

Title: THROUGH THE NARROW DOOR, LUKE 12:49 – 13:30  
(Chatham, NJ; 08/25/13, AM) [E – Topical]

Theme: Several of Jesus' hard sayings frame the narrow door that we must enter, but in entering we find life and healing.

Purpose: To encourage those who enter not to fear his challenging statements.

Introduction:

1. Everyone makes choices in their lives: some are the path of least resistance; others follow a difficult path because the reward is greater when the way is hard.
2. Such is choosing the narrow door of discipleship.
3. After listening to some of the hard sayings of Jesus should the crowd be surprised that the entry to the Kingdom is narrow (Luke 13:24)?
4. Picture a door with the door framed by these hard sayings.
5. Inside is the feast in the Kingdom; you want the feast so you deal with the sayings.
6. Consider them as you enter this way of life.

#### I. Not Peace, But Division, 12:49-53

##### A. Fire on the earth

1. To baptize with fire, Mt. 3:11
2. Fire is intimidating; it is also useful
3. We fear it but use it
4. Fire destroys: is this why Jesus sends it?
5. Fire purifies: perhaps this is why Jesus sends it
6. Forest fires destroy but they also allow the land to renew itself
7. Jesus' fire has a purifying effect: as gold is purified by fire, so is faith purified by the fires of tribulation, 1 Peter 1:6-7

##### B. Division

1. Jesus separates the wheat from the chaff, Mt. 3:12
2. The bad fish are thrown out, Mt. 13:47-50.
3. His desire is to clarify who are the righteous and who are the unrighteous
4. If you are against Jesus you are against God
5. You have to choose between God and the world, James 4:4-6
6. Neutrality is a choice against God
7. The door makes you choose

##### C. Interpreting the time, 13:54-56

1. A challenge to our spiritual sensibilities
2. Talking about the weather is comfortable and non-threatening to our souls
3. The crowd, not just the Pharisees, are hypocrites for missing what should be plain to them
4. They interpret the weather but miss something much more important
5. This part of the door frame challenges people to see the deeper significance of life

#### II. Repent or Perish, 13:1-5

##### A. Someone in the crowd speaks up

1. Heard about the Galileans: Pilate's executions and blasphemies
2. Why mention this horrible news?
3. It wasn't as comfortable as talking about the weather
4. Were they revolutionaries?

5. Jesus addresses an unspoken, false assumption: they suffered because of their sins

B. Think you're luckier? Less blameworthy?

1. Unless you repent you'll also perish (eternal punishment?)
2. Jesus adds another incident
3. This one is an accident, not an execution; harder to explain, but easier to feel fortunate
4. Still, the victims weren't worse sinners; all must repent
5. The fig tree will be cut down, 6-9

III. Why Pass through This Doorway

- Why would anyone want to squeeze through such a narrow opening with so many difficult things around the frame?
- You can see through the doorway to what is on the other side: a feast but even more than that
- Yet, there's more

A. Healing and hope

1. He heals a woman with a disability, 10-17
2. People rejoiced at this
3. He healed another man in 14:1-6
4. Healing is on the other side of the door

B. Jesus made sense

1. His argument for healing on the Sabbath was perfectly logical
2. If you water your animals on the Sabbath, why not heal? (13:15-16)
3. If you rescue your son or an animal on the Sabbath, 14:5
4. Jesus did what was consistent with the Law

Conclusion:

1. The sayings on the door frame may be hard, but they make sense.
2. They are compelling as much as the healings are hopeful.
3. Don't be afraid to go through the door.
4. Believe and obey the Gospel.
5. Repent and turn to righteousness.
6. Live for Jesus; be a witness that others should not fear the narrow door.
7. Open that door for others.