

# Up Against the Narrow Gate

Daily Gospel / Liturgical Cycle B

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Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 13: 22-30.

Jesus passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few people be saved?" He answered them, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough. After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside knocking and saying, 'Lord, open the door for us.' He will say to you in reply, 'I do not know where you are from.' And you will say, 'We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets.' Then he will say to you, 'I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers!' And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out. And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the Kingdom of God. For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, I believe in you with a faith that never seeks to test you. I trust in you, hoping to learn to accept and follow your will, even when it does not make sense to the way that I see things. May my love for you and those around me be similar to the love you have shown to me.

Petition:

Lord, grant me the humility and sincerity to enter by the narrow gate.

1. A Scary Question:

This is a scary question: Lord, will only a few people be saved? Jesus doesn't answer the question directly. Instead, he gives some advice. It almost looks like Jesus is avoiding the question, as if the answer is too discouraging. He tries to be encouraging instead, but at the same time underlines the difficulty of success. Strive he says, to enter by the narrow gate. Strive is the key word, since apparently, many are going to try to enter and fail, because the gate is so narrow.

2. A Disturbing Reply:

The words that many will try to enter and fail are troubling. What percentage? How many? Nowadays, we like exact statistics. Jesus doesn't say, but we get the impression that it will be more than a few. The possibility of failure is very real. Who will fail? Probably, people who don't take him seriously; people who don't try hard enough; people who love something more than they love Jesus. In other words, lots of people will fail.

3. My Christian Credentials May Not Be as Solid as I Think They Are:

He goes on to say that many who think they are doing enough are going to be surprised to find they didn't do enough. They think their Christian credentials are solid, but they will be found wanting. They will tell Jesus that they ate and drank with him, that they received communion every Sunday. They will witness to how many times they heard him preach in their streets, how much they contributed to the collection, but that will not be enough. Yet others who did not seem so good in life will be entering the Kingdom before them. Which group will I be in? Jesus is warning me that just because I feel I am doing enough for him doesn't mean I am going to be in the group to be saved. I need to follow him with as much sincerity and honesty as I am capable of, doing his will and not my own.

Conversation with Christ:

Dear Jesus, your words are troubling to me. I see how often I fail in what I know I should be doing for you. I see that I cannot reliably guide myself in this matter. Send your Holy Spirit to help me open my eyes to see if I am falling short before it is too late. Help me to enter by the narrow gate.

Resolution:

Today I will examine my conscience very honestly to see if I am saying to Jesus in any aspect of my life and to see if I am letting myself get too comfortable in any aspect of my life, since comfort, especially in the spiritual life, is a sign that I am not striving to enter by the narrow gate.