

# There is Only One Door

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 14 September 2014

Preacher: Don Coleman

[ 0 : 00 ] Take your Bibles this morning and open them to the Gospel of Luke.

That is where we are and have been for some months now. Well, over a year actually. We're not counting, are we? It's going to take us a while to get through this Gospel, this wonderful Gospel. And we're in chapter 13, in case you have forgotten. And so Luke chapter 13 in our text begins with verse 22. So 22 through 30 is our passage for this morning.

Luke 13, 22 through 30. Let me go ahead and read our passage. And he went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.

Of course, he is in capital, capital H. So we're talking about Jesus, of course. Then one said to him, Lord, are there a few who are saved?

[ 1 : 08 ] And he said to them, strive to enter through the narrow gate. For many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open for us.

And he will answer and say to you, I do not know you, where you are from. Then you will begin to say, we ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.

He will say, I tell you, I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed, there are last who will be first.

And there are first who will be last. All right? Interesting passage. When I was a kid, one of my favorite TV game shows was Let's Make a Deal.

[ 2 : 28 ] Maybe you remember that. Well, they still have it on TV today, I guess, right? Though I don't watch it anymore. But I did when I was a kid. And some of you in this place will remember that in those days, the game show host was who?

Monty Hall. Monty Hall. I just really loved their program. I really did. It's silly. It's really embarrassing to admit it, actually. But I used to watch that.

And you know how the show worked. And I hope I get this right. I'm not going to try to sound like a TV announcer. But the announcer would begin by saying, of course, as the camera is panning the studio audience, and they're all dressed up in crazy outfits, you know.

You know the show. And so the announcer comes on. And he says, these people, dressed as they are, come from all over the United States to make deals here in the marketplace of America.

Let's make a deal. And everybody just gets excited and goes crazy. And then the announcer says, and now here is America's top trader, TV's big dealer, Monty Hall.

[ 3 : 32 ] And the crowd, you know, would erupt in excitement. And all these crazy people dressed up in the weirdest of costumes would just go crazy. And you know how it goes. You know, Monty Hall, he would come in there.

And suddenly he would have this lady stand up. And she might be dressed as a clown or maybe dressed as a carrot, whatever. You know, they just had the crazy outfits. And he would say to her, this woman, she's hysterical.

She's jumping up and down because she was selected among all the others. And he says to her, I will give you \$50 for every quarter you have in your purse.

And she begins to rifle around inside the purse, you know, and she comes up, say, with four quarters. And then he reaches into his pocket. He always has cash in his pocket. And he reaches in there and he kind of peels off \$200 and gives it to the woman.

And she sits down and he goes on to help or to play games with others in the studio audience. And then, but then, eventually, he'll make his way back to this woman at the beginning.

[ 4 : 35 ] And he'll say, you know, a moment ago I gave you \$200. How would you like to trade that money for what's behind either door number one or door number two?

You know how it goes? And then, of course, then she's all nervous, you know. And she's, you know, biting her lip and she doesn't know which one to pick. She's afraid she would pick the wrong one. And she'd not get the good prize but get the booby prize, you know.

And so she's in such angst and consternation. And she finally selects door number two. She picks door number two. And you know how the drill goes.

First, she gets to see what she could have had behind door number one, you know. And so, and he says, and here's what you could have had, door number one.

And the door kind of slides back and the announcer says, a new car. And there's a new car, you know, sitting there. Or, you know, I really like the one where it would be just kind of a set of luggage.

[ 5 : 35 ] And I say, well, as a kid, that wasn't exciting. But then, and you're going to need that luggage because, and then they slide that back. And there's a trip to Europe or something like that, you know.

And then you know what's coming next. Then they pull back the door from door number two. And there is the game show announcer dressed up like a little girl sitting on a donkey.

You know, something stupid like that. The booby prize. And everybody is just, oh, and of course the lady, she traded \$200 for that, which is really nothing.

And she's thinking, and everyone is thinking, oh, if only I had picked door number one, you know. If only I had picked the right door. Well, maybe a strange way to start a sermon.

