

Will You Join the Kingdom?

2026-03-01 - Luke 13:1-30



As Jesus taught and confronted the religious leaders of his day, he made it clear that he was the only way by which one could enter the kingdom. Join us this week as we look at the urgency of the coming of the kingdom and how to respond to the words of Jesus.

Well, if you've got your Bibles, I want to invite you to open up to Luke chapter 13. This morning we're going to be in Luke chapter 13, and we are going to be reading and looking at Jesus' teaching. We've been in this series where we've been talking about the upside-down kingdom and the certainty of the gospel. And today as we move into Luke 13, we're going to see something unique, but not unique, but it's something we haven't seen so far in the Gospel of Luke. You see, so far in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus has mostly spoken against those who are rich in this life. And now he's going to talk about those who are poor in this life. And he's going to use parables very similar to ones he's used before. And we're going to see how the values of the kingdom of God do not match any of the values of this world in a way that is challenging. And there's going to be tension that arises. And as we read and as we try and figure out, are we in truth citizens of the kingdom of God?

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

The question for today is, **Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?**

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Now, it is likely—in fact, I will say, unfortunately, it is probable—that there are some in here who have grown up in the church, spent their whole lives in the church, and yet are not citizens of the kingdom of God. I don't say this to try and scare you, but to ask you, **are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?**

I once knew a man who grew up in a church that was not a Bible-believing church, but he grew up there. He got married there to a woman from that church. He had kids at that church. They got dedicated at that church. Their whole family got baptized at that church. And it wasn't until he was a grandfather, his children were going to a different church, and he was an elder at the church he'd grown up in. He went and visited his children's church, and he heard the gospel for the first time in his life. He went back to his old church and said, what are we doing? And they said, this is what we do. And so he left and he and his wife began going to a Bible-believing church, but his whole life he had been assured of his salvation in his own works, and in a sudden moment of clarity he who was blind could now see.

I had a dear friend that I used to work with that I will never forget her testimony. All through her life she assumed she was a believer, and towards the end of her time in college she was one of those believers who told everyone how they were wrong. And then she went to a campus ministry event and she heard the gospel. And all of a sudden she realized that she had it wrong all the time. She had been thinking she

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could earn her own righteousness. She repented. She turned to the Lord. And she told me I had a holy rage against my home church because they had never preached the gospel to me. And that summer when I came home to live with my parents for the summer, I was ready to have holy fire. And then the first Sunday she was back, she listened and heard the pastor preach the gospel. She had been blind, but now she could see, and she rejoiced. It wasn't the church's fault; it was she was blind.

There's another man I know, and this is one of my favorite stories. His wife became a believer when they were in their 50s, and he was disgusted by it. But he also wanted to be a supportive husband, and so he decided to read the Bible cover to cover in order to tell his wife how wrong she was. He read the Bible cover to cover, and he told his wife how wrong she was. But she persisted. Eventually, he came to an Easter service at a church. He heard the gospel. He responded. And the book he had scorned became his favorite thing to read and study.

Until the Lord opens your eyes, you cannot see.

The question is, **are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?** I hope your answer is "Yes," and I hope as we read today you make sure your answer is built on the foundations of God's word. To that end, let me pray and then we will jump in.

Father in heaven, we thank you that you have sent your spirit to open the eyes of the blind. We thank you that all who recognize that they are poor in righteousness, all who hunger for righteousness, and all who weep because we know we deserve death for our sins, to all who cry out to you, you offer us life in your name. We praise you, Lord, that through the work of your Son, we can be saved, though we are so undeserving. I pray right now, Lord, that your Spirit would move in our midst today, that if anyone here has a testimony like those I just shared, that by the end of today, they would be rejoicing, knowing that they are a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. And I pray, Lord, that for those who do know you, that as we go through this passage today, that you would be giving them a sense of urgency for those around them who need to know you. I pray, Lord, that your Spirit would be moving in our midst, that you would give us all eyes to see and ears to hear. And I pray, Lord, that you would speak to me and speak through me, that these would be your words and not mine. We thank you for the truth of your gospel. We thank you that you sent your Son, and it is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?

