

Psalm 117 1 Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. 2 For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD.

Isaiah 66:18-23 18 "And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory.

19 "I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans ¹**Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. 20 And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD -on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels," says the LORD. "They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the LORD in ceremonially clean vessels. 21 And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites," says the LORD. 22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure. **23 From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD.**

Hebrews 12:18-24 18 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; 19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, 20 because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned." 21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. **You have come to God, the judge of all men,** to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Luke 13:22-30 **The Narrow Door**

22 Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. 23 Someone 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.** 25 Once 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.

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. 30 Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

porei,an trip

And he went through cities and villages teaching and making the trip to Jerusalem.

23 Ei=pen de, tij auvtw/\| ku,rie(eiv ovli,goi oi` sw|zo,menoiÈ o` de. ei=pen pro.j auvtou,j\
And a certain man said to him, 'Lord, are the ones being saved little (in number)?' And he said to him.

24 avgwni,zesqe eivselqei/n dia. th/j stenh/j qu,raj(o[ti polloi,(le,gw u`mi/n(zhth,sousin eivselqei/n kai. ouvk
ivscu,sousin

avgwni,zesqe strive, make every effort

Strive to enter through the narrow door. Because many, I tell you, shall seek to enter and not be able.

25 avfV ou- a'n evgerqh/| o` oivkodespo,thj kai. avpoklei,sh| th.n qu,ran kai. a;rxhsqe e;xw e`sta,nai kai.
krou,ein th.n qu,ran le,gontej\
ku,rie(a;noixon h`mi/n(kai. avpokriqei.j evrei/ u`mi/n\
ouvk oi=da u`ma/j po,qen
evste,Å

oivkodespo,thj - householders, head of the house

avpoklei,sh| exclude, close, shut

e`sta,nai stand, establish

From which the householder shall rise and shut the door and you shall beging to stand outside and cry (at) the door saying, Lord, Open to us. And He shall answer and say to you, I do not know you or where you come from.

26 to,te a;rxesqe le,gein\
evfa,gomen evnw,pio,n sou kai. evpi,omen kai. evn tai/j platei,aij h`mw/n evdi,daxaj\
platei,aij streets

Then you shall begin to say, We ate in your presence and he drank and you taught in our streets.

27 kai. evrei/ le,gwn u`mi/n\
ouvk oi=da Îu`ma/jÐ po,qen evste,\
avpo,sthte avpV evmou/ pa,ntej evrga,tai
avdiki,ajÅ

And he will say to you. I do not know you or from where you are. Go away from you all workers of unrighteousness.

28 evkei/ e;stai o` klauqmo.j kai. o` brugmo.j tw/n ovdo,ntwn(o[tan o;yhsqe VAbraa.m kai. VIsaa.k kai.
VIakw.b kai. pa,ntaj tou.j profh,taj evn th/| basilei,a| tou/ qeou/(u`ma/j de. evkballome,nouj e;xwÅ

And there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abrham and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you shall be cast out.

29 kai. h[xousin avpo. avnatolw/n kai. dusmw/n kai. avpo. borra/ kai. no,tou kai. avnakliqh,sontai evn th/|
basilei,a| tou/ qeou/Å

And they shall come from the east and west from north and south in the kingdom of God.

30 kai. ivdou. eivsi.n e;scatoi oi] e;sontai prw/toi kai. eivsi.n prw/toi oi] e;sontai e;scatoiÅ

And behold there are last ones who shall be first and there are first who shall be last.

INTRO - The young man thought he had it made. His dad was rich. His dad loved him. In fact, for years the young man knew his dad had spoiled him. As a young man he lived a wild life. He even took loans to pay for his purchases, knowing his dad would leave him a large inheritance. Even though his dad was in his 60's, the young man did not expect his dad's death. But he died, and the will was read, and he found out he had been left an income of a middle class person to be given each year. But, the majority of his dad's will had been given to charity and the needy. The son was SURE he had a large fortune coming. He had actually taken it for granted. But, the inheritance he expected did not happen.

I. Jesus is talking to people he loves, who are sure of their inheritance. But Jesus knows what these people don't expect. They might not receive God's kingdom.

A. The Jewish nation was the chosen people of God.

1. God chose them to be the people through whom He would send the savior. That was what they were chosen to do.

2. Therefore, the people of Israel were then people who knew God, people who knew His creating love, people who knew His saving love in the Exodus. They knew God's call to obedience and faith.

3. Somehow, because they had known about God for so long they took His love for granted.

A. At times, trusting God's love, they sinned openly - just knowing God would keep loving them. They took His love for granted.

