

Get Inside

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[0:00] Please take your Bible and turn with me to Matthew 22. We'll see the first 22 verses. Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.

He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner.

My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet. But they paid no attention and went off, one to his field, another to his business.

The rest seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come.

Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you can find. Anyone you find. So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

[1:11] When the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. Friend, he asked, How did you get in here without wedding clothes? The man was speechless.

Then the king told the attendants, Tie him hand and foot and throw him outside into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are invited, but few are chosen.

Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. Teacher, they said, We know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.

You aren't swayed by men because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?

Show me the coin used for paying the tax. They brought him a denarius. And he asked them, Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription? Caesar's, they replied.

[2:17] Then he said to them, Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away. Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of Luke this time.

We'll read from verse 22 to verse 30. Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?

He said to them, Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. 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. Then you will say, We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets. But he will reply, I don't know you, or where you come from, away from me, all you evildoers.

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. People will come from east and west, and north and south, and will take their places at the feast, and the kingdom of God.

[3:42] Indeed, there are those who are last, who will be first, and first, who will be last. People are interesting creatures.

That would be you and me. We like to ask questions, and to get answers, don't we? Why do I have this pain in my body?

What's causing my car to make these noises? What was wrong with the bears this season? Where should I invest my money?

Now, that was just the way it was 2,000 years ago. That's the way people are. And it was that way when our Savior walked the earth, and people came to Him with their questions as well.

Usually far more serious questions. But sometimes, even as we read in Matthew's account, they were simply out to trick Him, weren't they, in the questions they asked. We want to look this morning at one question put to Jesus, and the answer that He gave.

[4:50] It's found in Luke chapter 13, and verse 23. First the question, then the answer. Someone asked Him, Lord, are only a few going to be saved?

Now, it wasn't a random question, just out of the blue. Notice it was as Jesus was teaching, as He went about teaching, that somebody raised this question.

What He heard Jesus teach prompted this question in His mind. Notice what the question is not. Lord, is everyone going to be saved?

Or, Lord, are most all people going to be saved? Now, those are the kinds of questions that would be prompted by listening to much preaching today. That says that God is so loving that He would never send anyone to hell forever, or that all roads and religions lead to heaven, or that conversion is such an easy thing.

It's just like casting a vote for Jesus, and you just raise your hand, or you just say this prayer, or just come forward. Do something small and easy.

[6:08] It's just try your best. Try to be a good person, and you'll go to heaven. That would have raised the response and the question, Lord, is it true that almost everybody makes it to heaven?

But instead, this man listened to Jesus, and he asked, Lord, are only a few going to be saved?

Now, what was Jesus teaching that would have prompted such a question?

You can just look up at chapter 13, verse 5, and you can see that he just recently said, I tell you that unless you repent, you will all perish. You'll all perish unless you repent.

Or those famous words in John 14, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Well, if no one comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ, then that rules out all unbelieving Muslims and Buddhists and Hindus and Jews and atheists and agnostics.

[7:20] In fact, everyone that does not come to God through Christ. And then we have those words in Matthew 7, 13 and 14 where Jesus talks about the two gates and the two roads and the two destinations.

And he says, enter through the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it.

Now, that's just some samplings of the preaching and teaching of Jesus. So we're not surprised to hear this man say, Lord, are only a few going to be saved? Now, the questions we ask often reveal something about us, don't they?

And this man's question tells us some things about him. First of all, he understands the gist of Jesus' teaching, doesn't he? He's got that much right. But we also can't help but notice that it also reveals that his question is a safe one.

His question is more of an academic point to be argued here. It's nothing personal. Surely nothing as personal as that jailer in Philippi who said, what must I do to be saved?

[8:48] No, this man is holding the question out here. Lord, are only a few going to be saved? I mean, some people say a lot, some people, where are you at in this argument?

Well, that's the question. He'd like to keep this thing at a comfortable distance from himself. Now, the answer, the answer follows and the first thing we see is that Jesus doesn't really answer the question directly, does he?