Our question for today is, **are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?** And the first, we're going to ask four questions out of this. The first question is, do you walk in repentance, or are you preparing to perish? Do you walk in repentance, or are you preparing to perish? And let me tell you, these are the only two options for every human who has ever existed.

Do you walk in repentance, or are you preparing to perish?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?

At that time, some people came and reported to him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

Luke 13:1 CSB

Luke 13:1 begins, ***At that time some people came and reported to Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.*** Now this is Pilate—you know, the guy who washed his hands of killing Jesus, but he's the governor, that guy. There was a point where there were some Galileans, some Jewish people, that they rebelled or upset Pilate in some way. There's some different debates on exactly what they did. But Pilate, in order to desecrate them as he killed them, he mixed their blood with pagan sacrifices to not just kill them, but to warn others and also to defile their deaths. This is something the Romans did often; there are stories of them when they invaded the temple at one point, they sacrificed pigs in it in order to mock the Jews. This is how they showed their dominance.

And for the Jewish people, when they heard about the Galileans, the first question that they asked was, well, what did those Galileans do wrong? You may say, well, why would they ask that? Well, if you know in John chapter 9, there's the story—Jesus and his disciples are walking. His disciples see a man who had been blind from birth and they say, is it his sin or his parents' sin? You see, the people of that day thought if someone was rich and wealthy and well off and lived a long life, it was a sign that they were righteous and blessed by God. But if unfortunate things happened to them, it was a sign that God had judged them.

And so the people reporting to Jesus here are saying to Jesus, look at these people who deserve judgment. And they're kind of asking, the assumption of anyone in that day of going to a teacher like Jesus and bringing this up, was to hear his take. What do you think? Why were they judged for this? What did they do that led to their blood being mixed with pagan sacrifices?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?

And he responded to them, “Do you think that these Galileans were more sinful than all the other Galileans because they suffered these things? No, I tell you; **but unless you repent, you will all perish as well.** Or those eighteen that the tower in Siloam fell on and killed—do you think they were more sinful than all the other people who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; **but unless you repent, you will all perish as well.**”

Luke 13:2-5 CSB

And here's the response of Jesus: ***Do you think that these Galileans were more sinful than all the other Galileans because they suffered these things?*** Do you think they were lower, do you think they were worse? ***No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well.*** (Luke 13:2–3). They're no different than anyone else. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. They are no different than anyone else.

Jesus goes on, ***Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish*** (Luke 13:4–5). Now, one was an act of Rome under Pilate. One was an act that some would argue was chance and others would argue was divine judgment. There was a tower in Jerusalem that fell and killed 18 people. And Jesus is saying that you think the judgment to one group of people is more or a different group of people is more. You think they must have been more sinful. But instead, Jesus to the audience he is talking to, he says, “No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all perish as well.”

The warning Jesus makes here is clear: it's not about who's the most sinful; it's not about who's the least sinful. You must repent. It's not about whose name isn't, or whose name is, in the Epstein files. You may be looking around, thinking, "I'm so much better than all these people out there whose names are in the files." You may be thinking about things around the world right now and saying, "Well, I'm blessed because I'm not like them." Wherever you stand, the reality is that all have fallen short of the glory of God because we sin, and the wages of sin are death. You, in your own strength, will perish. Whether in this life you think you've done good, or whether you think you've done bad, no one can stand before the wrath of God in our own strength because of His righteousness and because of our wickedness.

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?

