

The Gospel of Luke 13.22-35: Jesus & Purpose | Dave Solmes

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A bit of Background: Jesus is on the road travelling among various towns and villages. Sharing stories, parables and truths that people had not heard before. Jesus is teaching about the Kingdom of God.

What His followers are learning is that the kingdom of God is not identified by one certain village, town, city ... There was no one place that Jesus sets up shop - As Kirsten shared last week from In Luke 13:18-20 - we see the kingdom of God likened to how mustard seeds and Yeast seem so insignificant but are not at all. Rather, the kingdom of God was breaking out all over the place. Over time both mustard seed and yeast both assist in growth and creation. This was key then and key now. God is at work in His world - all over the place.

This is not new to Luke 13 - all through the first 13 chapters - people's lives were changing because of all that was supernaturally opening up to them because there were saying "yes" to Jesus. So cool

The crowds had been hearing that Jesus offers salvation, and so the question that arose was:
In our text the question asked directly to Jesus is:

"Are only a few people going to be saved."

Paraphrase: is Jesus someone I should be paying attention to as well?

Paraphrase: Is Jesus a big deal?

Paraphrase: "Who is in (the kingdom) - who is out (of the kingdom)?"

We can appreciate the question because of how people were often identified in the 1st century (and I suppose still today) with very specific categories: Rich or poor, master or slave, male or female, Roman or not. Very polarizing. In the kingdom / not in the kingdom,

In response to the question of how big the kingdom is, Jesus' answers by saying, "it is not who is in or out that matters: What is big, is how big the invitation of the kingdom of God is. The Kingdom of God is big - because everyone is invited.

So Jesus turns the conversation forward facing and says in verse 24 .. therefore, **"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door"**

In our text Jesus is teaching that the door to gain entrance and access to the kingdom of God, is a door that is open to all, and this door - is a person, Jesus. Just like the function of any door (verse 24-28) reminds us that it functions by letting in and keeping out. But, duly noted, Jesus will opens the door for all who want to come, and by opening that door - grants access to the benefits of the Kingdom of God.

²⁹ People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

This has a future and a present connotation. And Perhaps this is how spiritual maturity is to be measured: "By our response to Jesus invitation to "Come to Him" Come to the table He sets for us.

The gospel is so simple - come to Jesus - each day / all day / everyday
It seems like that age old Sunday School answer was not wrong - The answer is: Jesus.

THE QUESTION IS: How has this been going for you / us?

ANSWER: I think of how many times we argue about our "coming" to Jesus, or we evade certain issues altogether to avoid "coming to Jesus". I think there are times we chose to go through sorrow, rather than come to Jesus; there are times we would rather entertain all kinds of options rather than "come to Jesus".

Imagine how different a world would be? If we came to Jesus first?

Question: Perhaps this is a question we would hear Jesus asking us if we slowed down and listened? Why didn't you come to me?

Just think of the invincible, unconquerable, and untiring patience of Jesus, who lovingly says time and time again, "*Come to Me...*" And He watches us hesitate, delay or not come at all.

Question: What are the areas in your life, or within the world, that are difficult for you to bring to Jesus? Ex. our personal finances, relationship, your health, a future spouse, life after graduation, the many global crisis's, wars, injustice, inequality, world hunger ...

In this text ... all Jesus is telling us to do is to "*Come, enter by the narrow door.*"

By "entering in" – "we open ourselves to a new way of thinking, courage, empowerment, unlimited supply of resources, and the renewed involvement of a supernatural God who can do all things. A God that just happens to love us &&&& loves the whole world with agape / unconditional love.

Question: What happens when time and time again we don't come / or enter?

Answer: This is where the conversation about sin come up. Sin within our lives, and putting a name on the evidence of the activity of sin in the world.

Question: What is Sin? Perhaps the action / activity of sin is best understood by what we don't do, rather than what we do. Sin is not wrongdoing, but wrong *being*: in the sense of: "being a person deliberate and determined in their independence of God."

