *A great blessing!*

<sup>30</sup> *...some are last who will be first...* // That is, some who *SEEM* to be hell-bound will ☺repent and ☺be forever blessed!

- b. **Bad News – *going through the motions is worthless*:** <sup>25</sup> “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.’ //

Right now: *Many are rejecting!* All who continue will never enter! Think about this: Lenski: “The door will... be shut at the last day. But it closes also when the patience and the longsuffering of God come to an end for any nation or for any individual” (749).

<sup>26</sup> Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets’; // That is like saying: We attended church and received the supper.

<sup>27</sup> and He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.’ // Jesus knows one thing about them: *They are evildoers!*

<sup>28</sup> In that place [outside of God’s kingdom] 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 yourselves being thrown out.... // Entrance into God’s kingdom is being freely offered; for all who persistently reject, *they will finally realize the awfulness of their rejection and eternally regret it!*

<sup>30</sup> *...some are first who will be last.*” // The first should be in the kingdom, for example: ▶Children of Christian parents, ▶churchgoers, and ▶people who are good, kind, and helpful, yet some will be ☹LAST, thus ☹LOST *because they lacked godly sorrow and trust in Jesus!*

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Holy Spirit, while so many around us are unknowingly on a march to hell, ➡make us repentant, ➡keep us repentant, and ➡even snatch many others from the flames of the coming eternal torment!

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