

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

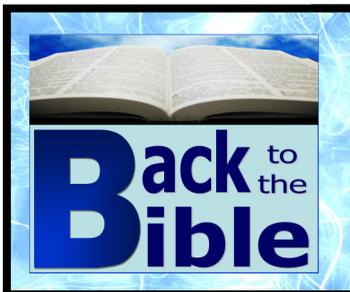
Visit Us At:
www.wjchurchofchrist.org
For Audio Lessons,
Past Bulletins, Bible Studies
& More
Wireless Internet Password:
94615548

FOR THE RECORD	
Sunday Bible Study	28
Sunday AM Worship	37
Sunday PM Worship	21
Wed. Bible Study	18
Offering	\$1693

are either to hold on to the baggage or let go. However, too often, we are unwilling to let go of our baggage. Then Satan is there to convince us we can be religious and still obtain salvation by entering another gate (the wide gate that everyone else is going through and we do not have to give up our baggage). That baggage represents such things as religious teachings or practices that are contrary to the Word of God, such as salvation by faith alone, or grace alone, or once saved, always save or even one church is as good as another church. It may be ungodly lifestyles and practices such as adulterous marriages, lying, cheating, stealing, cursing, immodest dress, social drinking, etc. Whatever is contrary to the Will of God simply will not fit through the narrow gate!

Jesus went on in verses 25-30 to illustrate that just being religious is not enough; just claiming to know Him is not enough. Salvation has been provided by God (at a very high cost to heaven). Every person, because of sin, is in need of salvation (Romans 3:23). Every person, by the grace of God, has access to salvation (Titus 2:11). The question is still pertinent to us today, "Lord, are there few who will be saved?" The sad reality is that not everyone is willing to accept God's terms and therefore reject the salvation God has provided and will be lost. Jesus said, "Strive to enter thru the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able." Do not let it be said of us if we are unable or unwilling to enter in, because it means we are too stubborn.

"And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³ Then one said to Him, 'Lord, are there few who are saved?' And He said to them, ²⁴ "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:22-24).



A Weekly Publication of the
West Jefferson Church of Christ
130 Robert Street
West Jefferson NC 28694
Phone: (336) 846-5615 | Email: info@wjchurchofchrist.org
Volume XVI August 6, 2023 Number 32

Minister:
Tim Canup
tim@wjchurchofchrist.org

Times of Services:
Sunday
Bible Study:... 10:00am
AM Worship:...11:00am
PM Worship:...6:00pm
2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday
Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program
Sunday:.....7:30am
"Back to the Bible"
AM 580 WSKS
93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm & Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

Are There Few That Are Saved?

Tim Canup

What is the one thing every person needs? Salvation from sin! Sin is the greatest downfall to mankind. It can and will utterly destroy any and every person who trifles with it, eternally. We have an enemy that is masterful in deceiving us into ignoring the sin problem. Man, in and of himself, has no hope of being saved from his sins; our only hope is Jesus the Christ. If it were up to us to decide, I imagine that the majority of the race would be saved? Just attend most funerals. However, the Bible teaches that is just not the case. In Luke 13:22-24, an unnamed individual came to Jesus with a great question. We can benefit from a study of his question and the answer given.

First, notice the asking of the question. It is important to establish the proper context in order to properly understand what is being said or taught. In John 10:22-39, Jesus was back in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication and was approached by the religious leaders asking for Him to plainly state He was the Christ. Although our Lord had not explicitly said words, He had clearly and frequently provided them with adequate evidence. Here Jesus again claims to be the Messiah and in verse 31 they took up stones again to stone Him. In verses 40-42, Jesus departed across the Jordan to the area of Perea where continued to teach of coming Kingdom. In Luke 13:22 we read, "And He went through the cities and villages,

Continued Inside

teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.” When Luke said Jesus was “journeying toward Jerusalem” we do not read of Him doing so until the beginning of last week of His life (He returned near there, but not into city). While traveling about and teaching, an unnamed man approached him and asked the question that serves as title of our study.

We will get to that question in a moment, but consider what could have prompted him to ask what he did? We are not told explicitly, but the late J. W. McGarvey makes the following suggestion. Just prior, Jesus had received sharp opposition for healing a woman on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-21). In response, Jesus gave them two parables. Previously in His ministry, He had given these same two parables (Matthew 13:31, 33). Notice Luke 13:18-21 “Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” Both parables teach the small beginning of the church and how it would grow to something very large.