Question: At what point are we held responsible? Let's take a few steps back.

Answer: Judgement comes when we realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver us from the heredity of sin, and yet we refuse to let Him deliver us. That decision, that rejection bears consequence and judgement.

The nature of sin is the self-realization which leads someone to say, "I would rather be in charge. I don't have to come to Christ, and by doing so over and over we declare "I have got this – I don't need God – at that point become – our own god unto themselves.

Ex. This is not new. These choices date back to decisions made in the Garden of Eden as recorded in Genesis 3 – with God granting the free will of Adam and Eve to choose – the knowledge of good and evil, at which point they became accountable to that knowledge.

What about us 1,000's of years later? Any person ever born, regardless of the circumstance, is born with a need to come to Jesus enter the narrow door.

And so we become accountable to this decision.

John 3:19 – "This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

Christian faith bases everything on the extreme, self-confident nature of sin: "I don't need to come to Christ." The first thing Jesus Christ confronted in people was the heredity of sin.

*2 Corinthians 5:21: "God made Him, who knew no sin, to be *sin for us...*"*

Jesus Christ reconciled the human race, and this involves the potential and possibility of putting each of us back to where God designed us to be. **This is good news:** Anyone can experience this reconciliation and be brought into oneness with God, on the basis of what our Lord has done on the cross.

Back to our text: This shows how expansive the kingdom of God is: all people can come and experience this for themselves. All nations, tribes, and tongue.

Yet – we must appreciate that: “No person can redeem themselves”: Redemption is the work of God, and is an absolutely finished and complete work.

Question: If Jesus is going to regenerate/redeem me, what is the problem He faces?

Answer: It is simply this: As it stands (without Christ) I have a heredity in which I had no say or decision: For example:

- I was born a sinner, into a sinful world.
- So, I was not born holy, I am not holy, nor am I ever likely to be holy

So, if all Jesus can do is tell me that I must be holy, His teaching only causes me to despair.

But, if Jesus Christ is truly a regenerator / redeemer / and someone who can put His own heredity of holiness into me, then I can begin to see what He means, when He says that “I have to be holy.”

The result of salvation / being saved: is “redemption” which means that Jesus Christ can put into anyone the hereditary nature that is in Himself (this is what being born again is all about).

All the standards Jesus gives us and calls us to, are based on that new nature. *His teaching is meant to be applied to the life which He puts within us.*

The proper action on my part is simply to agree with God’s verdict on sin, as judged on the Cross of Christ. And then Going forward – we are to allow the building blocks that God supernaturally uses, which is to put a new nature into me, through which I can live a totally new life – the Christian life.

We cannot save and sanctify ourselves; We cannot make atonement for sin; We cannot right what is wrong, purify what is impure, or make holy what is unholy. That is all the sovereign work of God.

Ex. When Jesus comes to us it is not to coach us .. He comes to transform us into His image and likeness. There is no threshold. He doesn’t come to make a new and nicer Dave .. He comes to transform us.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:^{la} The old has gone, the new is here!

The greatest need in our Christian walk, is not to *do* things, but to *believe* things. So, the big question is: do we have faith in what Jesus Christ has done? He has made perfect atonement for sin. This is the great act of God which He has performed through Christ, and we have to build our faith on this.

If we attempt to construct our faith on our own experiences, we will become try hards, only to produce the most unscriptural kind of life– an isolated life, with our eyes focused solely on our own holiness.

Verses 34-35 read, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 35 Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

Question: What is God’s love like? Like that of a mother. A mother always wants to protect her children and lead them to what’s best for them. Jesus looked out over Jerusalem as He looks at you and I with a great invitation to Come.

In the same way Jesus spoke about the city of Jerusalem – He asks us, take a look at your house, take a look within, look around you.

So many lives are desolate: experiencing a state of emptiness, despair, and abandonment.

And Jesus warns there will be bareness until we receive Him.