

Sermon Text: Luke 13:22-35 Strive to Enter

Christ urges each of us to strive to enter the Kingdom of God through Him alone.

1) Strive to enter through Christ for God's judgment will come suddenly (13:22-28).

- a) Many will not be able to enter, being shut outside, because:
 - i) They are not chosen: v. 25 "I do not know you, where you come from." (cf. Jer. 1:5; Hos. 5:3; 13:5; Amos 3:2 where to be "known" by God is to be chosen by Him)
 - ii) They refused to repent even though He ministered among them: v. 27 "workers of iniquity"
- b) Jesus' preaching & table fellowship was not personal affirmation, but a call to repent (v. 26; cf. 8:11-15, 19-21).
- c) The Kingdom of God (vs. 28) is the saving domain/dominion of God. To be cast out of it is to be under the wrath of God.
- d) "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" (v. 28) indicates self-pitying sorrow and God-hating anger in hell (the historical prelude to the final judgment/hell was the destruction of Jerusalem, which is the immediate danger for unbelievers in Jesus' and Luke's audience).
- e) Knowing the joy of the Patriarchs and Prophets will only increase the sorrow of the wicked.
- f) V. 30 "some are first who will be last"—people with high standing in the Jewish/religious establishment will be excluded in the great reversal of the Kingdom of God
- g) **Application:** Jesus warns that many will only seek shelter from God's judgment when it is "everlastingly too late." Do not be complacent about your salvation. Don't use theological debate to evade Christ's call to repent. God is patient, but His promise of justice is not slack (2 Pet. 3:8-10). Strive to enter, knowing the fear of the Lord.

2) Strive to enter through Christ for God's mercy is vast (13:29-30).

- a) Prevailing Jewish belief that only a "few" would be saved because the Gentiles were excluded from covenant and kingdom.
- b) What about Matthew 7:14: few find the narrow gate
- c) Vastness of God's Mercy:
 - i) "People will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God" (13:29).
 - (1) Four points of the compass indicates the international proclamation and reception of the Good News of the Kingdom of God.
 - (2) "Recline at table" indicates fellowship with the Lord.
 - (3) Matthew 8:11 says, "I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven."
 - ii) "Some are last who will be first"—people who are shut out will be exalted with Christ
- d) **Application:**
 - i) Strive against self-righteous pride by looking into the mirror of God's perfect law embodied in the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:10, 23).
 - ii) Strive against despair by beholding the immeasurable grace of God displayed in the cross of Christ (Rom. 5:8).

3) Strive to enter through Christ for God's salvation is in Christ alone (13:24, 31-35).

- a) “the narrow door” (13:24)—two ways to live: two ends, life and death (cf. Matt. 7:13-14)
 - i) Pluralism—“all paths lead to the same place”—fails because God is not what we imagine Him to be; He is what He is—“I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” (Exod. 3:14).
 - ii) Inclusivism—“all paths are implicitly the path of Christ”—fails because “Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame. . . . For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’” (Rom. 10:11, 13). The path of Christ is explicit faith in Christ that inevitably produces obedience to His teaching (Eph. 2:8-10).
- b) Consider the immediate context of the Kingdom’s liberation from Roman oppression with the broader context of the Kingdom’s liberation from the oppression of the kingdom of darkness.
- c) What was the Divine Plan for rebirth of the Kingdom of God?
 - i) Jesus’ authority over the powers of darkness and the curse of sin (13:32): casting out demons and performing cures on His way to Jerusalem/death.
 - ii) Jesus’ death for the sins of His people as the climax of prophecy (13:33).
 - iii) Jesus’ resurrection as the perfection of His Kingdom rebirth (13:32): lit. “I am perfected.”
 - iv) Jesus is the shelter from the judgment of God (13:34; cf. Deut. 32:11; Psalm 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 91:4; Ruth 2:12). Luke 21:22 says of Jerusalem’s destruction: “for these are days of vengeance, to fulfil all that is written.”
- d) Only the LORD has the authority to shut the door (31-33):
 - i) Vv. 31-32—Herod cannot thwart the purpose of God.
 - ii) V. 33—“I must go on My way.” Divine necessity.
- e) Even the temple cannot keep you safe from judgment (13:35a).
- f) Christ is the rejected stone who has become the chief cornerstone (Psalm 118:22, 26). He is the LORD who saves (13:35b).
 - i) Literally: “Until you should say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”
 - ii) The Disciples did say it (19:37-38), but Jerusalem refused it (19:39; 23:16-24).
 - iii) God’s plan of salvation and the rebirth of the Kingdom (Acts 4:27-28)
- g) **Application:** Are you under the wings of Jesus?
 - i) If not, then strive to flee from the judgment of God into the safety of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Repent of your self-righteousness and sin. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and King.
 - ii) If so, then rejoice in the assurance of your salvation, and strive to persevere in faith (21:19): “By your endurance you will gain your lives.”

Conclusion: Christ urges each of us to strive to enter the Kingdom of God through Him alone.

Philippians 2:12-13: “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

Doxology: “And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.”—Philippians 4:19-20