And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree that was planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. He told the vineyard worker, 'Listen, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it even waste the soil?' "But," he replied to him, 'Sir, leave it this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. Perhaps it will produce fruit next year, but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Luke 13-6-9 CSB

Jesus goes on to tell this parable. *A man had a fig tree that was planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. He found the vineyard worker, and he told the vineyard worker, listen, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down. Why should it even waste the soil? But the worker replied, sir, leave it this year also until I dig around it and fertilize it. Perhaps it will produce fruit next year, but if not, you can cut it down.*

Now this parable of a fig tree that didn't produce fruit was destined for the fire. A fig tree that didn't produce fruit was utterly useless in that day. You wouldn't grow the wood for anything else. You wouldn't waste your time. If it didn't produce fruit, you would tear it out, cut it up, throw it in a fire, and you'd grow a different tree. This image is an image of a warning. Unless you repent, you will perish also. If you do not bear fruit, if you do not turn to the Lord, if you do not cry out to Him, you are doomed to death for all eternity. Jesus is making a very clear point. We all deserve hell. And if we do not repent, that is where we will be.

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish? Walking in repentance means crying out to Jesus. It means saying, "Lord, I am a sinner, and there is nothing I can do to change that." It means acknowledging that He is your Lord. It means asking that the Holy Spirit would come in and transform you. Because there is not a single good work we can do. Ephesians 2: *we are dead in our sins on our own, but God makes us alive through the work of Christ*. You can do no good on your own. If you try and do good in order to stand before God in heaven, nothing we can do is good; at best, it's filthy rags. But through the work of the Holy Spirit, we can do good, and we can bear fruit, but it's God working in us and through us. **Do you walk in repentance, or are you preparing to perish?** That's our first question.

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?

Do you rejoice when you see what God can do?

After this, we're going to ask, do you rejoice when you see what only God can do? After Jesus finishes this, we move on to a teaching tied to the same unit of thought.

Do you rejoice when you see what God can do?

As he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, a woman was there who had been disabled by a spirit for over eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called out to her, "Woman, you are free of your disability." Then he laid his hands on her, and instantly she was restored and began to glorify God.

Luke 13:10-13 CSB

As Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, a woman was there who had been disabled by a spirit for over 18 years (Luke 13:10–11a). Now, we just talked about 18 people that a tower crushed, and now we see the word 18 again. It might seem like a small thing, but the number 18 back-to-back in an unusual Greek way is a sign of these passages being connected together. This is the Holy Spirit. There's no coincidences in scripture. So 18-18 back-to-back, you're going to look at that and go, wow, how are these connected?

And here's how it's connected. **She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called out to her, "Woman, you are free of your disability." And then he laid his hand on her and instantly she was restored and began to glorify God** (Luke 13:11–13). In that moment, Jesus heals her. She'd been coming to the synagogue 18 years, bent, unable to do anything about it. Jesus sees her. Notice it doesn't say she came to Jesus in order to be healed. Jesus is there, sees her, immediately heals her. We see this beautiful picture of how the Lord can heal and instantly she's restored and she begins to glorify God.

Do you rejoice when you see what God can do?

But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, responded by telling the crowd, "There are six days when work should be done; therefore come on those days and be healed and not on the Sabbath day."

Luke 13:14 CSB

But the leader of the synagogue was indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. Now, if you don't know, the Jewish people said, You can't work on the Sabbath. And the Pharisees and the religious leaders made these incredible lists of what you could and could not do on the Sabbath. You could not lift certain things. You could not move certain things. They took what God had made clear in the Old Testament and they added so many rules to it, to make it incredibly ridiculous. What Jesus is doing here is something that only God could do. The healing that He does is something radical and miraculous and something that no one could have comprehended could be done in that day.

How do I know no one could have comprehended that could have been done that day? This woman, for 18 years, had been going to that synagogue every single Saturday on the Sabbath. And no one had ever healed her on that day or any of the other days. But this synagogue leader is mad because it's the Sabbath. And so he tells the crowd, ***There are six days when work should be done. Therefore, come on those days and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day*** (Luke 13:14). Now, to give you perspective, she's been bent over for 18 years. That's over 6,000 days. 6,000 non-Sabbath days where this synagogue leader had not healed her. When you think about that, the words he is saying are beyond ridiculous. First off, this is clearly the power of God at work, and God, if it was sinful, would not do the work, right? I mean, it is that simple, but the people of that day were so blind. The leaders of that day were so blind to these incredible things Jesus was doing.