Second, let us analyze the question. Exactly what did he mean by this question? Brother McGarvey also suggested that most likely this man was a Jew. The Jews thought they, and they alone, would be allowed into the coming kingdom, i.e., the recipients of salvation. This fits the context perfectly. In essence, what he was asking was, “You taught that the kingdom (or church) would start small and then grow to something large, but, is it not the case only a few are going to be saved? That is, us Jews? The Jews did not believe anyone else was worthy of salvation, such as Gentiles, but especially not the Samaritans. There is no way of knowing this man’s motivation for asking question. He could have, as the religious leaders often did, asked Him trying to tempt or trap Jesus in His words. Or perhaps, he could have had typical Jewish idea of coming kingdom (only Jews allowed) and having just heard Jesus’ parables was honestly asking wanting clarification. Nonetheless, he asked and our Lord gave a beautiful response to it, the perfect response.

Third, notice the answer given and then let us make application for ourselves. First, there is a Diligence to Enter. Jesus said, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate...” There is a similar thought in Matthew 7:13-14, however, it is not a parallel account. The definition of the word “strive” is from the Greek (*agonizomai*) from which we get our English word, “agonize.” J. W. Shepard suggested “agonizing like the wrestler in a struggle” (Shepard, Christ of the Gospels, 406). Rogers & Rogers says, “To engage in an athletic contest...to strive to do something with great intensity and effort, to make every effort to {do something}” (144). It is literally “Keep on straining every nerve to enter in through the narrow door (of salvation)” (Shepard, 406). Jesus is not describing a one-time thing. Notice a description of the word “strive.” It demands such

focus that one puts every ounce and fiber of their being into obtaining the prize or goal. It describes the athlete, so focused on contest, he does not realize they are injured, or a soldier at war that is so focused on battle, does not realized he has been shot. It involves blocking out every and all distractions (cf. I Corinthians 7:35).

Second, consider the destination of salvation. Jesus said, “enter the narrow gate,” which implies that there is a certain way to salvation, described as a small, narrow gate. Access through this gate is something that restricts. Because of this, some have cried, “You have set the bar too high,” or some call us “narrow-minded.” However, our Lord said to keep on striving to enter in, it is not something that just comes automatically.

Third is the desire of the many. Jesus said, “for many...will seek to enter...” Is it not the case that everyone wants to go to heaven. As the late Andrew Connally used to say, “It would be better worded that everybody wants to be in heaven; because “going” requires work and effort.”

Fourth, we see the difficulty of entering. So, what is the difficulty? Jesus said, “many...will seek...” Is it that God made the access too hard to find? Certainly not! Is it that the requirements are too great to enter? They are high, but not so high man cannot meet them (cf. I John 5:3). Is it that God has only chosen a select few to enter (e.g., 144,000 or certain individuals)? Paul said in Titus 2:11 that salvation has been provided to every person and Peter said God is no respecter of person (Acts 10:34-35). Jesus said, man “will not be able.” Literally it is as Mr. Shepard suggest, “will not be strong (enough)” (406, footnote #3). The idea is that in and of ourselves, we are not able to do it. The difficulty comes on the part of man. Consider this illustration: Jesus described the entrance as a narrow gate, that is, it is something so small, it requires effort to enter. If it were physical gate, perhaps it would only be about 3 feet high and a foot or so wide. A person could fit through it, but they would have to conform their body to do so. The idea spiritually is that we can enter if willing to humbly ourselves and conform our will to the will of God. But the problem is, man comes along, wanting salvation and either says, “I am NOT bending down there!” or, he may look at the gate and then moves on, or he may immediately drop to his knees spiritually and enters, meeting God’s requirements. Often times we have things in our lives contrary to Will of God, which could be compared to large baggage. We can fit into gate, but baggage will not. Our only options

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Aug 6 – Men’s Business Meeting & Ladies’ Bible Class after Evening Worship
- Aug 14-20 – Old-Fashioned Tent Meeting @ Greenfield Campground w/ David Irick
- Aug 20 – Preach & Eat & 1:30 Worship Service
- Aug 27 – Prayer Service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell