

The Crowded Christian's Narrow Escape 3/03/13 Luke 13:22-30

In the Name of Jesus, Who said, "I AM the Door, If any man enter by Me he shall live," dear fellow redeemed,

It was St. Patrick's day in St. Louis back in the 80's. One of the children in the congregation went to school without wearing anything green. He was the only student in his class who was "greenless," and during the day many of his fellow students emphasized his being "greenless" by pinching him. Sure the pinching hurt; but the pain of being crowded by a majority of one's peers was a greater problem. The desire to seek safety by going along with the majority next year – this was the problem.

Is this just "kid's stuff," or does it represent the very real threat of the majority mentality to the salvation of every Christian? This morning we consider

THE CROWDED CHRISTIAN'S NARROW ESCAPE.

I.

"Majority rule" may be the strongest principle in any democracy. This does not mean that the majority is always right. We are constantly told that a majority of Americans prefer this or that product over another. We are told that a majority of Americans now believe that gay marriage should be permitted. We know that the majority mentality crowds children and adults into all sorts of wrong decisions and sins because "everybody is doing it."

The Christian is crowded by the majority mentality. For this reason we ought to remember two important things whenever we feel crowded by it.

FIRST, we need to remember that people are united against God by nature. Isaiah writes that "**we all like sheep have gone astray, each one to his own way.**" This does not mean that every human being has carefully thought sought and found his own, particular path away from God. "**All have sinned,**" and therefore all are stampeding together away from God. ALL are running together along "**the broad path that leads to destruction.**"

SECONDLY, we need to remember that those who are rebelling against God feel the need to get others to join them, especially if they have a guilty conscience. A person needs a lot of help if he is going to

fight against God!

Why do you suppose Eve offered Adam the forbidden fruit after she had eaten of it? Do you think she was concerned that her husband might be hungry? I doubt it. She probably didn't want to be alone on the path of disobedience – Eve wanted company in her rebellion against God.

When the crowd invites us to join them in anything they are doing, it may be that they really care about us. On the other hand, the crowd may have invited us because they are doing wrong and are looking for support in their rebellion, especially from those who seem to be Christians.

I remember that as a child I would not hesitate to talk my brother and sister into doing wrong with me in the hope that the punishment would be less if they shared the blame. When the church-going majority accuses us of being intolerant and narrow-minded because of our stand on the Scriptures and our defense of the Gospel of Christ, it's because we make them uncomfortable. For while they believe they are safe because of their numbers, we are saying that they are NOT because they oppose God!

Many, no doubt, were happy and relieved that they wore green on St. Patrick's Day because they didn't feel the "pinch." A child might have wished that he had worn green like the rest of the children in order to save himself!

II.

But the Christian's escape to safety must be made in the company of ONE – Jesus Christ! When was salvation with God ever gained by joining a crowd? You know how they crowded Noah with the majority mentality while he was building the ark. But Noah found grace and salvation in the company of ONE, His Lord and Savior!

When Korah rebelled against Moses in the wilderness, he gathered a great crowd of people around him. But the very ground on which they all stood opened up and swallowed them all! Moses stood safely in the company of ONE, his Lord and Savior!

Again and again O.T. Israel failed to find safety in their many alliances with Egypt and other heathen countries. Repeatedly God punished them because they did not seek safety in His company ALONE!

In our text Christ urges us to enter salvation by means of "**the narrow door (gate),**" That is, by repentance and faith in Him alone. He says that

we are to “**strive**” or struggle to enter by Him ALONE. Jesus makes a personal reply to this question: “**Lord are there just a few who are saved?**” Let me simplify the answer He gives in the following verses.

Jesus says: “**Entrance into the kingdom of heaven and salvation is gained only through one narrow gate, which is ME. You don’t have to make a gate for yourself – I am open to you! But only for a time. If you neglect or reject Me, and seek another way, as many do, then you will be seeking a way to salvation when it is too late and the door has been shut! Therefore let nothing keep you or distract you from entering this narrow door while it is open!**”

You can be sure that when it is too late for the great majority they will object. They will argue that they used Christ’s name, prayed, and read the Bible. They will argue that they have tried to do good and be good.

The majority will say to Jesus like the Jews did: “**Why, we ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets!**”

But notice that the Jews can only claim that Jesus “**taught in their streets.**” They cannot say, “**You taught us.**” There is a great difference isn’t there? Like the majority in Jesus’ day, the majority in our own day may say, “Jesus, You taught in our streets.” But the majority refuses to be taught by Jesus. Therefore, while the majority may think themselves to be the “**first**” choice to be saved and to enter the eternal kingdom of glory, they shall be “**last.**” Those who will be taught by Christ will be first, even though they appear to the world to be so few that they must be last.

Are we being taught by Christ, or is He merely teaching in our streets, so to speak? To be taught by Christ means that we unlearn all that comforts the majority – its indifference to sin, its self-indulgent ways, its pride and its “wisdom.”

To be taught by Christ means that we cling to Christ’s every word as one who is drowning clings to a life-saver without distraction from the noise of the sea around him. Only as we struggle to discard all our claims to personal righteousness, only as we are willing to have the coat of flesh removed – down to the last rag, regardless of what the crowd is doing, will we escape to salvation in the company of ONE, Jesus Christ!

Yes, it is a “**narrow gate,**” and there are “**few**” who will find it.

But lest we be influenced in any way by the majority mentality, may God help us to keep our eyes on the solitary cross of sacrifice. For through that cross ALONE our Savior would draw all people to Himself!

Our Lord never took a public opinion poll to determine how mankind wanted to be saved. If He had, the majority would never have chosen the plan God had chosen from eternity. If the majority had known that God would declare all the sacrificial works of man to be unnecessary and damnable by Christ's death on the cross, they would never have nailed Him there! Then all of us would have perished in our sins!

But thanks be to God ALONE that He executed His eternal plan, and thanks be to Jesus that He did not come down from the cross to join the majority! Amen.