

²⁷ “But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’

²⁸ “There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. ²⁹ People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. ³⁰ Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.”

Catherine Johnson sits at her desk in her office. Before her lie pages upon pages of documents, with figures, charts, and calculations. And I’m sure that she was pretty aware of the concentration and precision she would have to employ as she examined them. And that’s because Catherine Johnson worked at NASA before the widespread use of computers. And they were trying to land a human being on the moon. It was a target that was moving thousands of miles away, and to do so would involve putting people inside a metal tube with explosives on the back end of it. It was something that hadn’t been done before. And not only was the task difficult the risks were extremely high. A few degrees off would mean that instead of landing safely on a flat patch of ground, the spacecraft will smash into the side of the mountain crater. If the spaceship were moving too fast, it would mean the spacecraft would go clean out into space where certain death would happen. A transposed digit would mean a fiery inferno of death on national television instead of a victorious return to earth. Stakes were high, and Catherine was the one they trusted to ensure it was a success.

In our text for today from the gospel of Luke and Jesus is taking some time to explain to some people around him the monumental task of a different character. And that is salvation itself. It comes about because of a man’s question in the crowd: someone asked him lord, are only a few people going to be saved?

And Jesus describes The kingdom of heaven and the entrance into it in terms of a house. But it is not all roses and daisies as Jesus tells it. Yes, Jesus describes the entry into the kingdom first in a term of three specific warnings: with a narrow door. The temporary door. The all-important door. It’s not something that is pleasant to talk about, but it is something that Jesus necessitates. The reality of judgment and the reality of hell.

Jesus warns first that the door is narrow, that many will try to enter it and that not everyone will be able to. The Bible makes it very clear on what this means. Because what is required to be in gods presence is perfection. God cannot stand evil in his presence. Got himself is the doorkeeper, and you have to enter on his terms. If you try to enter on your own righteousness, if you try to enter by believing in a different God, if you try to enter based on anything other than faith in the righteousness earned by Christ, you cannot enter.

The second warning that Jesus gives it is about The temporary nature of this door. Not only is the door narrow and hard to enter into, but at some point, the owner of the house gets up and closes this door. At a time that is unannounced, Unknown to anyone but God himself, he will stand up and close the door that enters into eternal life. And the men who are left outside and are trying to enter ask to be let in. Then God replies that he does not know

them, even though they may recognize him now, but because of the lack of faith, he is unknown to God.

And the third warning is one of importance. Is that Jesus describes those who are left out of the door of eternal life are in a place that is described as weeping and gnashing of teeth. Because it's at this point, they recognize that the door is closed and that they realize that they have been judged and that they plead and beg, and they know the way to enter, but they cannot do so anymore.

This is the sad reality; the harsh warning that God is trying to give us is that there is a judgment. That there is a standard by which we must enter the gates of life. That there is a period in which the time of grace will end. But all of those who do not enter into heaven and eternal life will be in Hell, internal torment where there's pain, weeping, and gnashing of teeth separated from the presence of God for all of eternity, painfully aware of what it is that they have missed out on, With no chance of having a do-over.

And what was Jesus' goal with this teaching? Well, it's not that of intolerance, over harshness, or spite. Jesus' purpose of his teaching in this lesson is that of love. This warning is there for the specific purpose of driving us back to the cross. Because Jesus loves us, like a loving parent, he warns us of the dangers that exist. He warns us about the coming judgment and the punishment and consequences of sin.

And if you are like me, these thoughts, this lesson can be scary. To think about the narrow door and to be terrified of our own sin and our own unworthiness. Hearing Jesus' words and warnings and understanding that the stakes are so high, so permanent. But Jesus did far more than just warn us about it. Because Jesus set his face to Jerusalem to give us the deliverance to provide us with the forgiveness of sins that allow us to enter into eternal life to avoid the pain and torment of hell and instead to enjoy the blessings And Paramount and Joy to come with being in his presence for all of eternity, Jesus, through his teaching, proclaimed the gospel that while that door is narrow while it is open for only a time, while those who are left out will be so for all eternity; Jesus has given us an escape from that.

Not because of anything that we have done, not because of our race or gender or ethnicity, or even the actions we have taken, but purely because of the grace of God. Purely by the life and actions that Jesus has taken on this earth, we can enter that door into the heavenly feast. You, as a Christian, by Grace alone, through faith, will enter through that narrow door. That door to heaven to the presence of God forever.

Jesus says that people will come from all nations from the east, the west from the north, and the south to join with all who have faith in the Savior. All who have put their trust in Jesus Christ enter the house from eternity. He has proclaimed his truth through God's word and taken all of our sins away by his life and death, and through faith in him, we can enter through that narrow door.

There's no greater comfort. There is no greater purpose. There's nothing that encourages us to praise our God more than this. That our God rescued us and rescued all from eternal damnation, he saves all those who put their trust in him.

Jesus' warning also serves as a wonderful encouragement for us. Because the doors open. It is open today. But it will not be open forever. And there are those we know around us who do not know about the grace of God. They do not understand What awaits Those Who do not know their savior. Who do not know them the salvation and heaven that God has won for us. God has given us the opportunity to share the teaching that he gave us with others.

Catherine Johnson had a job with some pretty high stakes. Responsible for calculating a spaceship to land on the moon and bring it home safely. But there is the task with even higher stakes: our eternal destination. But unlike Catherine, we know that we have God himself to guide us home. The one who redeemed us bought us, forgave us. While the stakes are high, the outcome is sure for you. It's heaven. Amen.