He doesn't say few, doesn't say, you're right, or he doesn't say, no, you're wrong, it's really many. Instead, he takes the opportunity to urge this very man and all those hearing him to get in to the narrowed door.

He said to them, plural, make every effort to enter through the narrow door. So here's the short answer. The question, are only a few going to be saved?

And the short answer is whether many or few, you be sure that you get in. Whatever others are doing or not doing, don't you fail to enter.

[10:01] And don't let us miss the heart of Jesus in this whole passage. He's not willing to have this man simply be taken up with some academic interest about religion.

And there were many like that. And they would argue for hours about how many angels you could put on the head of a pin and how many people will be saved in the end. And Jesus says, oh, my friend, that's the wrong question.

You should be asking, what must I do to be saved? And he presses the issue home personally to his hearers. He's out to do us the greatest good, this Jesus, to save us from asking the wrong questions and going down the wrong way.

He's here to bring us to himself and to eternal life that's found in him. We don't always ask the right questions, but Jesus always gives the right answers.

That's what you find throughout the Gospels. Men aren't always asking the right questions, but he's always giving the right answers. Robert Haldane was a missionary to Geneva back in the 1800s.

[11:14] He went there, set up, got an apartment, and there was a liberal seminary nearby that didn't believe that the Bible was God's word and teaching all sorts of lies about God and the Gospel.

And so Haldane opened up his apartment to these fellows, anybody that would come and they would study the book of Romans. And so you know where Romans starts, sin, before you get to salvation.

The need for salvation comes first. And so he starts teaching these fellows with an open Bible the fact that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

The fact that we are totally depraved. We have nothing good to save for ourselves before this holy God. We're absolutely dependent upon him to save us. And one day after studying the scriptures, one of these students says, I see it.

I now see it. I see total depravity in the Bible, in Romans. And Haldane was so wise. He said, oh, that's fine that you see it there, but have you seen total depravity in your own heart?

[12:24] in your heart that you are the sinner who's offended this holy God and are absolutely, utterly dependent upon him saving you if you will ever go to heaven.

That's the way Jesus taught. He wants to save us from eternal damnation. He wants to gather us into his arms and carry us into his heaven.

So the answer. Notice, first of all, then, Jesus himself is the narrow door of salvation. He doesn't identify that right up front here, but as again, if we understand Jesus teaching, that much is clear. Here you've got this eternal banquet hall of salvation and there's just one entrance into this banquet hall and it's a narrow door.

And Jesus Christ is that door. John 10, 9, Jesus says, I am the door. Whoever enters through me will be saved.

[13:29] There's the hall of salvation. I'm the door. Come through me and be saved. It was simple. It was gloriously simple and plain. I am the way.

The way to the father. I'm the only way. to heaven. So we're saved by coming through Christ. We enter by faith in Jesus Christ.

We're all born sinners outside of salvation and we only get in through Christ. He's the door. The second thing we see in Jesus' answer is that he infers that it's no easy thing to get through the door. door. Do you see that? Make every effort to get through the narrow door. The word in the Greek is agonizomai from which we get our word agony or agonize, struggle, strive, labor.

make every agonizing effort to get through the narrow door. In other words, Jesus doesn't treat salvation and conversion to Christ as some easy thing.

[14:54] in one place, remember, he says it's easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And here he infers that it will take great effort if you are to get in the door of salvation.

Well, what are the hindrances that stand in front of the sinner and entrance into the door? Well, there are many. There's the world, there's the flesh, there's the devil.

And he'll take anything in the world to call you aside and to allure you and say, no, run after this and distract you from the door that is Jesus. Look, look, here's your friends.

You want to give up your worldly friends and you want to bear the cross and follow Jesus. Oh, that's going to be so hard and his burden is so heavy and his yoke is so tight.

How could you ever want to do that? Well, if you're going to make it into the door, my friend, you're going to have to press hard to get through such arguments that are trying to keep you out.

[16:08] All sorts of sins and pleasures of sin that last only for a season that are cheats, but they keep people from entering the door.

there's procrastination. All enter the door someday. There's pride and presumption. I'm good enough on my own.