B. At times, they trusted their goodness, and ignored God, and again, ignored His commandments and His call to love others. They took His love for granted.

C. Many times they just lived half hearted commitment to God. They knew what God wanted, but they only followed God when it was convenient. They took His love for granted.

B. To these people in Today's lesson Jesus gives a warning.

1. **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.**

2. To people who have taken God's love, and God's kingdom for Granted, Jesus is telling them they may not receive that kingdom.

C. Jesus was not just talking to the people of His church in His day. Today, the people of God seem to take God, and His love, and His kingdom for granted.

1. In Western Culture at least, Christians often act like their relationship with God is just another choice in a life of many choices.

A. People in Europe are known for attending church for hatching (birth and baptism), matching (marriage), and dispatching (funerals). But, even in America most churches worship around 1/3 of their membership. St. John has similar statistics. Does that sound like people are committed, or taking God for granted?

B. Do you know that polls say that over 90% of Americans say they believe in Jesus and pray to him but that less than 20% can speak from memory the 10 commandments? Does that sound like people are committed, or taking God for granted?

C. It used to be that Christians had better statistics when it came to marriage and divorce, but today divorces happen at the same rate in the church as the rest of society. Are God's people taking Him for granted?

D. Even leaders seem to take God's love, and God's commandments for granted. It is not just in the Roman Catholic church that scandals happen among the clergy. They happen in all churches, in our denomination. Did you know that the BTK killer in was an officer in his Lutheran congregation in Kansas?

2. Jesus was not just talking to the Jews of His day. He is talking to believers of every day, and to us, not to take the love of God, His word for granted when he says, **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.**

II. When the son heard the will read, he thought his father had been mean, stingy, hateful. But, actually the Father was acting in love, trying to get the attention of His son that character and faith are more important than possessions, that eternal life is more important than this life.

A. Jesus' words to the Jews, to his disciples, were shocking, but actually words of love.

1. Jesus cared about all the people of the world, and the Jewish people with a depth of love.
 2. He did not want them to miss God's kingdom because of their taking God and His love for granted.
- B. God does not take us for granted. He went to the ultimate effort to save the sinners of the world.
1. Do you know that the Father sent his Son to save the world, knowing His son would need to die? We got a letter this week from the maid of honor from our wedding. She sent pictures of her kids. Her oldest son may have to go back to Iraq for the second time. She wrote that, 'He is willing to go, but him being there the first time was the toughest thing I've ever been through. I hope he doesn't have to go again.' Do you see how hard it is to send our children to danger? But, God did not take us for granted, He sent Jesus.
 2. Jesus came to this world where we had rebelled in sin, but he took on our sins. He suffered for us, died on the cross for us, and rose for us. Jesus was serious about His love for us!
 3. God keeps calling us to His love. Parents, have you ever had a disagreement with your children when you simply said in the middle, 'You know, I love you.'? But, after your profession of love, you were rejected? The Jews were rejecting God's plan, but Jesus kept calling them to faith. People today take God for granted, and reject Him, but God keeps calling, in His Word, by His Spirit, through His people, in the Sacraments. Today he calls in the Lord's Supper. That is not taking us for granted, but being committed to us.

C. In truth, God wants everyone to be saved.

1. The words of the Gospel lesson echo the prophecy of Isaiah. The last verse of today's Old Testament lesson says, **all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD.**
2. Jesus says in today's Gospel **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."**

III. The young man stood up and was about to leave the lawyer's office in anger. Words of anger against his recently dead father erupted from his mouth - 'That stupid, tight - wad, old man.' But, the lawyer jumped up and hollered, 'Wait, I'm not finished with your dad's will. He also left a letter.' The letter was short.

A. Dear Son, I love you greatly, and want the best for you in this life, and the best that God has for you in Jesus in heaven. Your recent life seems to take God's love for granted and to ignore God's wise will for your life. I am afraid you are rejecting God, rejecting the narrow door of His love in Jesus, by your life. I cnaged my will to get your attention, to realize that God's love and living for Him is more important. But, though I have not left you a fortune as an inheritance. I am also naming you the Executive Director of the foundation which will give away the money. If you meet the goals set of helping and loving others, you can also earn a generous salary. However, my goal is not to get you money, but rather to reach your heart.

B. God's bequest to you in this life is generous. He is the one who gives you life, and love, and your family, and your possessions. God calls you to manage His gifts, to live for Him, and to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION - The words of Jesus, are not words of harshness, they are words of love to people he loves.

"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Do you need to listen to his warning? Will you do so?