



SERIES: Walking with Jesus
SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD
Tuesday, November 21, 2023
Scripture: Luke 13:22-27; 30
TITLE: Jesus' Gospel Message

Whenever we travel on vacation, we keep our eyes open for caves to explore. We went on our first cave tour about 4 years ago in the Black Hills. Often in cave tours, they will show you the “old way” into the tunnels. They are these very tiny holes and tunnels that few could comfortably fit through and move through. They often have opportunities for kids to try similar passages. Our kids always volunteer. But my wife and I always say, “no way. Never.” Few go through the narrow passage.

Jesus knew this would be true for the offer of salvation. In fact, here’s what Jesus says about the way to salvation in Luke 13:22-27, 30 (CSB).

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?”

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. 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!’ ... Note this: Some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last.”

Many people don’t know this, but Jesus had many disciples. It was not just the twelve. He had many people who followed Him for a time, but few stuck with Him. Few found salvation. So one of His flock asked, “Are only a few going to be saved?” Jesus’ answer contradicts the modern evangelists’ message. He says, “Make every effort or strive to enter the narrow door. Many will try to get in, but few make it.”

Many people say they know God or love God. Many people identify as Christians, but few really are saved.

First, we know that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him (John 6:44, 65). Not only that but salvation, though it’s instant and permanent, it takes self-denial and repentance. Jesus says, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”

Jesus' message of salvation was not that God loves everyone unconditionally and desires to fulfill every sinner's personal dreams. His goal wasn't to get a hand raised or a prayer prayed. Jesus' words of salvation were free, costly, and sobering.

Then Jesus said, "Some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last." What does that mean? He was telling these pious Jews that the gentiles would be more responsive to the Gospel than the religious chosen people. Incredible.

So here's my challenge for you today: refine your Gospel message. What message do you promote and prefer? How is it different than Jesus' message of repentance and effort? It is a free gift of God for those He calls. It is a life of self-denial, not your best life now.

So refine your Gospel for yourself and others. When you get the Gospel right, you win the day.