

Dangerous Doors

- **Vs. 23-25.** Can you hear urgency in J's voice?! This: matter life/dth, hvn/hell! Where you spend yr eternity depends on you understanding J's words right here! There is only 1 door to hvn, and that door: J. There: other doors you can walk thru, but do not lead hvn. On another occasion J: **"Enter thru narrow gate. For wide is the gate & broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter thru it. But small is the gate & narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it"** (Mt 7:13-14). So, there: other doors; but they: DD! And here J is begging you to avoid those DD, because they lead away from him, to eternal death.
- Here's DD#1: having J in yr past but not present. **Vs. 26-27a.** These are ppl: knew J yrs ago; used to go church; grew up w/Gos, but grew out of it. J: part/past; and figure good enough. So now, they never go church; or if do, just at Xmas/Easter, because like music, or makes mom happy. But they're not interested in living Xian life; not at all concerned re sin; and certainly have no intention of repenting. Xianity for them was childhood experience, like t-ball or PK. Have good memories of those days; glad were exposed to J. **Vs. 26;** I remember those days! But not connected to J anymore. Know what this vs really makes me think of? All Luth confessions who stop coming church, either few yrs after confession, or sometimes almost right away. It sickens me; nothing ages Protestants faster. This week, did little math. I: Protestant here 16 yrs; I've confirmed exactly 201 students. By my count, 108: fallen away; either given up on church or Xp. 108/201, over 50% – kids that stood/steps & promises remain faithful to Savior who's promises be faithful to them. Now, I fear they: traveling thru DD of relying on past faith/J. He's in their past but not present. And it haunts me, because I do not want these kids someday to say **vs. 26-27a.** That's DD#1.
- Here's DD#2: trusting in self, good works – because to these ppl J: **vs. 27b,** literally, "workers/evil." They don't think doing anything evil. In fact, sometimes lives actually look pretty good/moral. They love civic morality & think their morality'll save them. "Hey, pretty good person/citizen; don't break laws; I help ppl; I'd give shirt off back to anyone." And they think that's how get into hvn. Recently I've had sev ppl say: Really like yr school; you guys teach kids good morals. I say: pause right there. We teach children Gos/J, door to hvn; and teach how Gos motivates sanctified Xian living that honors J & serves neighbor – that's what we teach. We do not teach kids: civic morality; how be Pharisees, who are proud of good works they think'll get them into hvn. Tons of ppl think their outward morality'll save them. They're walking right thru DD#2.
- And here's DD#3 (I think really hits home, esp for lifelong Luths): trusting in background/heritage. In **vs. 28** J says. J talking to ppl who trusting in Heb heritage. They: chosen ppl; children of Abraham; of covenants saved! But JB once: **"Do not begin say selves, 'We have Abraham as our fr.' For I tell you: out/these stones God can raise up children for Abraham"** (Lk 3:8). It is not your background/heritage that saves you. Tell you: I was baptized/confirmed at Salem, Owosso. Same church: dad, grandpa, great; and grand-great settled at when moved from Germany. Mom runs hot lunch program; used to be school secretary; dad on SB; brother on SB; his wife, my sis-in-law, one Luth school teacher; their daughters, my nieces: 5th generation of Ls at Luth school – that's my background. And I know many ppl here at SJ also come from long line faithful Luth Xians, as well. Wouldn't it be easy trust in, bank on that?! But that's DD. Can you imagine standing before J at gate/hvn; he: "Why let you in?"; you dare answer: "Look at what my family did for church; look at my genealogy"? **Vs. 28a.**
- These are DD – past but not present faith; trusting in self & good works; trusting in background/heritage – DD, deadly doors, that lead directly away from J, straight into hell. There are so many ppl who think going to hvn but will be shocked when hear God say: **vs. 25c.** They went thru wrong door.
- J is only door. J is not a DD. But what is dangerous is forgetting: 1) J is only door; not multiple doors to hvn; J is only one. **"I: way, truth, life; no one comes to Father except thru me"** (Jn 14:6). 2) Door is narrow; yr sinful pride will not fit thru door; only faith/Xp fits thru door. 3) This door'll close. **Vs. 25a;** talking re J-Day, when God makes final decision re who goes hvn/hell; that day is coming. And 4) door is not going to reopen; once closed, stays closed.
- That's why there's urgency in J's voice? These words: warning! It all started when **vs. 23a.** J basically: don't worry re that; worry re self! Don't worry re how many saved; just make sure you one/them! So let me ask you, are you: on right path; entering thru narrow door; **"mak[ing] every effort"** to stay close to J?

- If these wrds/J feel little ovrwhlmng, make feel scared, then let me remind you of a beautiful truth that's so hidden in plain sight that it's easy overlook – simply this: there is a door! We have a door to hvn! Bec/sins, don't deserve door. But J has come to open a door for us. And that door is wide open – right now – has not closed yet! And J wants us enter thru that door; longs for it; longs for us be w/him in hvn forever. That's why he pleads w/us: **vs. 24a**. It's only narrow in sense that, can't fit: pride thru it; good wrks; morality; Luth conf; fam history. The only thing you can fit thru this narrw door is your faith/Xp. Faith makes: J big & you small, small enough to fit thru door. Pride makes you too big to fit thru. So abandon all self-righteousness you may still be hanging onto and cling to Xp in faith.
- Know smthng: J had lot doors open to him, but he chose to walk thru his own narrow door. J cld've stayed in hvn & nvr bothrd be born for us; easier. J cld've abndnd his mssn to save us when strippd off robe & startd whppng back. J cld've looked at railroad spike positnd vs wrist, & hammer about drive it thru, and said, "Know what, I've got 2nd thghts re this whole thing." Cld've called dwn legns/angels, ended it all. Had: wider doors, easier options. But in love for us, he walked thru his narrw door for our salvtn. And bec he did, narrw door to hvn now stands wide open – for you/me/evone! J died for evone! **Vs. 23a**. Well, no! **Vs. 29**. Or think Rev 7: **"I looked & there before me was grt mltt'd that no one cld cnt, fr ev ntn, tribe, ppl & lang, standng before: throne & Lamb (9)**. And by God's grace, smday: you'll be among them; J'll bring you to hvn, not bec of anything good in you, but solely bec of his goodness to you. Trust that; that's your door!
- In meantime, actually do what J says and **vs. 24a**. Strive, struggle; litly word is agonize. Make this your #1 priority in life. Let nthng else be more imp to you than J! Have that kind of focus – like Olympian competing for gold medal. Fight good fight; run straight race; **"make ev effort"** – bec there: lot DD that lead away fr J. Xianity can be a struggle; gotta work at it! But don't give up; and don't start heading toward those DD. J: only door to hvn. And that door may be narrw, but it's wide open.

Luke 13:22-30

²²Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. ²³Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"

He said to them, ²⁴"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. ²⁵Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.'

"But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.'

²⁶"Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.'

²⁷"But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!'

²⁸"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. ²⁹People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. ³⁰Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