Do you know, in the high stakes game of life and eternity, which is, by the way, no game at all, really. It's not a game. There's only one door.

[ 6 : 41 ] There's really only one door that matters. Right? And what's behind that door, we'll call it door number one. What's behind that door is not a mystery.

Because the Bible has clearly revealed what is behind that door. The only door that really matters. And also, we don't have to wonder whether or not we should choose that door.

Jesus makes that very clear. Choose that door. He says, strive to enter that narrow door. And so, when you look at this passage, we see that Jesus is talking about a door.

Not doors, plural, as in door number one, door number two, or door number three. But the door. That narrow door.

One door. And it is the one door that makes all the difference in eternity for those who enter it, as well as for those who do not.

[ 7 : 48 ] Do not. So, let's look at the text this morning with kind of the door in mind. And discover a few things about that door.

Not conjecture. Not possible things we might be able to learn about the door. But things that we learn right from the passage. In the first place, clearly, it is a saving door.

It is a saving door. It's the door of salvation. That's the door that Jesus is talking about. Now, as the passage opens, we see Jesus on the move. And He's been on the move for some time.

He was on the move visiting all the towns and villages in Galilee. And now He has been in Judea. And He's continuing to visit as many towns and villages as He can in Judea.

Because He's on His way where? To Jerusalem. And He's moving in that direction. And it's just a matter of a few months that Jesus will go to the cross and be crucified.

[ 8 : 51 ] And so here He is in one place. We don't know where it is. And He's been preaching, perhaps. And maybe to a crowd of people who gathered there in the street.

We don't really know the setting. And so He's preaching or teaching. And on this particular occasion, someone comes out of the crowd and asks Him a question. And it's an interesting question.

And it is kind of the question, it's an important question, because it's what gets us started here in this dialogue. And it is kind of what sets the stage for what we need to learn about salvation.

And so it's a good question. And here's the question. Lord, He says, and He's not saying Lord because He is His Lord in the sense of Master and in the sense of salvation.

But probably just using the word as an address of respect. Kurios is the word. And He says, Lord, are there few who are saved?

[ 9 : 50 ] That's a good question, isn't it? Interesting question. I like the ESV. The ESV translates this, Lord, will those who are saved be few? And that's kind of the intent of the question or the point of the question.

Are those who are saved few? Will they be few? And it is an important question. And we're not told who asked it. That is in the sense of was it a believer or an unbeliever?

Was it just someone from the multitude? Was it one of His disciples? We're not told. It's just someone asked the question. So we're not told about that. And we're also not given any clues as to why the question was asked.

Maybe something Jesus was teaching at the time. We don't know what prompted the question. We also don't know anything about what the inquirer meant by the question.

Because, you know, a lot of times questions, especially when those questions were asked of Jesus, a lot of times they had, the people had ulterior motives. You know, they had something behind the question or something they wanted to, some statement they wanted to make.

[ 10 : 57 ] Or rather they wanted to trick Jesus, trap Jesus or something. We're not told any of that. And there's been quite a lot of conjecture about that, speculation about that.

And possibly one of the most plausible possibilities is that it was a Pharisee who asked the question. It could have been a Pharisee who asked the question.

And maybe the spirit and intent of the question was maybe something like this. You know, Lord, you know how zealous we Pharisees are about keeping the holy law.

You know that, don't you, Lord? And you know that we obey the law meticulously, every jot and tittle. And we do so in a way that's unmatched by anyone else.

And so, Lord, will there be few like us that will be saved? Will there be just few? And maybe many like them, them out there who are not like us, who will not be saved.

[ 11 : 59 ] Maybe that was behind the question. And I really don't know. We're just not given enough information. So, you know, we don't need to speculate about that. Because really, what's important here?

What is important here is Jesus' response. How he responded to the question. And you might at first glance think, well, he really didn't answer the question. And really, in a sense, he didn't.

He didn't answer the question. What did he say? He said, here's my answer to the question, will those who are saved be few? Here's my answer. Strive to enter through the narrow gate.

