

ILCW Year-C Lessons for the 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Old Testament

Isaiah 66:18-23 NIV "And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see My glory. 19 "I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations - to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of My fame or seen My glory. They will proclaim My glory among the nations. 20 And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to My holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD - on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels," says the LORD. "They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the LORD in ceremonially clean vessels. 21 And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites," says the LORD. 22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure. 23 From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before Me," says the LORD.

Epistle

Hebrews 12:18-24 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; 19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, 20 because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned." 21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." 22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in Heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of a New Covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Gospel (Sermon Text)

Luke 13:22-30 Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as He made His way to Jerusalem. 23 Someone asked Him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, 24 "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. 25 Once the Owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' "But He will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' 26 "Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with You, and You taught in our streets.' 27 "But He will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from Me, all you evildoers!' 28 "There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. 29 People will come from East and West and North and South, and will take their places at the feast in the Kingdom of God. 30 Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL, USA
13th Sunday after Trinity  (14th of Pentecost-C)
August 25th 2013 9:30am  "Narrow & Wide Gates"



Woodcut illustration from a 1695 Bible – Matthew 7 & Luke 13

*The few entering through the narrow gate carrying crosses
and many entering through the wide gate in revelry.*

Image courtesy of the Digital Image Archive, Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

<http://www.pitts.emory.edu/dia/detail.cfm?ID=7388>

OSL OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH OSL

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BIBLE CLASS 8:30 AM WORSHIP 9:30 AM FELLOWSHIP 10:45 AM

Pastor: Andrew Burmeister (863) 430-5859

Organist: Janice Thomas (813) 650-9198

August 25th 2013 Pentecost-14(C) †WIDE/NARROW †

WELCOME to Our Savior! We are so happy to have you worship with us today. If you are visiting us for the first time (or in a long time), we ask that that you please fill out a visitor card found in the pew cardholder and place it in the offering plate. Come and worship with us again! **God bless.**

ORDER OF SERVICE (See insert)

PLEASE NOTE: The service folder insert has been written so that it may be used more than once. If you prefer to use the hymnal, see **page 5**. Keep this bulletin but please leave the (ivory)insert with an usher after the service. Thank you. May the Lord bless your worship!

Service		
Opening Hymn	511 (6v)	Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun
Hymn of Day	413 (6v)	I Walk In Danger All the Way
Sermon	Luke13:22-30	"Jesus+Cross = the Narrow Gate"
Offering Verse	655 (1v)	I Pray Thee Dear Lord Jesus
Sending Hymn	279 (4v)	Today Thy Mercy Calls Me
Closing Hymn	367 (4v)	Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus

PROPERs for (TRINITY13=) 14TH SUNDAY of PENTECOST-C ☞ AUGUST 25

INTROIT: Have respect, O Lord, to Your covenant; Do not let the oppressed return ashamed! Arise, O God, plead Your own cause; do not forget the voice of Your enemies. O God, why have You cast us off forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture? ...from Psalm 74

COLLECT: Almighty and everlasting God, You have made us heirs of Your eternal and great promises: Increase in us daily the gifts of faith, hope, and love; that we may love all that You command; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. C: ♪ A-men.

GRADUAL: Alleluia! Alleluia! O Lord, deal with Your servant according to Your mercy and teach me Your statutes. I am Your servant, give me understanding: that I may know Your testimonies. Alleluia! ...also from Psalm 74

SCRIPTURE LESSONS: (printed on the outside back page of the bulletin)

Isaiah 66:18-23 Final words of Isaiah, "They will come from All over."
Hebrews 12:18-24 Mt. Sinai & the Law is Not the Way to God & Heaven.
Luke 13:22-30 Jesus & His Cross is the One narrow door to Heaven.

