

Luke 13:24

by Chuck Smith

We must strive to enter the straight gate, making a strong effort to enter the kingdom of God, and not just going through the motions.

Scripture: Ezekiel 3:17, Luke 13:24

Topics: "Repentance", "Salvation"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the urgency of striving to enter through the narrow gate as Jesus warns that many who believe they are saved may not be. He highlights the need for genuine effort in faith, cautioning against false assurances of salvation that can lead to eternal separation from God. Smith stresses that merely knowing scripture or participating in church activities is insufficient for salvation; true faith must be accompanied by a transformed life. He urges listeners to examine their lives and ensure they are not deceived into thinking they are right with God while living in sin. The sermon serves as a wake-up call to take the call to repentance seriously before it is too late.

Transcript

I. "Strive to enter in at the straight gate." A. This exhortation from Jesus comes as a response to the question, "Are there few that be saved?" B. The word translated strive is from the Greek word agonizomai which is to struggle or fight. It is a word that speaks of a strong effort, such as running a race to win. 1. We get our word agony from the root of this Greek word, the word that was used for Jesus when in the Garden of Gethsemane "Being in agony, He prayed more earnestly and His sweat was as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground." 2.

You get the idea of great effort. 3. You can't get to heaven in a rocking chair, the Lord don't allow no lazy folks there. C. I wonder if we have not sought to make a broad gate into the kingdom of God that will just about include everyone? D. I fear lest we might be guilty of making it seem that the path is very easy for those who are seeking eternal life. E. As a representative of Jesus, I do not want to give false assurance to anyone, I don't want you to be thinking that you are all right when you are not. 1.

The Lord was angry with the prophets that were giving the people false assurances saying peace, peace, when there was no peace. 2. As a result of these false assurances the people were continuing in their sin feeling that everything would be OK, and they were actually destroyed. F. I do not want any of you standing outside the gate when it is once shut, being denied entrance into the kingdom because you misunderstood what it takes to be saved. 1. You see, as a minister I have a great responsibility to you to

tell you as straight as I can the truth of salvation. 2.

If I do not warn you, then your blood will be on my hands, if I warn you, then it is up to you to do as you wish with the warning, but at least my hands will be clean of your blood. a. God said the prophet Ezekiel, EZE 3:17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. EZE 3:18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked [man] shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

EZE 3:19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. EZE 3:20 Again, When a righteous [man] doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

EZE 3:21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous [man], that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul. 3. Paul the apostle declared to the elders of Ephesus, ACS 20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I [am] pure from the blood of all [men]. ACS 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 4. Perhaps this is what I am seeking to do this day, declare to you the words of Jesus that will hopefully take from you any false security or false hope of salvation that you may possess. 5.

Some of you may get angry at the things I am going to say, but I would rather have you angry with me now, than to find yourself outside the door being denied entrance and to be angry with me then for not giving you warning. G. The general response of Jesus to the question, "Are there few that be saved?" is that there are many who think that they are who are not saved. H. Polls show that about 80% of the people in the United States claim to be born again. 1. My estimate is that there are fewer than 25% who are truly born again. 2.

That would mean that 55% of the people who believe that they are born again are deceived. 3. Paul in his epistles warned several times against being deceived. 1CO 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, GAL 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 2TI 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

TIT 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, [and] hating one another. 4. I do believe that there are many today who believe that they all right with God when in reality they are not. 5. Paul said to "Examine yourselves to see if you be in the faith, prove your own selves." In another part of the epistle to the Corinthians he said, "For if we would examine ourselves we would not be judged by God."

II. "Many shall seek to enter in and will not be able."

A. They felt that they should be given a place within the kingdom.

Listen to what they say.

1. Lord, Lord, open to us.

- a. They are calling Him Lord.
 - b. Jesus said, "Not all who say Lord, Lord are going to enter the kingdom of heaven, but He that doeth the will of the Father."
 - c. Jesus tells us that the 5 foolish virgins that were outside knocking on the door that had been shut, they were saying, " Lord, Lord, open to us." They were calling Him Lord.
 - d. Jesus said, "Why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and you do not the things I command you?"
 - e. Have you truly submitted to His Lordship?
2. They will say, "We have eaten and drunk in your presence."
 - a. We have taken holy communion.
 - b. We have attended church regularly, and paid our tithes faithfully.
 3. They will say, "You have taught in our streets."
 - a. We know and have studied your word.
 - b. I know the 23rd psalm and the Lord's prayer by memory.
 - c. James tells us that we must be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving ourselves.
 - d. How many people are deceived into thinking they are saved because they can quote scriptures.
- B. Listen to what He says,
1. I do not know from whence you are.
 2. Depart from Me you workers of iniquity.

- a. You may know His word and be living in iniquity.
- b. This seemed to be the case of these people.
- c. Still living in sin, still being ruled by the flesh, still watching R and X rated movies, yet still attending the services in the house of the Lord.

3. Paul warned the Galatians,

GAL 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these];

Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

GAL 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

GAL 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

4. He also warned the Ephesian church,

EPH 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

EPH 5:6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

III. What Jesus is apparently saying is

A. We must strive to enter the straight gate, just desiring to enter is not sufficient. "Many will seek, and not be able."

B. Once the door is shut, your opportunity to enter is over, there will be no second chance after death.

C. There will be many standing outside of the shut door who were deceived into thinking that they were going to make it, and who did not. They apparently thought that they could still be saved while living in iniquity, they were wrong.

D. There are many pastors today who think that it is their duty to make man feel good about himself. They avoid the word sin, for they do not want to put a guilt trip on anyone. They are actually comforting, and giving assurance to those who are on the way to hell.

1. If you are living in Christ, I seek to assure and comfort you today. Surely He is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

2. If you are living in sin today, I desire to remove you from your comfort zone, I seek to stir you up. I seek to warn you that you are in danger of being on the outside looking in and not being able to enter the kingdom of God.

a. Saying the right things is not enough, many will say Lord, Lord.

b. Just hearing the word is not enough, they were saying "You have taught us in our streets." We listened to your teaching.

c. Keeping the ordinances of the church cannot save you, "We have eaten and drunk in your presence." All who are saved will keep the ordinances, but not all that keep the

ordinances are saved.

3. Twice in the early part of this chapter Jesus said, unless you repent, you will likewise perish. To repent is to change, to turn from the life of sin, and begin to live for Christ. You today are either living after the flesh, or living after the spirit, yielding to the flesh, or yielding to the spirit. You cannot have it both ways, it is one or the other. They that are after the flesh do have the mind of the flesh. They who are living after the spirit do have the mind of the Spirit. The mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace in the Holy Spirit.

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