I don't need salvation. I'm a good boy. I'm a good girl. I'm a moral man, a moral woman. Don't cheat on my wife. Anything to keep you out of the door.

Do you remember in Pilgrim's Progress? Where did Pilgrim, on his way to coming to Christ, find the greatest resistance?

Remember how Bunyan puts it? He comes up to the door and he's knocking and it's just across the way that he sees a castle, Beelzebub's castle, and the arrows are flying thick as hail.

[17:10] He's telling us something. He's telling us that all hell will break loose when you seek to get into the kingdom of Christ. Now, he fights you all the way, but you just get close and you just start considering should I really not stop my way and come to Christ and ask him to save me from my sins?

And you get near the door and all the arrows will fly like hail to keep you out. So today some people are being kept from churches where the gospel is preached because other things have drawn them aside and it's Satan's way of keeping them from coming near the door.

But I want to warn you about a more subtle tactic of the devil and that is to allow you to come to church and to sit and to listen to the preaching of the gospel but not to go in the door.

that is the greatest deception perhaps of all. In other words, young people, he may not be all that concerned. I'm talking about the devil now.

All that concern that you're here this morning because you come often enough that you start to think I'm okay with God. I go to church. I'm not like the other kids at school and I think in the end I'd get in.

[18:36] and the devil's just happy to keep you right there. You see, he's not afraid to use religion as one of his instruments to keep you from Jesus, from entering the door.

He might use something as outwardly wicked as he's using with some of the kids at school, but he also might use religion and respectable, moral, upright, young person that you are, but both will keep you effectively from entering through the door of Christ.

And so if you're going to ever get through the door of conversion to Christ, you're going to have to make every effort. You're going to have to deny yourself all this high view of yourself that your righteousness is enough and you're going to have to come low and be stripped of all the baggage to get through that narrow door.

That's hard work, that's struggle, that's agonizing. And that's the point Jesus is making. It's no easy thing to get through the door.

Notice in the third place, there is an urgency in Jesus' answer. Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, he says.

[19:48] Our minds have been on earthquakes lately. Suppose while we're sitting here, we had an earthquake. everything starts shaking and the walls start bulging out and the rafters begin bulging in and then it all stops and it's just heaving there waiting to collapse upon us.

And there's no windows in the room and there's no doors except for that one door right there. I dare say we'd all be making every effort to get out that door because if we remain in here, the next aftershock could bring the whole roof down upon us.

So we would make every effort to get out the door. That's what Jesus is saying to us. To remain here is death, damnation. The only life to be found is to be found through the door, which is Jesus.

And don't hinder or don't linger. Don't wait around. Why? Because you aren't promised tomorrow.

And so he's urging us to enter that door right now at once.

Because he says in verse 24, because I tell you, because many I tell you will try to enter and will not be able to once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door.

[21:16] 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. You see, the door of salvation that is open today

will one day be closed forever.

That's the reality Jesus is confronting us with. The day of grace will then be passed. It will be too late to be saved. And no one will be able to enter no matter how passionately they seek Christ, no matter how passionately they beg and knock for entrance.

And notice the frightening many that comes off of Jesus' lip there. Many, he says, will try to enter and not be able to.

That's interesting. He's the question was, are there a few that will be saved? And here's one of those words about many and few. And here Jesus says, many will try to enter when entrance is no longer possible.

And they'll cry, open the door for us. But they'll find no entrance into salvation. Then, you know, Jesus knows what people are thinking.

[22:35] and he knows there's many people and especially young people who keep telling themselves that they are planning to come to Christ.

Sure enough, just not yet. There's many people like that, Jesus says. I plan to repent and be baptized.

I plan to turn from my sins and trust in the Savior. fear, but I'm not ready yet. And one day turns into two and two into three and years and years and they're still not in the door.

Jesus is warning against that thing of procrastinating because at one point the door will be closed either when they die or when Christ returns.

The door for them will be closed forever. Jesus is telling us it is possible to be concerned about your salvation too late. It is possible, not only possible, many will do that.