SERMON Text (Gospel-C) **Luke 13:22-30** THEME: **"JESUS SQUEEZE US THRU"**

Suggested Bible readings for the week of the 13th Sunday after Trinity

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2King.10:1-36	2Chro.22:1-12	2 Chr.23:1-21	2Chr. 24:1-27	2King14:1-29	2K.15:1-38
1 Thes.5:12-28	1 Tim. 1:1-20	1 Tim. 2:1-15	1 Tim. 3:1-16	1Tim. 4:1-16	1Tim.5:1-25

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Madeline Beck (Elma Hendrick's) brother	Patty & Buster Brewbaker
Mary Fowler (Sharon Williamson's mother)	Delores (Dee) Kurczewski
Jonathan Jumper (Elaine's grandson)	Jeanette Kubly
Vivian Temple (surgery recovery)	Mariah Sawyer
George Wendt (brother of Steve Wendt)	Ann Wentz

Volunteers	Today	Next Sunday
Greeter/s	(Pastor)	(Mr. & Mrs. Volunteer)
Usher/s	Leroy	Leroy (or)
Treats	!Ice Cream! & Cookies	(Welcome back) Bev Weinke

COFFEE will be served in the Fellowship Hall following the service. Everyone is invited to stay! We thank our volunteers for serving today. We are **IN NEED OF SERVERS** for future Sundays. If you can help, PLEASE SIGN UP. Thanks!

Statistics	Last week	Year to date (average)
Sunday Worship	18	31
Communion Attendance	15	24
Sunday Bible Class	11	11
Thursday Bible Class	7	9
Sunday Offering	\$	(YTD total) \$

Calendar of Events

Sunday, 8/25	8:30 am 9:30 am 11:00 ff...	Bible Study (Joshua 6) Divine Worship (no Communion) Fellowship time: !ICE CREAM! & Cookies
Thursday, 8/29	6:30 pm	Bible Study at Madeline Beck's
Saturday, 8/31	1:00pm	Catechism Class: Prescott, Jon & Mariah
Sunday, 9/1	8:30 am 9:30 am 10:30 ff...	Bible Study Divine Worship (W/ Holy Communion) Fellowship time: Treats and Drinks

Congregational Notes

Members, please contact one of our Elders with spiritual concerns you have:
Leroy Dux 940-3237, Jim Vanesky 644-7807 & John Weber 853-5458.

Schedule notes here in August

- + First, please stay for fellowship and enjoy Ice Cream & Cookies today!
- + We have *edifying & exciting & enjoyable* Bible studies at 8:30am.
- + **Meditations:** daily devotions (SEP-NOV) are in. Please take one (or 2,3...)

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Next Sunday: **09/01 Trinity-14 (W/L.S. p.15)** Hymns: 574, 568, 15(1), 393, 36

Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL, USA
TRINITY-13(P14C) Luke 13:22-30 "W-I-D-E vs. NARROW DOOR" 08.25.13

INTRODUCTION As Jesus was making His way to Jerusalem to give His life to save the world, someone came up to Him with a question. **"Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"**

You wonder sometimes, don't you, when you look around at the world as it is. When you look at the state of the Church as it is. When churches have become houses of entertainment or personal therapy or anything but repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus. When you look at the diminishing impact that Christianity seems to have, especially in our place and time, you begin to wonder yourself. Will only a few be saved in the end?

Perhaps the person who asked the question noticed something similar. He saw the large crowds hanging around Jesus, pushing Him for a miracle, demanding favors, looking to get something from him. And the guy wonders out loud, *"Does anyone actually trust Jesus around here?"* Or perhaps the question comes out of a **self-centered kind of security**: *"I know I'm in, but look at all these losers. You're not telling me they're in too, are you Jesus?"* Maybe he's worried about the seating at the heavenly banquet; Will he need a reservation to ensure a seat? Or perhaps he's like the safety-minded guy on a boat who sizes up the life raft and his fellow passengers. Is the life raft big or small? Will few get on or many?

Whatever his motives, he **assumes that salvation is for the few and not the many**, that the Kingdom of God is an exclusive country club, a refuge for the religious, a sanctuary for the salvageable, a health spa for the spiritually fit ... the "winners."

Ever catch YOURSELF thinking that? Ever catch yourself thinking of the church **as the religious equivalent of a political party or exclusive club** where the like-minded all get together and talk about how everyone else is **too stupid to see it our way?!**

"Are only a few people going to be saved?" How would YOU answer?

In the Gospels, it seems Jesus rarely answers questions posed to Him. He usually answers a question with another question or starts talking about something completely different, which He does here today. And in doing so, gets to the heart of the matter. Are only a few people going to be saved? Jesus' answer is a **paradoxical "yes" AND "no."** It all **depends on how you look at it.**

"Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." The way into the Kingdom of God is incredibly narrow; everything else is a brick wall. There is only **one, narrow door**. You hear it all the time, in our politically-correct, multi-cultural, inclusive age: **"All roads lead to heaven; we all worship the same god only in different ways; it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe something."** <- WRONG! The opening to eternal life is a **thin Cross-shaped** opening in a solid stone wall of the Law, the Law that bars a sinner from God's presence. That Wall says **"Be perfect, be holy, keep every Commandment in**

thought, word, and deed or you can't enter." And it doesn't matter how hard you try, or how hard you throw yourself against that wall, or take a running start and try to climb or jump, **you can NOT make it.** There is only one way through the Law to God, and that is through the narrow opening of the **perfect life and death** of Jesus, the Son of God. He is that Narrow Door in an **otherwise impenetrable wall** that leads to life.

Religion, (=) this business of trying to **deal with God by doing good**, is really **trying to knock down the wall of the Law or climb over it by your strength and will** (with God's help of course, but **you** always wind up doing it or it wouldn't be religion). And that's not the way to be saved. To be saved **is to be saved.** It happens **to you**; it's something done for you **outside of you** by Another. You cannot save yourself, by definition. You can't save yourself from **drowning**, from a **fire**, from being **trapped**. If you could save yourself, then you wouldn't need to be saved.

This is what makes TRUE Christianity the joker in the deck of religious playing cards. It's the one (and only) "religion" that doesn't have you WORK your way in. You simply trust that you are in by virtue of the death of Another. You trust that you are righteous before a righteous God, not for what **you** have done but because **He says so**, for what **Jesus** has done and has given to you. You trust that you are Baptized, forgiven, clothed with Christ, united with Him in His death and life, that in Him you are **FREE from the Law**, that in Jesus you have been pulled through the **very narrow door** of this one dark death on a Cross that embraced you and will not let you go.

The way of Christ IS a narrow, exclusive way. *"No one comes to the Father, except through me,"* Jesus said. And His death and Resurrection are the only way that leads to life. There is **no other way.** All other paths, no matter how pious, how religious, how rigorous, how full of works and rituals and disciplines, run head long into the brick wall of the Law and come to nothing but destruction.

The window of opportunity is short - one lifetime, our "Time of Grace." The door shuts at your death or at the day of Jesus' appearing, whichever comes first, and you do not know the day or the hour. Smart money says, *"Don't delay when it comes to Jesus."* There will be those who find themselves **on the wrong side of** that narrow door, who **bang** on it and **plead**, who **argue** that they are **entitled** to be let in, *"We ate with you, we drank with you, we heard you teach in our streets."* But it's not about what **we did**, but who we are and where we stand **in relation to Jesus.** *"I don't know you or where you come from,"* is the **word of judgment** to all who would 'try to "credential" their way in. **Too little, too late.**

Jesus is speaking to the religious of His day. Those who were **working hard to please God**; those who religiously **kept the fasts and feasts and tithes and traditions.** But they did **not** trust the mercy of God toward sinners. They looked down on their fellow sinners and judged them unfit for the Kingdom. They (**thought** they)were the winners. But in the end,

the religious winners **weep** and **grind** their molars at the grace of God toward sinners, when people **from the four corners of the world** dine with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the Lamb's high feast.

There's the inclusive or **universal** (or "catholic") part of **salvation**. Will only a few be saved? **NO, not a few, but MANY**. Many who had no inherent "right" to be there. Many (or **ALL**) including the Gentiles (= the goyeem), the "outsiders," the nations, even the ancient enemies of Israel, (YES) those Canaanites (in Joshua) from **the north, south, east, and west**. Isaiah spoke of it when he said that prophets would go out from Israel to **Tarshish**, to the **Libyans**, the **Lidians**, **Tubal**, and **Greece**, to distant islands, to those who had not heard the name of JEHOVAH. And they will bring them all together and gather the nations on JEHOVAH's holy mountain.

