

Luke 13: 22-30

**Jesus went through one town and village after another,
teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.**

Someone asked him,

“Lord, will only a few be saved?”

He said to them:

**‘Strive to enter through the narrow door,
for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able.**

**When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door,
and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying,**

“Lord open to us,”

then in reply he will say to you:

“I do not know where you come from.”

Then you will begin to say, “We ate and drank with you and you taught in our streets.”

But he will say:

“I do not know where you come from, go away from me, all you evildoers!

**There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob
and all the prophets in the kingdom of God,
and you yourselves thrown out.**

**Then people will come from east and west, from north and south,
and will eat in the kingdom of God.**

Indeed some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.

Meditation

It is not unusual for someone to call the Center and request a special favor for their family or group... such as:

**Could I use the camp cabins for a family reunion or...
Could I host a family luncheon in the Great Hall of the Lodge...
or whatever....**

**and some times, in these situations,
because the request is not what we normally do around here,
they quickly follow up with:**

oh! I knew Sandy and Elizabeth....

I grew up here at The Center...

I've known Dave since he was a little boy...

And most of the time it's true...

and but sometimes...well, let's just say that the relationship between The Center and their family isn't as close as they remember it to be...

Well, basically...that is one of the issues arising in our Gospel today that we will reflect upon, but before I go there, I'd like just to point out one other interesting little detail at the beginning of the reading...

At the beginning we have Jesus going from one town and village to another teaching all along the way...

He must have met and engaged lots of people...

When some one asks him a rather interesting question:

“Lord will only be a few saved?”

This question is not a self centered question...

it's not: what must I do to be saved...

or will I be saved...

But it's a numbers question!

how many of us will be saved?

Now, according to Biblical Scholar Jack Shea

there was a tradition in ancient Judaism that in the age to come,

all the people of Israel,

by the very fact they belong to Israel,

would be seated at God's banquet table.

So I think we can suppose that people had been talking about this

among themselves as Jesus passed from town to village...

Yet...

in typical Jesus fashion,

he never deals directly with the question he is asked...

What he does say in response is:

“Strive to enter through the narrow door;

for many, I tell you,

will try to enter and not be able...”

Then he moves on to talk about the ‘owner’ of the house closing and locking the door...

telling those people left out that he does not know where they came from...

and then the people respond: Ah! but we ate and drank with you...

you taught in our streets...

In other words: But wait! we are part of your group, remember?!

You taught in our village!

**You ate and drank with us...that makes us we're family, which it did in those days:
eating at the same table with someone made them all kin...**

You have to let us in!

But Jesus responds:

“I do not know where you come from, go away from me, all you evildoers!

In other words...just because I visited your town...

just because we ate and drank together...

just because you think we are all members of the same group,

the same nation,

the same religion...

does not mean that you will automatically enter the Reign of God...

When Luke had Jesus' respond “I do not know where you come from”

it's not like he talking about which village or town...

He's talking about their level of consciousness...

their level of compassion...

their level of awareness....

their level of Love.

Because their level of consciousness and love was not his...

he does not know where they come from...

because he cannot understand why they are so

small minded and hard hearted...

Think about it: how many times have you looked at your very good friend or perhaps a loved one when you are not on the same page about an issue: and thought to yourself or even spoken out loud:

Who are you? Do I know you???

When Jesus ignored the ‘how many’ question

he’s basically saying:

guys! It’s not about numbers...

It could be a lot,

it could be a few...

guys...don’t worry about the numbers...

the real question is: how well do you love?

It’s not about being in the same group

it’s about how often you forgive...

It’s not about being from the same village

It’s about making sure no one

no one is hungry or naked or alone...

Boy, do we have still to learn this deep lesson!

So many people in all the different religious groups

still think it is about belonging to the right religious group

in order to be ‘saved’

Jesus, over and over again says: Not so!

I will admit,

**it is oftentimes easier to pay dues to a particular church
to follow the rules and regulations,
to shut off our brains
and close off our hearts
to put a good size check in the collection basket
and then think we've got it all covered.**

**But the reality is that none of that,
without a transformed mind
and an open heart**

will do much to extend the Reign of Heaven on Earth.

So...

**let's not worry too much about which group we do or do not belong to...
let's not obsess about following the rules and regulations
let's not how many or not will be inside the pearly gates..**

as a matter of fact,

**Let's not worry or think or obsess about the next life at all!
Because whatever happens in the next life is simply not dependent
upon belonging to the right group or name dropping..**

**it simply depends upon doing the best that we can do in this life,
at this moment in time
with the folks we encounter in this day
in the situations that we find ourselves in.**

And for that...we can all breathe a sigh of relief and say Thank you! Amen...