[23:46] They will repent too late. They will seek Christ too late. And so if the door was to slam shut this afternoon, on which side of the door would you be for eternity?

That's what Jesus is saying to us here. Oh, enter. Make every effort to enter and to do so now. Now, here's an unusual phenomenon.

First of all, nothing is more despised than the open door. Nothing is more despised, no door is more despised than when it's open.

The open door here is the entrance to salvation. Jesus Christ is the door and he's willing to receive sinners. His arms are outstretched to receive them.

And if you'd come to him, you know what he would do? He would wrap his arms around you and welcome you and love you and save you. That's what the open door means.

[24:51] He's willing to have you, to save you, if you would come to him. But oh, how people are ignoring the open door.

Have you noticed that in your life? That people are neglecting this open door. They're not concerned about the open door. They're not thinking about the open door. They're despising it as an unimportant thing.

Men are bored with the gospel. They yawn at Christ, the open door. Think of the trifles that sinners choose over the open door of Christ. A boyfriend, a girlfriend means more to them than the open door.

Popularity, advancement, some pleasure of sin for a season. Trifles, things in eternity that won't be worth a penny, and yet now they're viewed as more important than the open door.

It's despised. What a low price tag is put on the open door of Christ today. As long as the door is open, few are even concerned about entering.

[26:00] But all that will change in a moment. And that leads us to the other half of this phenomenon, that nothing is more desired than the closed door.

Despised when it's open, but now desired once it's closed. Once the owner of the house gets up, Jesus says, and that's himself.

And closes the door, and eternal judgment is falling, that very door that was hated, and despised and rejected and neglected will be desired then. And people who yawned at the door and yawned at Christ will then be beating on that door for all their life, all their worth.

Open the door for us. They'll cry. Same door, only difference is now it's closed. It's no longer open. Now they're willing to trade anything.

And now they blush to think that ever a boyfriend, a girlfriend, or money, or pleasure ever stood in the way of getting through that door when it was open. Nothing more despised than the open door, nothing more desired than when it's closed.

[27:16] Now that's the way it's always been. It's not just a 21st century phenomenon. It's always been that way, and I think back to another open door. And as long as it was open, it was despised and neglected.

It's the door on the ark that God told Noah to build. Because judgment is coming upon the world, and the flood will cover the entire surface of the world, and only those who are inside the ark will be spared.

So build an ark, Noah. And so he's building for 120 years, he's building, and he's a preacher, and he's preaching righteousness as he's building, and he's warning men to flee the wrath that's coming.

And when he's finished with his ark, he's not done with his sermon until he turns to the crowd and urges them one last time to get in the door now.

But the open door is a despised door, and baboons and monkeys are going through that door, but men are refusing to go in that door.

[28:34] It must be smelly in there with all those animals, don't you think? And besides, Noah wears all the water to carry this boat. And the open door was the despised door.

Changed in a moment. For on the day that Noah and his family go into the ark, and all the animals are there, and the Bible says the Lord shut them in.

And the door was closed. And on that day, the fountains of the deep broke open, and water starts gushing out of the earth, and the floodgates of heaven opened, and water starts pouring down out of the heavens, and the floods came up.

And now that closed door is the desired door, and they would give anything to be in there with those smelly animals. Doesn't mean anything to them now.

The door, once it's closed, is now desired, but it's too late. Do not despise the door when it's open.

[29:42] today, if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts, but enter. Because this is an awesome reality, lesson five, that there's coming a day when many will try to enter when the door is closed.

When Christ returns, many will try to enter, and Jesus says they'll make every effort. They'll make quite some effort. We see that in the story he tells, but it will all be for naught.

And the efforts made is they're knocking and they're pleading, sir, open the door for us, and Christ will say, I don't know you or where you've come from. And they'll keep seeking entrance and they'll make even further efforts arguing that they should be let in.

We belong in there, Jesus. Because he says, then you will say to me, verse 26, we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets. And here it becomes clear that the one they're pleading with for entrance is none other than Jesus Christ himself, who was there teaching in their streets, and eating and drinking with sinners, seeking their salvation.

And that's what they'll turn to in that day. Surely you know us, Lord. I mean, we were there and we ate and drank with you. And we were there when you were preaching and healing.

[31:08] Remember that blind man on the way to Jericho? We were there, Lord. We saw that miracle. And he will reply, I don't know you or where you've come from.

Away from me, all you evildoers. There's quite the effort now to get in, you see. But the closed door is not budging. It's closed for good because it's Jesus is saying you don't belong on the inside.

You don't belong in here. You're evildoers. Your sins are still clinging to you and nothing defiled or unclean can enter in here. You were never saved from your sin, never washed in the blood of Christ.

You never entered the door while it was open. And so you're still in your sin away from me, you evildoers. You see, physical nearness to Christ is not what gets people into salvation.

There are all sorts of people that heard Jesus as he was on the earth and saw his miracles. Loved to hear him teach. Loved even to hear him shut up the scribes and Pharisees, the know-it-alls.

[32:16] And they enjoyed Jesus teaching to a certain extent. And they were there. They ate and drank with him. But that's not the same thing as entering through the door.

Trusting in Jesus to save you. And oh, what a picture this is. I'm afraid of many, many young people in churches and older people in churches who are hanging around the door.

And they're hearing preaching about the door and they're talking about the door and they're admiring the door, but they're not entering the door. And some people think that they're good for heaven because they are standing around the door and they're where the gospel is preached.

And they'll say, but I was there most weeks in church and I was in Sunday school and I heard the preached word and my parents taught me all about you, Jesus. And remember, I was baptized on such a date or I was a member of that church.

And I was there to eat with you at the Lord's Supper and I read my Bible and I tried to do my best. And he will say, I don't know you.

[33:31] I don't know you. Folks, when Jesus says, I don't know you, he doesn't mean I'm aware. I was unaware of your existence. He knows every time a bird lands on the ground in a Brazilian rainforest, he knows every hair on your head.

It's numbered to him. He knows everyone. In that sense of being aware of their presence on earth. When Jesus says, I don't know you, he says he's meaning I have no relationship with you.

You don't know me and I don't know you. And he's teaching us that it's very possible to know a lot about Jesus without knowing him. You can know all the statistics about Peyton Manning.

And yet, if you called him up and said, hey, Peyton, how about if I came over after the game tonight? He'd say, I don't know you. What's your name? I don't know you. I have no relationship with you. And that's what Jesus is saying to us.

It's not enough that you were there when I taught. It's not enough that you were there and saw it and heard it and even professed it. Did you know me? Did I know you?

[34:40] Did we have that intimacy of relationship? I don't know you? It's nothing when Peyton Manning says, I don't know you.

But when the Son of God says to you, I don't know you, in that day, it will mean eternal torments. Two days before Thanksgiving, Tariq and Mikhail Salahi caused quite a stir, didn't they, when they got into a formal presidential dinner at the White House and the White House accused them of crashing the party uninvited.

They claimed otherwise. White House says that you weren't on the list of people, guests, that were invited, and yet somehow they made it through all the security checks, didn't they?

And there they were. They got in. Supposedly didn't belong there. and yet there they were. They got there and they stayed for the entire dinner. They met the president and distinguished guests, took pictures and posted them that we've all seen.

We may never know what really happened in that whole fiasco, but we can know this, that there will be no security checks at the gate of heaven.

[36:05] and no one who does not belong on the inside will ever get inside. And the reason is, is that there's no secretary, no underling with a name of a list of names standing at the pearly gates.

And as all the jokes about heaven have St. Peter at the pearly gates, it's not that way, my friends.

The one at the pearly gates, the one at the entrance to heaven is Jesus. He's the one.

He's the only door. He's the only way in. He's there. And he's talking to the ones banging on the door. And he makes no mistakes.

He knows those that are his. He knows those who are trusting in him in more than name only. And so to all who have not entered the door during their lifetime, he says, away from me.

I never knew you. The last lesson is that there will be a lot of surprises on that day. The day of judgment will be full of surprises.

[37:20] Now, there will be weeping there and gnashing of teeth when Jesus says, I never knew you away from me. And there will be many surprises. verse 30 tells us that there will be those who are last who will be first.

Didn't expect to see that, did we? And those who are first who will be last. Now, that's quite a surprise. There will be some of the least expected found on the inside of the kingdom of God.

And there will be some of the most expected on earth who are shut out of the kingdom of God.

That's what Jesus is telling us. Now, here were the Jews and they were favored by God out of all the nations to have the scriptures, to have the Old Testament scriptures, the promises, the covenants, to be the people who are related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the promises that were made through their fathers.

They were the nation from which the Messiah would come. They were blessed in so many ways. It was to them that Jesus first came and preached salvation. Come to me. Enter through me.

So many spiritual privileges. They were first in privilege. And they thought they were shoe ends into the kingdom of God because of their privileges, because they were close to Jesus when he preached, and because they had the law and the prophets.

[38:55] Gentiles. And then there were the Gentiles. But Jesus says of them that they are the ones who will be weeping and gnashing their teeth.

He says, when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out because you didn't enter through the narrow door, you rejected Christ, religious, but no relationship with Jesus.

So there were the first in privilege, the Jews, but here were the last. The last people to be led into heaven were the Gentiles. You know how the Jews despised them as dirty, unclean dogs, unfit for heaven.

And their last and least expected to be in the kingdom, they didn't have anything of these privileges that the Jews had, and they're worshipping other gods and other idols.

And yet, what happened? they entered through the door before the Jews did, Jesus says. They came and repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus to save them.

[40:06] In this life, they entered the door, and so they were saved, so they will be there inside the kingdom in that day. And what will be especially galling to the unbelieving Jews will be to see those Gentiles from all over the world streaming in and taking their place at the feast, along with Father Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets.

Here are these Jewish forefathers, and here are the nations, people from all the nations, some of us from the United States will be there with them. And these Jews that have been so privileged will really gnash their teeth when they see that, Jesus says.

Them in and us out. and again, I'm reminded of the question, Lord, are there only a few who are going to be saved?

We see the countless hosts streaming in, don't we, from east and west and north and south. Yes, there are few in any generation, but oh, you bring them all together in that last day and they'll stream in from all directions.

God's elect from the four corners of the earth, a number that cannot be counted. And Jesus is saying to us this morning, know this, there'll be lots of surprises on the day of judgment.

[41:28] It'll be shocking because of who's in and shocking because of who's out. Some of the least expected will be in, like the tax collectors who everyone despised as thieves and thugs, prostitutes who sold their bodies for money and notorious sinners.

Everyone knew were scumbags, spent the greater part of their lives in outward sins of wickedness. And lo and behold, they're on the inside of God's kingdom forever.

And there's Zacchaeus, that money grabbing tax collector, and he's on the inside. There's that immoral Samaritan woman that Jesus met at the well, and she had five husbands and was living with him.

She's there. There's Rahab the harlot. She's there. And there's that thief that died on the cross beside Jesus who spent his life in sin, and yet he's there because just at the end he entered the door when Jesus said, today you'll be with me in paradise.

He said, oh, remember me, Jesus, when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus says, yes, you'll be with me inside the kingdom today in paradise. They're inside some wonderful surprises of God's grace.

[42:50] But they all entered the door while they were still living on the earth. Don't anyone think, well, maybe I'll be one of those surprises. Nobody thinks I'm a Christian, but maybe I'll be found in folk.

You won't be found inside unless you enter through Christ in this life. But then there's also those that were expected to be in that won't be found in.

I mean, there's men that have spent their whole lives studying the scriptures like the scribes did.

They've spent their whole lives trying to live by strict religious rules like the Pharisees did.

And there will be Bible scholars and there will be ministers and there will be priests and there will be leaders of ministries that are on the television set. And there will be hosts of people whose outward lives were moral and upright and were looked upon as community leaders and who did a lot of sacrificial works of charity.