I wonder, genuinely, if everyone in the synagogue was like, "What is this guy talking about?" Like it must have been a really awkward moment. Come back a different day to be healed. Like no one in that room, I hope, was thinking, "What a good point. What a good point."

Do you rejoice when you see what God can do?

But the Lord answered him and said, "Hypocrites! Doesn't each one of you untie his ox or donkey from the feeding trough on the Sabbath and lead it to water? Satan has bound this woman, a daughter of Abraham, for eighteen years—shouldn't she be untied from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" When he had said these things, all his adversaries were humiliated, but the whole crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things he was doing.

Luke 13:15-17 CSB

Jesus responds immediately. ***Hypocrites! Does not each one of you untie his ox or donkey from the feeding trough on the Sabbath day and lead it to water?*** (Luke 13:15). This is on the Sabbath. They were permitted. If your animal needed to eat or drink, you could take care of it. Jesus is pointing out that you can take care of a beast on the Sabbath to do good for it.

Satan has bound this woman, a daughter of Abraham, for 18 years. Shouldn't she be untied from this bond on the Sabbath day? (Luke 13:16). If you care about this beast, care about this woman made in the image of God. It's such a simple thing. And yet they were blind to it. ***When Jesus had said these things, all his adversaries were humiliated, but the whole crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things he was doing*** (Luke 13:17). The people recognized this could only be a work of God. Jesus used scripture to prove this was a work of God.

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?

Do you rejoice when you see what God can do?

Do you rejoice when you see what only God can do? This is an important question. As believers, we should be rejoicing anytime and every time we hear of someone's testimony, when we hear of someone getting baptized, when we see a baptism, when we talk to people and they are saying..., I talked to someone this morning who said, "Matt, I've got four prayer requests that were answered this week." I marveled—I was

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almost in tears and had to run and go fill up my water, but it was such a wonderful thing to hear prayer request after prayer request being answered. The person said, "I prayed for this. I prayed for this. I prayed for this. I prayed for this. God answered all four." She even said, "Let me know what yours are. I'm on a roll." I was rejoicing in that moment, because that's not a moment of the person saying, "Look what I did." That's a person saying, "Look at what God has done." We should be rejoicing. We should be encouraging one another. We should be glorifying God.

Next week you're going to hear from Pastor Ashton. He's going to be in Luke 15. And we're going to hear about a prodigal son and another son. A son who doesn't rejoice when he sees the work of God. But I want to encourage you, you need to rejoice when you see what only God can do. If you become blind to that, it is a sign of a calloused and hard heart. If, when you hear the work of the Lord, your response is, "Well, that wasn't an offer. He doesn't do that for me," or even, "Well, I don't really believe that,"—I mean, have discernment. You know, every time you hear that Justin Bieber became a believer, it's okay to go, "Well, that church isn't really preaching the Bible." But when people that you know are talking about how God is working in their lives, when you see people in the church sharing how the Lord is answering prayer requests, when you see the Lord at work in our midst, we should be rejoicing. We should be rejoicing all the time because of all that the Lord is doing. If you're a citizen of the kingdom of God, you're going to see that. You're going to rejoice because each day He's going to give you your daily bread.

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?

Do you rejoice when you see what God can do?

Does your faith spread into every facet of life?

This brings us to our third point. **Does your faith spread into every facet of life?**

Does your faith spread into every facet of life?

He said, therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It's like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the sky nested in its branches." Again he said, "What can I compare the kingdom of God to? It's like leaven[g] that a woman took and mixed into fifty pounds of flour until all of it was leavened."