What kind of answer is that? You see, really, essentially, if you remember back this far, and it hadn't really been all that long ago when we started chapter 13, you might remember that this was very similar to the way Jesus responded to a question that was posed to him then.

You remember? You remember? And the tone and response to the question asked of him at the beginning of the chapter, very similar to what's going on here.

[ 13 : 15 ] The people brought up this ancient, you know, kind of, not ancient, this incident where Pilate had executed some Galileans while they were worshipping.

You remember this at the beginning of the chapter? And their blood was mixed with their sacrifices. And so they brought that up. And what they wanted to know, of course, was were these Galileans, these Galileans who suffered, were they greater sinners than all other Galileans?

And how did Jesus respond? He said, I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. You see, very much the same kind of an answer.

There in verse 3 of chapter 13, Jesus is saying, never mind about those Galileans, never mind about the status of other sinners, the important question is, have you repented?

And so here in verse 23, Jesus says something similar, responds in a similar way. He's saying, forget about the few who will be saved, and never mind about the many who will not be saved.

[ 14 : 27 ] The important question is what? Are you saved? You see, that's what Jesus does. You know, he takes the question, and he, kind of like a laser beam, he zeroes in on the real issue.

And it's a personal issue, though he didn't say it just to the one who asked the question. The Bible says he asked to them, to everyone. But he was asking it of this one who asked the question to begin with.

He zeroes in on the issue, and the issue is personal, individual salvation. That's the issue. And so he says, strive to enter through the narrow gate or the narrow door.

That is the door of salvation. The door of salvation, and the door of salvation is opened right now in this age. It's opened by his grace.

And he says, strive to enter through it. Now, folks, at the very least, this is a word of urgency, isn't it? I mean, you can sense this tone of urgency in Jesus' response.

[15:37] The tone is urgent because the time is now. Enter through that door. Strive to enter through that door. And not only that, but this is a word of command, by the way.

The word strive is a Greek imperative. It's an imperative. That means it's a command. So he's not giving a suggestion, saying, you know, it might be a smart thing for you to do.

He's commanding them, strive to enter the narrow gate or the narrow door. But even more than that, this is a word of sober reality.

There's a sober reality here that a lot of people miss. A lot of people don't understand. He said, strive. Strive to enter that door.

Now, in case you're misunderstanding, Jesus is not suggesting that one must work his way or her way to salvation. He's not saying that at all. The Greek word translated strive, and it's translated strive in nearly every version of the Bible.

[16:43] In fact, every one that I checked. English version, that is. That word strive is the word agonizomai. Agonizomai, from which we get our word agonize.

Sounds similar, doesn't it? Agonize. And it means, literally, to fight. To struggle. To strive, you see. And so, you see, entering through the door of salvation is not easy. It's a narrow door. It's a hard door. And he says, you must strive.

You must fight. You must struggle. But, you know, you say, but, pastor, all we have to do is believe, right? Well, yes, that's right.

But believing begins with repentance. You can't separate the two. Repentance, turning, forsaking. You see, repentance and faith are not two separate things.

[17:43] Repentance. That's why some have come to the conclusion that those who preach repentance are actually preaching a work salvation. Repentance is not a work.

It's not a separated thing or act or movement or decision. Separated from faith. They go together. Repentance and faith are the two sides to the same coin.

I mean, you can't have faith in God. That is, turn to God without repenting or turning from sin any more than you could go to Tulsa without first leaving Bartlesville.

You can't turn toward Tulsa without turning away from Bartlesville. Repentance and faith go together. True faith presupposes repentance.

True faith means that you have denied, you have forsaken sin, self. You've forsaken anything and anyone that keeps you from following Christ.

[18:45] And the moment you begin to move in that direction, guess what? You have a fight on your hands. Inside and out. Don't you know?

Don't you remember? And you ought to because the fight doesn't ever end. There's a struggle. There's a struggle in your soul. And actually it's a struggle for lordship.