There will be baptized church members, regular church attenders, and they'll be outside the kingdom of God where there is weeping and gnashing teeth.

[43:59] That's what Jesus is telling us. So the son of Sam, he's in because he repented of his sins.

But there's a whole lot of professing Christians who are nothing more than do-gooders with no relationship to Jesus who never took one life but hated a plenty and they'll be outside where they belong.

Because though they were religious, they never entered the door. John Newton, they never entered so that means all their sin is still on them so they must pay for eternity what they owed to God. They never trusted Christ to pay it for them. Now John Newton was one of those that the world would shake their heads and say no he doesn't belong inside. He was a blaspheming slave ship owner.

He was known for his filthy mouth. He would pretend to be a preacher and blaspheme the holy Jesus. But one day he put all his trust in Christ.

[45 : 16] One day he came and said save me from my sin. I have nothing to offer but my sin. Come and save me. And he entered the door. He became a minister of the gospel, became a songwriter.

He writes amazing grace. how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. And one day you will see this wretch on the inside with Jesus.

And he knew all about these surprises that Jesus is talking about in the last day. He said if I ever reach heaven I expect to find three wonders there. First to meet some who I never expected would be there.

Maybe some of those fellow sailors that used to curse and swear with him. Maybe he didn't live to see their repentance and faith. Maybe he'll find them in there. Surprise number two to miss some that I had expected to see there.

Maybe some members of his church who had all the trappings religiously but had no heart relationship with Jesus. Surprising. But third and this will be the greatest wonder of all to find myself there.

[46 : 42] Amazing shocking surprising grace that saved a wretch like me. That's the greatest wonder of all.

You see the greatest wonder is that anybody is in there with Jesus. that even one is saved for we've all sinned and come short of God's glory and our offense against God is so great that eternal damnation is the punishment.

He's too holy and righteous to have sinners in his presence. But this God that we have offended has so loved this world that he sent his one and only son into the world to become a man, to be born under the law, and to keep God's law and he did it perfectly which qualified him to be the perfect substitutionary lamb.

And so he goes to the cross and what's he doing on the cross? Well, he's stepping in as the substitute. He's standing in the place of sinners there and he's taking the sins of all his favored people and he's saying, Father, punish these sins in me.

And so on the cross, he takes the wrath of God. He's damned in the place of sinners and dies the death we deserve.

[48 : 07] Now, that's what it cost to cut a doorway into the kingdom of heaven. Nobody could ever get in unless this happened.

Jesus damned receiving the punishment that we deserved. He dies that we might live. He is cursed that we might be eternally blessed.

That's how the door is cut into the kingdom. And the father was so pleased with his son that he raised him from the dead showing he's accepted his payment for sin.

He's elevated him to his own right hand and he's made him the foundation stone of his church and he's made him the only door into his kingdom, the only door into his heaven.

So that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Life. That there even is a door into the kingdom his grace is grace.

[49 : 20] That we wretches can enter is amazing grace. For when through grace our trust in Christ is, justice smiles and asks no more.

For God is pleased to look on him and pardon us. That's Christ our door. door. But if the salvation is to be yours, you must enter.

No more lingering around the door. You can die an inch from the door and go to hell forever. It doesn't mean anything that you spent your life an inch closer to the door.

My friend, the fact that you lived an inch close to the door will make your punishment increase. You mean you heard? You heard I was open-armed and willing to have you and you didn't enter?

What is more shocking whether there is a door into heaven or the fact that some of you here still haven't got in it? Can you imagine that? Some of you here haven't yet run into this Christ.

[50 : 21] Run to him now and he'll save you. But do it today. Do it before the door is closed forever and ever. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we have found no grace in the world like your grace. No love like the Father's love. No good news like the gospel that answers all of our needs as sinners.

We needed righteousness and you gave us Christ in his perfect life. We deserve to be damned and he took the curse in our place. We needed life and you brought him from the dead and all your people from our spiritual death.

Make us to love you, to serve you, and to rejoice in you and bring others this day to trust in the Savior, to get in the door now. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.