Luke 13:18-21 CSB

Jesus said, **Therefore, what is the kingdom of God like and what can I compare it to?** By the way, this is as his opponents were humiliated and as everyone else was giving glory to God.

It is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the sky nested in its branches (Luke 13:18–19). Now, I have to pause here for a moment. A mustard seed is tiny. But when they grow, and I was fascinated in doing my horticulture research this week, a mustard seed, depending on which strain of seed, it could grow into a tree that if it's properly pruned will be 25 feet tall. Or it could grow into a giant bush that's like 10 feet tall and just massive in every way. But there's also something else. You don't think of a mustard tree at all, hopefully, let's be honest. But also you don't think of a mustard tree and think, oh, I'll have a mustard fruit off of it. And you may laugh at this, but it sounds

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like the smallest of things, but he just gave this whole illustration about a tree needing fruit. And it's a small thing, and so is a mustard seed.

It's also, there are people who say it's weird that he chose this instead of, why didn't he do a cedar tree? Because a cedar tree was imagery of the house of David in the Old Testament growing and becoming this, and that would have been a strong and mighty tree, where a mustard tree is a tree that why on earth would you grow it? It was more like a weed in most people's eyes. Why would you put it in a garden in the first place if you were going to let it grow up? And it speaks to something small that becomes invasive and takes over. And the kingdom of God is like that. In the synagogue, Jesus heals, the leaders reject, the people rejoice. The kingdom of God, as it spreads, the world will reject it, and yet that will just further its spread. We're going to be in the book of Acts soon. As we finish Luke, we're going to go into Acts. And one of the key themes of Acts is every time the church faces persecution, the gospel spreads. The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It starts small, but it takes over.

Again, he said, "What can I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like leaven that a woman took and mixed into 50 pounds of flour until all of it was leavened." (Luke 13:20–21). Now, for those of you who had a lot of free time during COVID, I'm betting you started your own sourdough starter, right? Like that was the thing that everyone did. And if you did, you remember you had that little thing and every couple of days you added a little water and added a little flour. And then every time you went to bake your bread, you'd mix all your ingredients and you'd add that leavening agent, the sourdough, and then you'd watch as it doubled, right? I read this passage and it's the easiest thing in the world is when you add yeast, you don't need to add a lot of yeast to something for it to have a major impact because it grows and it grows. When you add yeast to 50 pounds of flour is the illustration, it'll fill its way through all of it and it will cause it to grow and grow.

The imagery here is of something that enters and takes over because that's what the kingdom of God does. Yeast starts off this little small granular thing or this little small amount goes in to the flour and it takes over all of it. There's also a tension here because just a chapter ago at the start of chapter 12, ***be on your guard against the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy*** (Luke 12:1). You see, there's a question is which will you be leavened by? The Pharisees seek to have a righteousness that is in your own strength and by your own works. If you're leavened by them, you are preparing to perish. But if you are leavened by the kingdom of God, it will take over everything. It will fill everything. You will become someone who lives for the kingdom. It will start off small and it will grow and it will expand and it will double in size and multiply. That is the imagery here. Jesus uses similar parallel imagery across his parables to make us wrestle with these ideas. Will you be leavened by self-righteousness or will you be leavened by his righteousness? That is the question.

Does your faith spread into every facet of life? Because if it is He who you are following, if your faith is in Him, it should be seen in your life. It should be seen when you go to the grocery store; it should be seen. I once knew a man who always told me, "Matt, I love what you're saying, but when I'm at work sitting in front of my computer in my Excel spreadsheet, it is very hard for me to give glory to God." He was a tax guy, and he said, "So I don't even know what I do. I just sit here and I punch in numbers." And I asked,

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"Well, do the people around you—when they interact with you, when your clients come in—do they come away... Do you show them someone who is honest and excellent in their work? Do you show them someone who gives glory to God at having provision through this job? Are you someone who shows them love and respect and care, showing them that they are made in the image of God?"