Place of lordship. And there's that struggle. Jesus used the same analogy in Matthew 7, 13. He said, enter by the narrow gate because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life. And there are few who find it. Very sobering. A very sobering reality. Because listen, if you are looking for an easy way to salvation, you can just forget it. You can just forget that.

In fact, Jesus said in Matthew 7, 13, the gate is wide and the way is broad or easy that leads where? To destruction.

[19:49] And there are many who enter through it. I'll tell you something else. And just getting beyond just the initial salvation experience.

The agony and struggle and fight with sin and Satan and self. That continues on throughout your journey as a believer.

It's an ongoing fight. I mean, can I get a witness? It's an ongoing fight. In fact, in 1 Timothy 6, 12, Paul told Timothy, fight the good fight.

As a matter of fact, that's the word agonizomai again. Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold of eternal life to which you were also called. 2 Timothy 4, verse 7.

Paul gave this personal testimony. He said, I have fought the good fight. There's that word again, agonizomai. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.

[20:49] It's a saving door. A saving door. The door of salvation is open. By His grace. Fight to enter it.

If you've not already done so. Fight to enter it. And do so now. Because what comes next in the passage helps us understand why. And so, one day, it will be a shut door.

It will be a shut door. A saving door, which is open now, will one day be shut. That's what Jesus tells us. Verse 24.

For many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Now, what are we to understand about this? Are we to understand that Jesus is saying that many will want to be saved, but they will not be able to be saved?

Many will want salvation, but they will not be able to have it. Is that what He's saying? Well, possibly in this sense. Because many people, maybe even most, want salvation in their own way.

[ 22 : 03 ] And on their own terms. Jesus could be talking about that. And so, there are people who want salvation, but they want it their way, their time, their terms.

And they're not able to have it. Can't have it on those terms, no matter how much they want it. Is that what Jesus is talking about? I don't really think so. And we really have to go a step further here in the text to find out what He's talking about.

Look at verse 25. When once the master of the house has risen up and shut the door. Stop right there.

You may know that there is no punctuation in the Greek text. First, punctuation is something that's added by the Bible translator. And sometimes they get it right. Most of the time, maybe.

But sometimes not. And punctuation, depending on where you put it, makes a lot of difference in the meaning. Right? And so, what about here?

[ 23 : 07 ] I think it ought to read this way. Now listen. For many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able when once the master of the house, that's God, of course, has risen up and shut the door.

See, listen. Anyone, anyone who desires to enter that door of salvation through genuine repentance and faith in Christ may enter that door.

It will not be barred. It will not be, they will not be expelled. They will not be stopped. They can enter that door. Anyone who desires to repent of sin and trust Christ may enter that door.

I don't care what your theology is. It's open for those who will believe. Jesus said in John 6, 37, all that the Father gives me will come to me.

Oh, yes, they will. But he goes on to say, and Jesus says, the one who comes to me, I will by no means cast out. Whosoever will may come.

[ 24 : 17 ] Whosoever will. See, I really believe that, it was Adrian Rogers who said this. He said, I believe that the door, the gate to heaven, on this side of heaven reads, whosoever will may come.

And then when you pass through and look on the other side, it says, only God's elect. Only God's elect is God's business.

But here's our message. Whosoever will may come. And if you desire to come, you may come. The way is not closed off to you because you may or may not be God's elect.

Whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely. Revelation 22, 17. That's our message. You see, Jesus is referring, getting back to our passage, I believe Jesus is referring to a future time when God will shut the door.

Jesus is referring to the day of judgment. Now, right now, it is a saving door. It is open to all those who will repent and trust in Jesus Christ. But one day it will be a shut door.

[ 25 : 33 ] You can count on that. It will be shut once the master has shut it. Listen to what one old, old, old theologian put it. A day is coming on the earth when the longsuffering of God towards sinners shall have an end.

The door of mercy, which has been so long open, shall at length be closed. The throne of grace shall be removed. And the throne of judgment shall be set up in its place.

Now, listen to what Jesus says here in our passage. Verse 24. And following many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able when once the master of the house has risen up and shut the door.

And you begin to stand outside and knock on the door. I don't know who I'm talking to this morning. I don't know who Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, as he applies this passage.

I don't know who he's talking to this morning, but there's some who may be even here today. When that door is shut, you're going to be knocking on the outside of the door. You're going to be saying, Lord, Lord, open up.

[ 26 : 49 ] What is he going to say? Can you imagine this? Can you imagine the horror of these moments just before judgment?

We have a picture of it, by the way, in the Old Testament. Back in Genesis. Righteous Noah, preaching the gospel for 120 years.

And no one was saved other than his family. No one believed his message until the floodwaters began to rise. But God had shut the door.

He had shut the door on his salvation. His ark, which signifies salvation. And though the people on the outside surely began to believe the message of Noah by then, but it was too late.

Too late. The door has been shut. Remember what Jesus said about that in Matthew 24, 38? He said, for as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark and did not know.

[ 28 : 02 ] Well, they didn't know the truth until the flood came and took them all away. So also will be the coming of the Son of Man. Listen, in the end of all things, there are a whole lot of people who are going to experience a rude awakening.

Sad awakening. I hope it's none of you. Back here in our passage in verse 25, he describes these people standing on the outside and they're knocking.

Knocking at the door. It's a shut door. And Jesus will say, I do not know you. Can you imagine hearing that?

I do not know you. Where you are from. I don't know anything about you. That is, I don't know you in a saving way.

That's what he's talking about. I don't know you. I have no relationship with you. But they will say, but we know you.

[ 29 : 18 ] That's what people are going to say. We know you. We have a relationship with you. We have eaten and drank in your presence. We've hobnobbed with you, rubbed elbows with you in life.

We know you. And we went to church every Sunday. That's what they're going to say. We were members down there at the Highland Park Baptist Church.

There nearly every time the doors were open. We listened to the preaching of the gospel. We listened to your preachers. And that's what they're going to say. You taught in our streets.

The implication being we listened to your teaching. We got in on all your sermons. How could you shut the door on us? And Jesus says, I tell you, I do not know you.

Depart from me, you workers of iniquity. Man. Man. Can you imagine?

[ 30 : 27 ] You see, they knew Jesus. As many today would profess. You say, I know Jesus. I'm a believer. I meet people like that all the time.

I'm a Christian. I know Jesus. But what really counts is, does Jesus know you? In a saving way. That is, have you repented of sin? This is what Jesus requires. Everywhere he went, he preached repentance. Have you repented?

Have you believed on Jesus? And there are going to be many at the end of all things. He's going to be pounding on the door, metaphorically speaking. Open up. Let us in.

We know you. We have a relationship with you. We ain't with you. We listen to your preaching. And Jesus says, I don't know you. You didn't repent. You didn't believe on me while the door was open.

[ 31 : 23 ] But now the door is shut. And it's too late. A saving door. A shut door. Then finally, one other thing about this door.

It is a separating door. It's a door of separation. Once the master shuts the door, the door becomes an impenetrable barrier between two very different spheres of existence.

And both of these spheres of existence are eternal. They're eternal.

First of all, on the outside of the door, those who failed to enter through the door of salvation through repentance and faith.

And what Jesus says about them represents, I think, one of the most frightening verses in the Bible. Verse 28. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[ 32 : 33 ] He's describing those outside the door after it's shut. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out.

Now you remember he's talking to a Jewish audience and so that's the point of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all of your patriarchs.

You're going to see them in the kingdom. You'll see all the prophets, those prophets that you persecuted and killed. You rejected their message. You're going to see all of them in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out.

But we can apply that to a Gentile audience too. It might go something like this. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see your godly mother who witnessed to you or father or grandparents or godly friend professed to be a believer and he witnessed to you.

All those preachers you heard preaching the gospel and you laughed at them. You're going to see all of them in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out.

[ 33 : 55 ] It's a frightening, frightening description. It literally means thrown out of God's presence forever and ever and ever.

