

Few Find the Way to Life - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of striving for true salvation amidst the prevalence of mega-churches and superficial faith.

Duration: 9:43

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:21, Luke 13:24, Galatians 6:7-8, 1 Timothy 2:3-4, Hebrews 12:15, James 4:8

Topics: "Personal Salvation", "True Repentance"

Description

This sermon addresses the phenomenon of mega-churches and questions whether all individuals in these large congregations are truly saved. It emphasizes the importance of personal striving for salvation and highlights the need for individual commitment and repentance, rather than relying solely on the size of a church or the words of a pastor. The message stresses the urgency of entering through the narrow door and making decisions that align with God's will, as each decision sows seeds that will eventually be reaped.

Transcript

We are living in a day of what is known as mega-churches, and I don't think Protestant Christianity has seen the type of numbers that there are in churches nowadays. I mean, there are huge Roman Catholic churches in many places, but in many, many countries we have many thousands that are churches with 20,000, 30,000 people, and churches with even more than that, some, I think, 100,000. And, of course, everybody would be proud of the fact that they are part of a large church.

The question that comes to me in all this is, of course, we rejoice. God wants all men to be saved, and if there are nearly 7,000 million people in the world, God wants every one of them to be saved. It says that in 1 Timothy 2, and it says in 2 Peter 3 that God wants every one of them to repent also.

So, there's not a single person whom God does not want to repent or to be saved. The question is, in all these churches nowadays, are all the people sitting there really saved or not? Was it God's will that there should be these huge churches which just listen to one pastor, and where people don't know one another, don't build fellowship with one another in the local church? I don't think so. The goal of God was ultimately to build fellowship between people, to make two people into one, to make opposite people into one.

In Luke chapter 13, someone asked Jesus this question, Lord, are there just a few who are being saved? Are there only a few who will be saved? He said to them, strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. He didn't answer that question directly.

The question is, Lord, are there only a few who are going to be saved? What was his answer? Strive to enter. Don't worry whether other people are saved or not. Don't worry about how many people are saved or not.

You make sure that you have entered through the narrow door. And is it something you can walk through? No. He said here you've got to strive.

And in the Message Bible it says it requires your total attention. It requires your total attention. You've got to put your mind to it.

Set your mind to it. Strive. And then, that's one thing.

I don't think a lot of people are being told to strive. Have you ever heard an evangelist preach a gospel saying, strive to enter in through the narrow gate so that you can be saved? I've never heard one like that in my life. And I've lived a long time listening to preachers.

I want to tell you something honestly, brothers and sisters. We're living in a time when the words of Jesus are not preached. And he said that heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away.

And people have taken just some words of Jesus here and there and made that the gospel. When we proclaim the whole counsel of God, the whole purpose of God, if someone says to me, are there only a few who are going to be saved? I've got to give them the same answer that Jesus gave. Brother, let me urge you, strive to enter through the narrow door.

And the second thing I will tell him is, there are many who will seek to enter and will not be able. How about that? Now we thought that anybody who wants to enter, he can enter. But he said, there will be many who will seek to enter and will not be able to enter.

There could be various reasons for that. You know the rich young ruler, he wanted to enter. He wanted to enter through the narrow door but he couldn't enter because his money made him so big.

Now if he had got rid of his money, he could have gone through quite easily. Now Jesus told him to get rid of it because he loved it so much. He didn't tell everybody to get rid of all their money.

Zacchaeus gave up only half his money to the poor. And Mary and Martha, as far as we know, probably gave up nothing. So it's like cancer.

In some cases, the doctor says, yeah, I can just go in and it's very early stage. Just take out a little bit and you'll be okay. And some other people, the cancer has spread so much, the doctor says, I've got to take out the whole organ.

I've heard of people who's got cancer in the stomach and 80% of the stomach is cut out. It's the only way they live. Sometimes the whole organ is taken out because the whole thing is spread and some other people just a little bit and they're cured.

So in the rich young ruler's case, the cancer of the love of money had spread so much that the whole thing had to be removed. But he wasn't willing. So what happens when a person's cancer has spread so much and the doctor says the whole thing has to be removed and he says, no, I don't want it.

Well, then keep it and you die. That's exactly what happened to the rich young ruler because Jesus gave him the same invitation that he gave to Peter. Come, follow me.

He could have been an apostle, but he had to go through the narrow door. And just think, I don't know where he is today. If he never repented, then of course he's in hell.

But if he repented towards the end of his life, maybe he did get to heaven after living a wasted life on earth. But wherever he is, go and ask him. I mean, if you were to make that choice again, what would you do? He'd say, oh, now that I see from eternity's standpoint, I have no doubt as to what choice I would have made that day.

But it's too late now. Brothers and sisters, we are going to review the decisions we made in our life one day. All the little, little decisions that we made.

You know, we're making decisions. Decisions about money, decisions about our attitude to sin. We decide what type of books to read.

We decide what type of programs to watch on TV. We decide what type of sites to go to on the internet. It's all decisions.

And we've got to remember that a decision is like sowing a seed. Your mind and your heart is like a vineyard. And every day you're sowing some seeds.

And those seeds may be good or bad. And you know how it is when you sow seeds. Some seeds, you plant a mango tree, you won't get anything for a whole year.

Coconuts, some years you get nothing. But then it keeps on producing. So it's too late to change the type of tree after it started growing up.

It's just going to produce what you sowed. So years later, you're going to be reaping exactly the result of all these little seeds that you've been sowing in your younger days. You remember in Hebrews 12, verse 15, it says, Take heed that there's no one among you like Esau.

Hebrews 12, let's turn to that verse for a moment. Hebrews 12. Now Hebrews is very obviously written to believers.

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