I don't know how everyone can do this in their individual personal situations, but I will tell you that we should all be striving that when people interact with us, they come away like if, again, if you've ever done sourdough bread, when you're mixing the dough, it sticks to you and then it's... I pray that when people interact with you, a little bit of the kingdom sticks to them and it starts to spread to them.

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?
Do you rejoice when you see what God can do?
Does your faith spread into every facet of life?

Does your faith spread into every facet of life? The kingdom of God is the greatest multiplying kingdom the world has ever known. It started out with a couple hundred, 500 people who saw the resurrected Christ, who were in a hostile nation, ruled over by an even more hostile nation. Every time any of them said that Jesus Christ is the risen Son of God, they were declaring that there was a Messiah the Jews rejected, and they were declaring that there was a king higher than Caesar, which the Romans rejected. It's why Christians were killed in the Colosseum. It's why Christians were crucified, why they were burned alive. And yet the gospel kept spreading until it became the religion of Rome. The kingdom of God spreads into all facets of life as it spread into all the facets of your life. This brings us to our last point.

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?
Do you rejoice when you see what God can do?
Does your faith spread into every facet of life?
Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation?

Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation?

Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation?

He went through one town and village after another, teaching and making his way to Jerusalem. "Lord," someone asked him, "are only a few people going to be saved?"

Luke 13:22-23a CSB

Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation? So as we keep going in this unit, *Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching and making his way to Jerusalem* (Luke 13:22). *Lord, someone asked him, "Are only a few people going to be saved?"* (Luke 13:23). And this may look like a new idea, but the report about the Galileans and their blood being mixed was a question of are they under divine judgment? This question is in that same vein. "Who exactly will be in heaven? Lord, who will be saved?"

Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation?

He said to them, “**Make every effort** to enter through the narrow door, because I tell you, many will try to enter and won’t be able once the homeowner gets up and shuts the door.

Luke 13:23b-24a CSB

And Jesus answered this way, *Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to* (Luke 13:24). And that “**make every effort**,” it’s from the Greek word for agony or striving. Do everything in your power. Now, you may say, “Well, Matt, you’ve said we cannot be saved by works.” Yes, you cannot be saved by works. Make every effort to turn and cry out to Jesus Christ. *Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because I tell you, many will try to enter and won’t be able to, once the homeowner gets up and shuts the door.*

Now we’ve seen a shut door and a homeowner before. I don’t know if you remember a few weeks ago when we talked about Prayer. The parable of the homeowner, the friend comes and he’s knocking on the door and the homeowner says, “Go away. My kids and I were sleeping, go away.” And the guy keeps knocking and is persistent. And because of his shameless boldness, the guy will give him the food. We’ve also seen knocking right after that when Jesus says, *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you* (Luke 11:9). And now we come to another door and another homeowner.

Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation?

Then you will stand outside and knock on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open up for us!’ He will answer you, ‘I don’t know you or where you’re from.’ Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ But he will say, ‘I tell you, I don’t know you or where you’re from. Get away from me, all you evildoers!’

Luke 13:24b-27 csb

Jesus says, Then you will stand outside and knock on the door, saying, “Lord, open up for us.” And he will answer you, “I don’t know who you are or where you’re from.” Then you will say, “We ate and drank in your presence and you taught in our streets.” But he will say, “I tell you, I don’t know you or where you’re from. Get away from me, all you evildoers” (Luke 13:25–27).

This passage is speaking of after we die, there's going to be no chance. After you die, if you have not knocked, the door will not open. After you die, if you say, Lord, I attended church every Sunday. I served, I tithed. I even that one time went out door to door to tell people about the church. Whatever you might say, if your faith is not in Jesus, but is in your works, on that day after you die and you knock, the kingdom of heaven will be closed to you. We must make the decision in this life. This is abundantly clear in this passage.