Can you imagine? Mark Twain once wrote, I'll take heaven for climate and I'll take hell for the company.

How stupid. I don't know where Samuel Clemens is. I have a suspicion. But if you go to hell, let me tell you the kind of company you're going to spend eternity with.

All of the murderers and mass murderers and rapists and child molesters and sodomites.

You know what that is. And sexual perverts who have ever lived. Spend eternity with them. And don't forget about the demons.

[ 35 : 02 ] The myriad of demons. Wicked. Vile. Demons. And also the prince of demons. Satan said, how would you like to spend eternity with them?

But the worst of it is this. Thrust out of the presence of God. I guarantee you there's not an unbeliever today who could begin to comprehend what that would be like.

Right now, the presence of God is with us. And even unbelievers are benefiting from his presence. The very air we breathe is part of his grace. Can you imagine a place that is minus God in his presence?

Now God is everywhere. He's omnipresent. I understand. God removes himself from that place forever and ever and therefore no hope.

No hope. I don't care what kind of situation you might find yourself here. Kind of life and death situation. Or I don't care what kind of maybe even some terminal disease that you have.

[ 36 : 19 ] And a person says, you know, I just have no hope. Well, you have some. But in hell there is no hope. No hope of it ever ending. Proverbs 11, 7 says, when a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish.

Imagine a place where there can be no expectation. And it goes on, and the hope of the unjust perishes. No hope. Just torment and regret and bitter sorrow forever and ever and ever without end. someone has said that many now listen to this many will be anxious about salvation too late and long for heaven too late.

They will wake up in another world and be convinced of truths which on earth they refuse to believe. And then get this hell itself is truth known too late.

Man. How could we put any better? But then on the inside of the door those who through repentance and faith entered through the door of salvation into the kingdom of God.

[ 37 : 54 ] Verse 29 they will come from the east and the west from the north and the south and sit down in the kingdom of God. Now you might think there's no real wow in that city.

This is incredible. To sit down in the kingdom of God. first place Jesus knows of course that the gospel will reach the four corners of the world all around the globe.

Those that believe in him will come from every tribe and tongue and nation and at some point they will sit down we will all sit down in the kingdom of God.

What a picture of heaven. A picture of salvation. The word sit down is one word in the Greek. refers to what one does at the dinner table.

And you'll find this imagery all throughout the scripture and it talks about you know a close fellowship a family fellowship to sit down at the table.

[ 39 : 06 ] And we're going to be doing other things. We're not just going to be sitting down at the table and eating all the time in heaven for eternity. Though that might seem agreeable to most of it. Myself included. I guess it depends on what's on the menu but it's all going to be good in heaven.

Be exactly what you like. You can have your tuna fish and I'll have my country fried steak. Well, that's silly. Just sit at the table.

And the implication is to sit at the table with Jesus. Jesus. That idea of closeness and acceptance and family and unity and all of that to sit down, to lean, it literally means to lean, to recline at rest and in perfect peace and security at the table of Jesus.

We'll sit at the table with Jesus forever and ever. one more thing he says in verse 30 and indeed there are last who will be first.

There are first who will be last. What's he talking about there? Well, the big picture is this is a word to the Gentile church.

[ 40 : 21 ] It's a word to us. It's a word to us. See, the gospel came to the Jews first, right? And what did they do with it?

They rejected it as a nation. They rejected the Messiah. They rejected the Christ. And so God set them aside for a time, for an age, for now over 2,000 years, as a matter of fact.

He's going to give back to the Jews, but his focus for the last 2,000 years has been the Gentile.

This is the Gentile church. Who got the gospel first?

Jews. They rejected it. And the gospel then came to the Gentiles and they received it. And so the last, the Gentiles, will be first in the kingdom.

And the first, Jews, will be last into the kingdom. God will save all Israel eventually. As all those are living at that time.

[ 41 : 34 ] It's a wonderful promise and affirmation to us, to the Gentile church. And so we bring this to a close.

I set before you, or Jesus sets before you, door number one. And there is no other. There's the door.

What say you? What say you? Thank you.