**“The Narrow Door”**

Psalm 50:1-15

Isaiah 66:18-23

Hebrews 12:4-24

Luke 13:22-30

 Pentecost 11, August 20/21, 2022

“Someone asked Jesus: ‘Lord, will those who are saves be few?’ And He said to them, ‘Strive to enter through the narrow door.’”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

One image for me, here, is the old “**hour glasses**”. Still used as, maybe, egg timers or novelty items or game timers, the passage of some amount of time was measured by the steady but trickling fall of sand from a top compartment into a bottom one … but through the **narrowest of spaces in the middle**. The “hourglass” shape in a **woman** is equated with this time-piece, buxom at the top and hippy at the bottom, but **oh, so, trim at the waist**.

With a **buxom amount** of sand up top (from the “**east and west, and from north and south**” as Jesus described the vastness and geographic distances traveled of those to come to kingdom of Heaven), **welcome to that lower “hourglass” widened out hip of the divine kingdom is gotten-to through the narrowest of middle entries**.

There is no **mass swarming of locations of entry** to God’s realm and Heaven. **One door exists** (and thanks be to God that one **does / that’s the Good News / the Gospel, the thing won by Jesus, the King, on a cross self-sacrificed so that a “Way” to the Father would be made** (redemption then through repentant faith, baptized into Christ Jesus work and person / **the cross with Him so sacrificed there**. And **gifted that entry**, but through no multiple tracks and loose floodgates, but **a singular pathway and entry**. **Jesus** **and Him crucified** is the “**Narrow Door**”: narrow because it can be passed through by, only, **one person, and only one way (through the death of God’s purity carrying human sin),** God’s Son incarnate into flesh, killed and then raised and **riding us through raised in Him, only though as we’d be tightly attached to Him** who is the only One pure enough and allowed to **walk through that door into the presence of the Most Holy Heavenly Father**.

**Text**

Jesus was on His way to **create a doorway** as this historical episode happened to get shared with us. “Jesus went on His way through towns and villages, teaching and **journeying toward Jerusalem / there the cross**. And someone said to Him, ‘Lord, will those who are saved be **few**?’” and there’s not **questions wiser to have been asked** in all of history. Since Isaiah’s time those to be saved began being numbered as just a “**remnant**”, with “**universal salvation**” not that I know of a mistaken notion until quite recently. Many have “**hoped**” for a saving way, yet few have “**known of it promised until after Jesus came and said ‘It is finished’**”. This, then, is the most pressing and important question of every time and place … without being a “wishful thinking” “**universalist**” as I said …

… and “**universalists**” are those who don’t even ask the wise question so (I think) the biggest in error today. Society doesn’t ask (in public) that wise question anymore. The false (naïve) thinking is that the Good God who’s only that (whoever He, she, or it might be) has (for all people / **everyone decent**) someplace “better” for **us** to end up in: “Fred (for instance) in a **better place now**”, and that’s common lingo for anybody reasonably decent and passing from this world to the next.

Someone in the crowd of one of towns that Jesus passed through asked from an understanding that’s not effected by our current “romanticism” and self-delusion about our own “decency”: “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” and He answered from an **assertion complimentary (“Good question”)** that, **yes, your concern** **is valid** and, “I tell you **many will seek to enter and will not be able**. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock on the door, saying ‘Lord, open to us,’ then He will answer you, “**I do not know where [some of] you come from. Depart from Me**. And **that will be** where those who get **locked out for whatever hypocrisy reasons** will go weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but **you yourselves cast out**.”

**WE** seldom worry about this … but **society overall** should. What **we’ve** followed in the account of the Gospel is **the rest of Jesus “journey”** as He **arrived and entered Jerusalem, giving Himself over to those who He’d allow to crucify Him, being doomed by His Father with every ounce of the appropriate anger upon the world’s sins from the beginning to the end … our sins**. **God is Good but also Just and REQUIRED (by the nature of His Goodness finding any connection to Evil) to wield justice upon it with it (evil) being even the is seemingly faintest of rebellion, what’s full rebellion even when it’s faint**. The eating of a fruit told not to and the choosing of stuff or anything over God, both and (so much the more) are as **drastic rebellion’s as is full rejection since it’s “not listening” and “not obeying” and “not, then, believing” and unbelief is a damning sin that causes death (and, yet, not just death) but the inability to be saved without “SALVATION”**. “Will those who are saved be **few**?” …

… and he answer is “**no**”, yet **not “all**”, and maybe (by so many evidences) **less** (**substantially less maybe) than a majority of all of humanity, “countless numbers” and yet a “remnant” of the total**. And the “**WAY OF SALVATION**” is, **ONLY through One “Narrow Door”** and that’s **Jesus and His Holy bloodshed poured out upon a cross / sacrificed there then counted by the Father as “SUFFICIENT” for those He’d attach to it by grace, believing the Savior “high and lifted up” for, even, their salvation … and they NEED IT AND KNOW THAT.**

 **Application**

If you have held this **at bay so far**, then there is **this warning**. Many, **locked out**, will cry out to the Judge that “**We** ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets” and the problem with this **condemning** **judgment** is that it to (most directly also) **church goers or (at least) people going through church-going motions**. “We **ate and drank in Your presence**, and **You taught in our streets**”. “You, Lord, were **close at hand** and we ate at Your Lord’s Supper Communion Rail and know that You preached in our town though You may be warning us about possibly **cutting us out because of our hypocrisies**. “I do not know where you come from” is what You imply that You, Lord, might say to **church-goers** (weather regular or occasional), “depart from Me, all you workers, rather, of evil than Good!”

**We all know** people baptized, and even confirmed, who think they’ve “**graduated**” and need no further growth, choosing distance (even if in the building / “eating and drinking in Jesus’ presence”, yet **not believing really or craving and worshiping and embracing really or being useful (much) in the kingdom**. Jesus’ warning **hits closer to home** than any in all of Scripture.

**We** must **cling** to God’s **promises made (we know) to us**, because **in them is where “SALVATION” lies**. There is **comfort and peace and SECURITY** **in God’s** **promises**:

“He, in the manner of the cross, loved the world, giving His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him (trusts in Him and that Promise directed at each of us) would not perish but **HAVE everlasting life**”. And then “**Baptism saves**. Not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an **appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ**”. And “don’t we all know” (as Romans 6 reminds us) that **all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death, buried therefore with Him by Baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His**.

“And **we know that** Christ, being raised from the dead will never die again having **passed through that “Narrow Door” / is it and is beyond it**; **death no longer having dominion over Him**. **For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God (with us baptized and believing united with Him)**. So **you also MUST (and have this as confidence)** **consider yourselves dead to sin and alive / SAVED to God in Christ Jesus**.”

For a prayer, let’s **say this:** “Father, **let us** **fear nothing except losing You**. Help us to **cling to Your promises in Your Word**. Grant Your Spirit to us, that we **take hold of (and ever hold fast to) promises that You call a ‘Guarantee’ to us made certain according to Your Word**. Thank you for **SAVING US**”. **In +Jesus’ name**. Amen.