Jesus commanded His disciples (Matthew 28, Mark 16) to make disciples of **'ALL nations.'** **As many as Jesus died for.** An, **How many** did the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the **world** die for? **Not just a few, or even a lot, but "the many," the whole lot == ALL!** *"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."* (That's **A-L-L**.)

IRONICALLY, the **narrow** door is also a **WIDE** door really (Joshua – **Jericho**: "drive a tank through it"), embracing **all** of humanity in one perfect Life, **squeezing the world** through one perfect death, one Resurrection from the dead. Just as **one man, Adam, dragged all** of humanity into sin and death, so **One Man, Jesus, pulls all humanity** into His forgiveness and life by His own Cross and tomb. Question is: Will we trust it? That's the question Jesus asks: When the Son of Man comes, who will He find on the earth?

CONCLUSION So, **back we come to the original question** on our menu this morning. **Will only a few be saved? How do YOU answer?** It depends entirely on how you look at it. If you look at it from **our** perspective, from our **inability to find the narrow door** and squeeze our way through it on our own, the answer is YES, only a few. And even then you can't really be sure **that you'll be among the few**. Fewer than you want to imagine. So few, it's not worth considering. **In fact, only One**. One perfect Jew who **makes it in on His own merits**, and you are **not** Him. His name is **Jesus**.

But if you **look at it from God's perspective**, focused through the narrow door of Jesus' death, the answer is NO. Not a few, **but many, a great multitude** no one can count from every nation, tribe, people, and language. The narrow door of Jesus' death is wide enough to include the worst of sinners, the chief of sinners, even you ...and me.

Will only a few be saved? The key to getting the question right is to get it "**Jesus-right**." **He is the narrow door** that leads to life. And looking to Him, you don't even have to ask the question. **In Jesus' Name, Amen.**

The **Peace** of God, which passes All understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting, **Amen.** **SDG**



Prayer of the Church + 14th Sunday after Pentecost + August 25 2013
Because it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom, let us pray to Him with confidence as dear children speak to their dear fathers.

Gracious Father, Your Son who is first made Himself last for us and our Salvation. Because **the door is narrow** and many will not enter, do not let us be led astray or lose the faith You have granted to us. Instill in us an abiding trust in Your Son that looks forward to the day when people come from the east and west and north and south to recline at the table in Your kingdom.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious Father, thank you for making us **Your children in Baptism**. Help us to receive Your discipline in faith, rejoicing that You discipline those whom You love so that we may share Your holiness. When that discipline feels painful, remind us of the result You are achieving in us. Lift our drooping hands and strengthen our weak knees with Your promises and with Christ's body and blood.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious Father, because the door is narrow, open the **mouths of Your people to proclaim the saving work of Jesus** and open the ears of those who do not know Christ to hear and believe. Give to us the joy that You have over one sinner who repents, and bless the outreach efforts of this congregation and our Synod. Protect also all missionaries and strengthen them for their work.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious Father, guide, protect and direct those who govern us according to Your will. We pray for our President, *[for FL's governor, for LL's mayor,]* and for all who make, administer and judge our laws. Help them to bear the sword of civil government faithfully and bring peace and unity to our nation and world.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious Father, You promise that though a righteous man may have many troubles, You deliver him from them all. Deliver all who are enduring the troubles of earth *[including _____]*. Help them, heal them, protect them from the evil one and grant them a faith that looks humbly but confidently to You through all trials of life. *Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Gracious Father, thank You for giving us each day our daily bread. Grant Your blessing to all farmers. Protect them from harm and strengthen them for their labors. Provide a plentiful harvest. Protect all people and crops from flood and drought and from famine and disease. Fill our hearts with gratitude for Your loving provision of everything we need for this body and life.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious Father, in Christ, the mediator of Your new covenant, You have set Your people apart and made us Your own. Prepare us to receive Your Son's body and blood in the fellowship of this altar. Because the sprinkled blood of Your Son has brought us to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, enable us to live each day not in immorality but in holiness that reflects Your holiness. *Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**