



DAILY DEVOTIONAL

MONDAY, MAY 25, 2020

Readings: Luke 13:10-end (especially verses 22-30)

“Lord, will those who are saved be few?”

This question put to Jesus by an unnamed follower begs for a “yes” or “no” answer, but Jesus doesn’t comply.

He first responds by exhorting His listeners to “strive to enter through the narrow door.” This certainly implies the numbers will be few. Narrow doors restrict, create bottlenecks and can leave certain persons out.

Then Jesus tells a story of the master of the house who shuts the door (verse 25). Those outside demand to come in and base their argument on all that they have done, eating and drinking with the master and hearing him teach in their streets, but to no avail. The exclusion will be doubly painful when those outside are able to see the chosen (“Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets”) inside, but “you yourselves cast out” (verse 28). Apparently appeals to personal experience that can confer status (eating and drinking) or some other self-defined form of relationship (“you taught in our streets”) are not the basis for entrance into the Kingdom.



Jesus is not done. He describes a picture of people coming from “east and west, and from north and south” reclining at table in the Kingdom of God (verse 29). Jesus begins with a very restrictive image, that of a narrow door, but He concludes with a very expansive image, that of a banquet that calls forth people from all four points of the globe.

Jesus’ final statement, which I take as a summary, is key: “some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last” (verse 30). The Kingdom is about reversal of expectations, the adoption of divine and not human standards. Social or religious status avails nothing. In fact, anything we do for self-enhancement avails nothing.

There is a warning in Jesus’ words: the door is narrow. Such is always a call to repentance. There is also an invitation in Jesus’ words: the Kingdom will be open to those who come from east, west, north and south. Such an invitation is a call to faith. Both are the key to opening the door to the Kingdom – repentance and faith – and both are the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

– Fr. Marc

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

For Repentance and Forgiveness, To Be a Christian: An Anglican Catechism, page 116