

Luke
See Jesus
The Narrow Door
Luke 13:18-30

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I. What God chooses to measure is often radically different from what we choose to measure.

Luke 13:18-24 *“He said therefore, ‘What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it?’¹⁹ It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.’²⁰ And again he said, ‘To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?’²¹ It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.’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.’”*

If the Bible teaches salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, plus nothing – and we do believe that it does – how does the **strive** part work? The word we translate into strive here, Ἀγωνίζεσθε (Agōnizesthe) was originally used to describe Olympic athletes in the peak of their efforts.

The only way people like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and people like me, and people like you, have any chance of getting into the Kingdom of God is if God’s incomprehensible mercy drives His limitless power to treat us with infinite kindness by giving us a faith we could never deserve. That is the essence of grace.

II. The only way into the Kingdom of God is through an all-consuming effort to know and love Jesus.

Luke 13:24-30 *“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.”*

Just wanting to be in the kingdom won’t be enough. Even knowing that Jesus is the door to the kingdom of God won’t be enough.

The people knocking seem to at least agree with the premise that only known people should be allowed in. Their argument isn’t based on their merits, their timeliness, or the fact that they got the right door. Their argument is that they actually do know each other!

III. Consistent proximity to Jesus is not the same thing as a consistent, growing affection for Jesus.

Matthew 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

3 reasons for incredible hope:

1. **No amount of sin can keep you out.** Just like the mustard plant and the yeast - an affection for Jesus can overwhelm and transform any desire or activity.
2. **No one who strives will be turned away.** See Jeremiah 29:13 and Luke 13:29 Anyone can strive to enter and everyone who strives will be welcomed.
3. **The door is not shut, yet.** There will come a day when the door will be closed but it hasn't happened yet, so there is still time.

If you want to make a consistent, growing affection for Jesus the dominating, all-consuming effort of your life, but you're not sure how or where to start, here are a few practical ideas that have been helpful for me.

1. Structured, unhurried time with Jesus.
2. A record of your gratitude.
3. Think and speak about eternity
4. A ruthless, aggressive, posture towards anything you know is a threat

This passage of scripture encapsulates this kind of life very well:

Philippians 3:8-14 “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”