**Luke 13:22-30**

**The Narrow Door Stands Wide Open**

There was a gentleman I got to know when I was out in Montana. We were discussing these words that Jesus speaks, and with a straight face, Kurt says to me, I don’t think I’m gonna fit. I asked him, “What do you mean?” He explained that he was so bogged down by his past mistakes, his intrusive thoughts, his uncertainty about forgiveness that there’s no way he’d be able to walk through this door to heaven that Jesus describes as narrow. I stood there and said, you’re right, I’m too big to fit through that door too. There’s two reasons that the door is too narrow for people like you and me to enter. The first is the saturation of sin. You can’t walk through the door to heaven with a single mark on your record. You can’t enter the kingdom of God unless you are squeaky clean. But the other reason this door is so narrow is because we can’t carry anything through it. I’m not talking about the money you’ve got stashed away at home. I’m not talking about the beautiful car you’ve got in your garage. I’m talking about the ego’s, and the services, and the worship that we often hold onto as proof of the invitation we have into God’s kingdom. The reason the door is narrow is because there is only one way to get to heaven and that is through Jesus. We have to become so small, so deprived of ourselves, so caught up in our Savior that we can walk through that door because we have faith in the door himself, Jesus Christ. The door to heaven is narrow, but the door stands wide open.

**Lord, are only a few going to be saved?** If you let that question ring in your ear for a moment, you’ll notice that there’s an incredible amount of uncertainty behind the words. And what do we do when we’re uncertain about something? We go get affirmation. We get answers. We live in a world where proof or evidence speaks louder than anything or anyone. And so, when the question is asked: who’s going to heaven, or how do I get to heaven, or are only a few going to be saved, where do people look? They look at the evidence, their own resumes. What do you do before a job interview? You make sure your resume is as meaty as possible. You’ve got your references, you’ve got your previous experiences, you have as many credentials as possible so that the employer doesn’t have to take much time to see that you’d be a great addition to their team. And then you walk in the front door and you see all the people lined up for the same position, and you start thinking about how you compare. How does your resume look compared to his? Are her references better than mine? The better the resume, the higher the level of certainty. The more experience, the better chance of being picked over someone with less. This is how reasoning works today. But the same way of thinking is what led this person to ask if only a few people are going to be saved. Why?

When you look at the requirements God has posted on the gates to eternal life, what do you see? You see one word. A word that no one here knows. A word that no one here is able to grasp. Perfection. This person should’ve asked, is anyone gonna be saved? Is anyone gonna meet the requirement; does anyone have the resume God is looking for. Perfection is the only word that can be on your personal resume; that’s the only thing that you can acquire to be saved. And not one of us has a resume that will pass. So, what do our sinful hearts try to do? We try to fill our resumes with other things that look good. Listen to the resume that some will try to build up, **We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.** We know who you are! We spent time with you! Eating and drinking with Jesus doesn’t get you through that door. Knowing the Bible doesn’t give you that perfect resume. Ask yourself, what have I put on my resume to make myself look like I belong in the presence of God? What do I consider to be reasons for which God should let me through that narrow door? Is it that I went to a Christian day school, which means I already know Jesus and that’s good enough. Is it that my family is a foundational part of the church, and so, I can ride the family history through the narrow door? Is it because of all the services I provide to the church, free of charge, that God should be honored that I come into his presence? What about the heart I have to always put others before myself? I can lean on that for security, right? No, no, no, and no. A chunky resume with lots of good rapport and references is awesome when you’re looking for a job. But when you walk up to the gates of heaven, that resume can only say that one word. Perfect.

Where does one get a legitimate resume of perfection? Not a resume that says I help others whenever I can. Not a resume that says I go to all the Bible Studies, and every worship opportunity. Not a resume that says I always try to follow God’s commands in my life. You can build all those resumes. You cannot build a resume of perfection. This is how Jesus answers the question put before us this morning. **Strive to enter through the narrow door.** On multiple occasions, Jesus talks about this entrance into heaven. But he doesn’t talk about what you do to get to that door. He doesn’t talk about all the things you have to do to gain entrance through that door. He is the door. Your Savior is the door. *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, whoever does not believe will be condemned. I am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.* Jesus is your ticket, passage, and entrance into eternal life. You only get to heaven going through that door, which means you only get to heaven by believing in Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin—faith in Jesus is that resume you need, in faith he hands you that one-worded resume—the resume that says perfect. That’s why the door is so narrow—it’s simply faith in Jesus. It’s narrow because it isn’t dependent on your works; entrance is not given only to those who spend all their free time at church; eternal life is not just for those who know how to sing Psalms, or those who have a worship attendance of 75% or higher. Eternal life is for those who believe in Jesus, which means, eternal life is yours. You believe in Jesus, which means you are able to walk through that narrow door.

The second part of Jesus’ response is just as important—especially for a congregation like ours looking to be a church that evangelizes outside her walls as much as she does inside her walls. Those words read: **People will come from east and west, from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.** I went to the youth rally a few years ago down in Knoxville, TN. I had a group of about 15 people with me. After returning from that trip, we had the students write about their favorite parts of the trip. Among many things like touring campus, singing along with Koine, going to workshops and excursions, something that every single kid wrote was this: “It was so cool to see so many other kids from all over the country who believe the same thing as me.” That’s the takeaway of a dozen high schoolers. You are part of a Christian church body that has a couple hundred thousand people in it, which is amazing. However, that’s barely a drop in the bucket of the people around the world—the people to which God’s invitation into heaven has been sent. Those of you who have been in churches your whole life may have fallen into the trap now and again of thinking that salvation was meant for those inside these walls. It’s meant for people who take church seriously, or clean up really well, or have their ducks in a row. No, salvation is given to all, everyone, to the ends of the earth. That door to heaven is wide open to the world, yet it’s still narrow. There’s still only one resume that God will take, that of his Son.

We have a job to do, people. We gotta get that resume into as many hands as possible. The door may stand wide open, but you only get through by believing in Jesus. I’ll take this time to emphasize the Bible Study we’re beginning in two weeks. It’s based on a keynote presentation by a pastor who coined the concept of one by one evangelism. Which boils down to—I have built a relationship with this person, therefore, I have the obligation to tell them about Jesus, because I know that the key through that very narrow door to eternal life only comes through faith in him. Over the next couple of weeks, as I encourage you all to attend that Bible Study, think about one person, and you all have at least one in your life who does not have that ticket—does not know or believe in Jesus. What can you do to be able to say, I did everything I could to get them through that narrow gate. If we all dive headfirst into one, just one, relationship that we have, a friend, a neighbor, a cousin, a child, and say with courage, I love you too much to watch you stand on the outside of heaven’s door, so let’s talk about Jesus—if we all do that, we will have been faithful to the task to which God has called us. That door stands open wide, but it’s narrow.

I’m excited to walk through that door with each of you into eternal life. And I’m excited to work alongside you as we present our Savior, that wide open door, to those we love, and those we don’t know quite yet. God bless the work we do as his forgiven and redeemed people. Amen.