

Reflection "The Only Door" Luke 13v23-30

3-25 A bystander said, "Master, will only a few be saved?"

He said, "Whether few or many is none of your business. Put your mind on your life with God. The way to life—to God! —is vigorous and requires your total attention. A lot of you are going to assume that you will sit down to God's salvation banquet just because you've been hanging around the neighbourhood all your lives. Well, one day you're going to be banging on the door, wanting to get in, but you'll find the door locked and the Master saying, 'Sorry, you're not on my guest list.'

26-27 "You'll protest, 'But we have known you all our lives!' only to be interrupted with his abrupt, 'Your kind of knowing can hardly be called knowing. You don't know the first thing about me.'

28-30 "That's when you'll find yourselves out in the cold, strangers to grace. You will watch Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets march into God's kingdom. You will watch outsiders' stream in from east, west, north, and south and sit down at the table of God's kingdom. And all the time you will be outside looking in—and wondering what happened. This is the Great Reversal: the last in line put at the head of the line, and the so-called first ending up last."

There is only one door to heaven. The devil has tricked many people into thinking they can earn their way into heaven. Some people think that if they just do enough good things, they will go into heaven when they die.

But this is a lie. We can never be good enough to deserve heaven. No matter how hard we try, we have been marked by sin. God cannot look upon sin. Sin had to be removed by an acceptable, perfect sacrifice.

Jesus said he is the only way, the truth, and life. (John 14 v 6) Jesus paid the price of our sins on the cross. He is the door to God. Wouldn't it be sad if people did not hear the truth about Jesus' way to God? It took the death of Jesus on the cross to make it possible for our sins to be forgiven and our relationship with God restored.

When this person asked his question, it was certainly his assumption that the kingdom of God was for the Jews and that Gentiles were to be shut out. Jesus' answer must have come as a shock to him.

He declared that the entry to the kingdom can never be automatic but is the result and reward for a struggle. “**Keep on striving to enter**”, he said. The word striving is a word from which the English word **agony** is derived. The struggle to enter in must be so intense that it can be described as an agony of soul and spirit.

We run a certain danger. It's easy to think that once we have made a commitment to Jesus and recognise him as a son of God and our saviour, we have reached the end of the road and can, as it were, sit back as if we have achieved our goal. There is however no such finality in the Christian life. We must always be going forward striving to bring God's glory to this earth or we will go backwards.

The Christian way is like climbing up a mountain pathway towards the peak which will not be reached in this world. It was said about gallant climbers who died on Mount Everest, when last seen they were going strong for the top. It was ascribed on the grave of an Alpine guide who died on the mountainside, “**he died climbing**”. The Christian, life must be an all upward and an onward journey.

Jesus states there will be some who think that just because they are a member of the society based on Christian principles all is well. Those who live in such a society are not necessarily Christians. They may be enjoying all its benefits and are certainly living on Christian capital which was earned by others; but that is no reason for sitting back content and believing that all is well. Rather it challenges us, “**what did you do to preserve and develop God's glory on earth**”? We cannot live on borrowed goodness.

There will be surprises in the Kingdom of God. Those who are very prominent in this world may have to be very humble in the next; those who no one notices in this life, may have a significance in the world to come. The standards of heaven are not the standards of earth.

Rev Ken 12/10/20