Now, this would have been radical for the people Jesus was talking to, just as it’s radical today, because you see, Jesus is talking to Jewish people. And Jewish people felt in that day a security in their salvation because they were children of Abraham. But what Jesus teaches, and this isn’t just in Luke, it’s in John. We went through John last year and Jesus, you know, to be a child of God is a work of God. It’s not something we can do. It’s not something we can earn. It’s something only the Holy Spirit can do in us and through us.

The Jewish people would have assumed they had salvation, but salvation is found in Christ alone. And so Jesus is saying this to people who are wondering and they're confident in their salvation. They're wondering why on earth he would say anything different. And yet his warning here, his challenge here, the clarity here is that if you do not put your faith in me in this life, I will not recognize you in the next.

He has said this many ways in the Gospel of Luke so far. He said to the one who is ashamed of me in this life, I will be ashamed of him in the next. He's talked about, if you think you are rich in this life, you already have received your reward and heaven is not for you.

Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation?

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth in that place, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves thrown out. **They** will come from **east** and **west**, from **north** and **south**, to share the banquet in the kingdom of God. Note this: Some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last."

Luke 13:28-30 CSB

He goes on, ***There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth in that place, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves thrown out*** (Luke 13:28). You'll see all the people that you're confident of your faith in. They'll be there because their faith is in Christ. And you yourselves will be thrown out. This is a warning that for anyone who does not believe in Jesus, they will spend eternity in hell.

Jesus goes on, ***They will come from east and west and from north and south to share the banquet of the kingdom of God*** (Luke 13:29). If what he said so far is radical, these next words are even more so for the audience of that day. Because when he says, they will come from **east, west, north, and south**, he's referring to **Gentiles**. To this Jewish audience where they would have assumed the kingdom is ours because of our birthright, he's saying no, all have sinned, you need to knock in this life, you need to repent in this life or you will perish. And Jesus says for any who do knock in this life they will come and they will share the banquet in the kingdom of God. If you are here today and you are not of Jewish descent, this passage is the promise that the gospel is for each and every person. It's not the only passage, but it's one of those wonderful passages about how the picture and purpose of the kingdom is far greater than anyone in that day could have imagined. It's going to spread into the whole world. Eventually it will be the only kingdom. There will be those separated from God in hell forever, and there will be those in the new heaven and new earth where Christ reigns.

Note this: Some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last (Luke 13:30). At the end of the passage, Jesus is saying what you think of righteousness and wickedness in this life—who you think is deserving or undeserving, who you think, “Look at the judgment they’re under because of God,” or, “Look how great they are”—the way you think is not the way it will be. You do not see how God sees. Blessed are those who do.

Are you a citizen of the kingdom of God?

Do you walk in repentance or are you preparing to perish?

Do you rejoice when you see what God can do?

Does your faith spread into every facet of life?

Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation?

Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation? I talk to people sometimes who say, "Well, if God is so petty that He's going to make me say a prayer in this life to follow Him," I've had people say this to me, "and then I guess I don't want to be in His kingdom." And that is a sign of how blind someone is. Because it's not "if God is so petty," it's "we are so wicked that we have no way to stand before him," and so He sent His Son. His Son died on the cross for our sins so that we who deserve to perish would have a way to truly repent and stand before Him. Do you believe all must knock in this life to receive salvation?

If you're here today and you're a believer and as you've read through these and thought about how you would answer these, if you're confident in where you stand before Christ, this passage is a call to urgency for those around you. Because each and every person you interact with is either walking in repentance or preparing to perish. And for those people you interact with that do not know the Lord, be a mustard seed, be that little bit of leaven. Point them to the gospel that they would turn and they would repent and they would respond to the Lord. You cannot make them do it. That is a work of the Holy Spirit. But make sure that you are showing them. You are a witness to the work that only Jesus can do. Make sure that in your strength you are pointing them to the truth of the gospel. As much as you are able, pray that the Lord would give you the words. Pray for urgency because there are so many around us who are destined for hell. There are so many around us that are going to knock in the end and thought, I was a good enough person. And yet, the reality is that none of us are.

