

**Home : Sermons : August 20, 2006****“Are There Few Who Are Saved?” – Luke 13:22-35**

Introduction – Comparing the kingdom to small seeds and pecks of leaven raises an obvious question about the number of those saved. While Jesus travels through cities and towns, many remain behind and the leaders seem hell-bent on His destruction. Throughout the history of the church, the question is still raised because the number of believers remains a minority in most nations in most ages, a small remnant and almost nonexistent in some situations. And then considering from the time of the Reformation it can appear that the more and more “reformed” you become, the smaller and smaller your group will be. Prunings, it seems, appear to abound in the church more often than growth.

Are There Few Who Are Saved? (vv 22-30) – Jesus answered Yes to this question in Matt 7:13-14 and 22:14. The point of that parable (Matt 22:1-14) is that Israel has spurned the offer of the invitation (John 1:11). The questions and answers are surrounding the time of Jesus’ ministry and not about the whole history of the church.

A Master, A House, A Gate – Jesus doesn’t answer the question directly here, but rather points all of the listeners to the narrow gate that must be used to enter. There is only one Way to get in and that is by striving to enter into that gate (believing on Jesus). One day, not very long from “now,” it will be too late (for that generation) and they will be cut out. The disciples in Acts urged the people in the name of Jesus to *be saved from this crooked generation* (Acts 2:40).

Self-Justification – Being externally near Jesus will not guarantee one’s entrance (v26), nor will having the patriarchs as one’s ancestors (v28). In the Day of Judgment, people will try to justify themselves by *who they are* or *what they’ve done*, but all that matters is whether they entered the Narrow Gate. “*I do not know you,*” will be Jesus’ words to *the workers of iniquity* (Psalm 6:8). Weeping (great sorrow) and gnashing of teeth (great anger) is all that will be left.

From the Four Corners – In the Matt 22 parable, the wedding hall was filled, and in Jesus words here (v28-30) the kingdom will be flooded with people from all over the earth (Is 2:1-4); Gentiles will fill the kingdom. The “*few that are saved*” is Israel in the days of Jesus’ ministry. Indeed, “*there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.*”

Herod, that Fox (vv31-33) – Herod had killed John the Baptist and was conscience-weary that Jesus was John back from the dead. Jesus publicly ridicules John as a low, cunning, and worthless “fox.” While Jesus knows that He will die at the hands of such rulers as Herod, He is not afraid at all, for He will be about His Father’s business for two days and the third day He shall be perfected (alluding back to Luke 2:46 and of course forward to His death and resurrection). Nothing will stop His prophetic ministry which must take Him to Jerusalem.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem (vv34-35) – Jesus wept over Jerusalem because she would be lost. Jesus likens himself to a mother hen who protects her chicks (from foxes and fires) by covering them with her wings. Jerusalem could have been saved, but she would not come under the wings of protection from judgment.

Left Desolate; But Not Forever – The prophets had promised a great Abomination of Desolation upon unbelieving Jerusalem, and Jesus is pointing to the same event here. Israel fell away and this led to the salvation of the Gentiles (Rom 11:11-12). But this is a partial blindness, for God promised that one day a “full” Israel will come in (11:12, 25-27). Jesus then quotes from Psalm 118:26 regarding another time that Jerusalem will see Him. This other day will be a day where Jerusalem, that is, all of Israel will say, “*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.*” And Psalm 118:22-25 tells us why. Because the stone which the builders rejected became the chief cornerstone – and it will be a marvelous story. This Day, this resurrection Day (and all that is connected to it) is the Day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Why? Salvation will come to all the world – to the Gentiles and to Israel.

Drawing Straight with Crooked Lines – That is a saying made about the Triune God of the Scriptures. Somehow, almost magically, this story of rejection ends in a story of salvation; this story of small beginnings and a tiny remnant ends in global victory; this story of death ends in a story of resurrection and life eternal. But it is not because God is magical. It is

because He is sovereign, exhaustively sovereign over every detail of the story He is telling.

That Sovereignty - When fire fell from heaven upon Jerusalem, only those who were under the wings of Jesus were saved. But that maxim carries forth into every situation of judgment, whether individual, ecclesial, or national. Jesus is Lord and there is only one narrow gate. But that gate leads to a wedding hall filled and a world saved.

Dave Hatcher – August 20, 2006