

The Way to Enter Through the “Narrow Door” Is to Love What God Loves, and to “Belove” Him:**To Yearn for Him, to Commit to Him, to Be Loyal to Him, and to Value Him above All Else**

On his way to Jerusalem, someone asked Jesus, “Lord, will only a few be saved?”

Whether the questioner wondered how many people would make it to heaven, or referred to the temporal crisis which Jesus warned that Israel’s people faced, “We shouldn’t be surprised that Jesus doesn’t answer the question

directly,” Deacon Donald Hughes said in his sermon Sunday. “It was a common practice of Jesus to change a theological debating point into a personal challenge,” he continued.

“Now take notice that Jesus’ response is personal in nature rather than general, as the question was posed,” Deacon Hughes said. “And, instead of responding to how many would be saved, (Jesus) talks about the time of salvation. What is limited is time, not the number. Hence, the tone of urgency: ‘When the head of the house has locked the door, it will be too late.’”

It can help us to understand this passage in Luke (13:22-30) if we look also at the “narrow gate” in Matthew’s version of the Sermon on the Mount, Deacon Hughes said, where Matthew’s account advises, “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction . . . The gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life.”

The “broad way” or “wide gate” is “not the path of gross wickedness but rather the path of cultural convention,” Deacon Hughes said. “Most people structure their lives by the conventions of their culture, by the taken-for-granted notions of what life is about and how to live it. Jesus teaches that the ‘broad way’ involves being blind though sighted, dead though alive, and in bondage though perhaps living in the land of the free. Therefore, if we do not examine our lives and submit our lives to critical reflection, we *will* live our lives according to the conventions of our culture and miss the ‘narrow’ door. . . .

“This is a call to center one’s life on God. This involves repentance—a returning to God and acquiring a new mind that is not the product of convention. It is a new way of seeing. This also involves dying. . . . Entering by way of the ‘narrow gate’ is the way of death—death (p.2→)



“The Banker and His Wife”, by Marinus van Reymerswaele (1490-1567), Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes. © Web Gallery of Art. Reymerswaele specialized in genre scenes of bankers, usurers, misers, and tax-collectors, to show the sin of avarice and the vanity of earthly possessions. The readings this Sunday will warn us of the evils of trusting in ourselves or our own resources; loving money; hoarding; seeking honor, power or pleasure for ourselves; and withholding hospitality, compassion or mercy.

Editor: Box 972, Boise, ID 83701. 208-336-3951, harbingermail@aol.com

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander, epworthrector@msn.com

On the Web: www.epworthchapelonthegreen.org

Sundays

10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion

6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Choral Evensong

Thursdays: 6:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 7:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.

Readings, 9/2, 10 a.m.: Is. 24:17-23; Ps. 112; Heb. 13:1-8; Luke 14:1-14.

9/2, 6 p.m.: Ps. 114; 1 Kings 8:22-30; 1 Tim. 4:7-15. **9/9:** Deut. 30:15-20; Ps. 1; Philemon 1-20; Luke 14:25-33.

Prayer Emphases: Finland; Evangelical Covenant Church; First Free Methodist Church, Seattle, WA, and the Rev. Mark Abbott, pastor; Missionary Aviation Fellowship; parishioners on Montana Avenue.

For the poor (supplemented list): Ground beef, chicken, bacon, *fresh produce, canned fruits and vegetables, milk, butter, cheese, cooking oil, pancake mix, syrup, dry cereal, chili powder, garlic powder, diapers, baby wipes, toilet paper, hand and bath soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream, men’s and women’s new underwear, gift cards or money to buy ice for dining facilities, cleaning supplies and bleach. *(particular need at this time)

(Sermon, cont’d.) to the world of convention. Following on the heels of repentance and death, is the resurrected life. This is the life centered on God,” he said, but not “in ideas about God” or “our beliefs about God”. Centering in God “means to belove God: to yearn for, to pay attention to, to commit to, to be loyal to, to value above all else, . . . to love what God loves.”