If you're here today, and as you're listening to this, you're realizing, I am not a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Let me say, you should hear this with urgency above all else. You should pray. You should cry out to God. In your bulletin, there's just a simple prayer in there. And it's not about the words of that prayer are a good guideline, but what I want to encourage you in is if you want to say that prayer, pray to God, praying and trusting that the Holy Spirit is working. Because if you are a follower of Jesus, it is the Holy Spirit making you able to see. You are blind, but you're able to see through the work of the Spirit. And so if you feel desperation now, if you feel urgency right now, I want to invite you to cry out to the Lord.

If you're a believer, I want to invite you. I'm going to just, we're going to bow our heads for a couple minutes. I want to invite you, if you're a believer, to pray for those around you that do not know the Lord. Pray for those in your life that do not know the Lord. Lift them up even now. And if you're a non-believer, take some time to pray and cry out to Him.

Father in heaven, we thank you that while we were still sinners, you sent your Son to die for us. We thank you that though the wages of our sin are death, and we are all deserving of death, Lord, we all deserve to perish, none of us can bear fruit in keeping with your kingdom. We thank you that through the work of your Son and the work of your

THE CERTAINTY OF THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Matt Johnson

Spirit, we can be made alive. We can be righteous before you, not in our works, but in his. We thank you, Lord, that for all who cry out to you in this life, we know, we know, Lord, that you respond. We know that all who call upon your name will be saved. We know that we can have confidence before you, not because of anything we have done, but because all that you have done, that you take us from dead to alive. By grace, we are saved. We thank you, Lord, and we pray that for all here that we would have the urgency to tell others about your kingdom and especially our king. We pray, Lord, that as we go out, that those we encounter we would be pointing them to you for your glory. We pray, Lord, that we would see your kingdom spread and expand, that we would rejoice in joining in the work, and that above all, we would rejoice, Lord, because you sent your son that we could knock, that we could ask, we could seek, we could knock, and we receive and we find salvation in your name. We thank you, Lord, for all you have done. And we pray all of this in your holy and precious name. Amen.

Scripture References in Order of Mention/Quotation:

- Luke 12 (general reference to last week's sermon)
- Luke 13 (overall passage)
- 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (Lord's Supper words, with bold on v. 26)
- John 9 (blind man story allusion)
- Luke 13:1–5 (Galileans and tower in Siloam)
- Ephesians 2 (dead in sins, made alive)
- Luke 13:10–17 (woman healed on Sabbath)
- Luke 12:1 (leaven of the Pharisees)
- Luke 13:18–19 (mustard seed)
- Luke 13:20–21 (leaven in flour)
- Luke 13:22–30 (narrow door, knocking, banquet)
- Luke 11:9 (ask, seek, knock)



Digging Deeper – **Will You Join the Kingdom?** – Luke 13:1-30

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

Read Luke 13:1-30

2. What stands out to you as you read through the passage?
3. In the first 9 verses, Jesus is asked about those who seem to receive judgment. What are the assumptions the people of that day had about judgment?
4. What is the response of Jesus to this way of thinking? What does Jesus say matters instead?
5. The power Jesus displays in healing the woman is something that the synagogue president could not do. Why was he speaking against Jesus?
6. How does the response of Jesus show us what the kingdom of God values?
7. What do we learn from the two illustrations in verses 18-21? How should this impact how we see the world?
8. In the passage, Jesus uses parables in ways that cause tension with earlier parables he has said. For instance, he talks about the yeast of the Pharisees in Luke 12 but now talks about the yeast of the kingdom. He also talks about asking, seeking, and knocking in Luke 11 with a promise of receiving a response, but here he says there will come a time when the door is shut for good. What do we learn from these contrasting parables?
9. How should we respond to these contrasting parables?
10. Take some time as you close to pray for the salvation of those in your life who have not responded. Pray also for urgency and boldness as a group to stand strong in a world that rejects the kingdom.