

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

**And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luk 13:23-24)**

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## *The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment (Part 11)*

*Many Will Seek to Enter, Few  
Will be Able to*

*May 10, 2026*

**Sermon Text:** Luke 13:22-30

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew  
13:1-23

Once again we turn to these words  
of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Luk 13:22-30 And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to

Jerusalem. (23) And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"

And He said to them, (24) "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (25) "Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' (26) "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; (27) and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.'

(28) "In that place 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, but yourselves being thrown out. (29) "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. (30) "And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."

And Matthew:

Mat 7:13-14 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. (14) "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

We spent time two weeks ago considering those words *strive* and *strait* (narrow, difficult). We were reminded that our justification before God, our being declared righteous by Him through faith

alone in Christ alone *is a free gift. Faith apart from works. Yet few are they who find it, let alone enter by it. Why?*

***Because Christ is a stumbling block to the natural man. The gospel is foolishness to him.***

Admitting to the idea that he is a sinner, condemned by God and that therefore he must repent – is obnoxious to him. He does not want to give up his sin. He wants to boast that he is quite good enough for heaven – though the Law condemns him. The angels stand guard at the gate so that no profane person will ever enter. It is *strait*.

Following Christ, then, is no easy matter. Walking with Him is to enter into His sufferings in this evil world. We must strive against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The Bible uses words like *run, fight, labor, wrestle*.

***Run, fight, labor, wrestle, for heaven or you are very likely to go without it. [Bunyan]***

The battle is not won by lazy soldiers. The prize is not gained by those who claim the name “Christian,” but are dead.

"The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. (Mat 13:20-21)

### Where We are Going – An Outline

As I have mentioned to you, we are being helped in this series by our friend John Bunyan. Let me give you a kind of roadmap for where he is going to be taking us:

1. There will be a disappointment to some at the day of judgment: they will seek to enter in and shall not be able.
2. That not a few, but many, will meet with this disappointment; for man will

seek to enter in and shall not be able.

3. This doctrine of the many being unable to enter stands upon the words of Christ Himself – *For many, I say...*
4. Professors shall make a great portion of the many who will fall short of heaven.
5. Where saving grace and striving are absent now, seeking and contending to enter in *then* will be of no profit to them.

### They Will Seek to Enter and Shall not be Able

Listen to J.C. Ryle on this:

“Oh, what a condemnation there is here for all those easygoing persons who seem to think they may pass their time as they please, and yet be numbered with the saints in glory everlasting! Are those who show less earnestness about their souls than about their earthly amusements, and those who have much to tell you about this world’s business but nothing about heaven, and those who think

nothing of neglecting the commonest helps towards Zion, and count it much to give religion a few Sunday thoughts--are these men running, and straining every nerve after the prize?

I leave the answer with yourselves: judge what I say. And those who profess to have entered the course, and yet find time to rest by the wayside and trifle with temptation, and find fault with the anxiety of others--and those who stop to take breath and boast of their attainments, and look behind them--are such running the race set before them as if it was a matter of life and death? Oh no! They may get the name of Christians, but they are not so running that they shall obtain.

But they who are taught and called of God may soon be distinguished from the sleeping children of this world. These have no leisure for vain amusements; their eyes are fixed and their thoughts are engaged upon the narrow path they have to tread and the crown they hope to receive; they have counted the cost, and come out from the

world; and their only wish is that they may finish their course with joy.

Ryle, J. C.. *The Christian Race And Other Sermons*. Heritage Bible Fellowship. Kindle Edition.

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

**Who, specifically, are these "many" the Lord speaks of?** We are left with no doubt. Certainly we know that the hordes of those who embraced false religion, and those who made no profession of any religion at all, will be a huge multitude – in fact, the majority of the human race. These, on that day when Christ comes, will run to caves to try to hide from the wrath of the Lamb

But the Lord Jesus in this scripture is speaking to the Jews, to people who claimed to be God's chosen. It is as if He is saying to them, *for many of **you** will seek to enter and will not be able.* And we see this

even more plainly from Jesus' words here:

"Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' 'Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.' (Luk 13:25-27)

**These “many” are people who claimed to be God’s people,** who claim in other words to be Christians. Many of those who profess to be Christians will find themselves outside the locked door to the kingdom, pounding on it, ‘Lord, open up to us!’”

And when they hear Him say “I do not know you,” what is their response? These Jews to whom Jesus was speaking will still cling to this false confidence that because they were descended from

Abraham, because they were citizens of earthly Israel, because they were the people of Jerusalem who heard the Lord Jesus teach them and who “ate and drank” in His presence, there must be no doubt that they *surely* are His people and to whom the door to His kingdom *must* be opened. But it will remain closed and locked to them.

**The application of this to all who profess to be Christians today is clear.** In that day, the many, the majority of professors are going to find the door to heaven closed and bolted to them. They are going to hear Christ say, “I do not know where you are from, depart from me, all you evildoers.” They assumed. They were careless. They drifted. They did not enter via the narrow gate, they did not strive and pay the price of following Christ. Let these two words sink in – *many, many, many. Few, few, few.*

You see Him teaching the very same thing here:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' (Mat 7:21-23)

Do you recall the full title to Bunyan's treatise on The Strait Gate? –

The Great Difficulty of Going to Heaven: Plainly showing by the scriptures that not only the rude and profane, but many great professors, will come short of that kingdom.

*Great professors.* Who are these? They are the notables, the ones who appear to be most saintly of all in the church, those who were most diligent in doing, those who showed great zeal in serving, those

who other church members regard as the greatest and holiest among them, and yet the Lord never knew them.

There will be a disappointment to some at the day of judgment: they will seek to enter in and shall not be able.

That not a few, but many, will meet with this disappointment; for man will seek to enter in and shall not be able.

“How few, I say, have His name lying nearer their hearts than their own carnal concerns! No, do not many make His Word and His name and His ways, a stalking horse to their own worldly advantaves?” [Bunyan]

Do you see what he means by a *stalking-horse*? Stalking horse religion. What is that? A stalking horse is a horse which a hunter hides behind in order to approach his prey within range. The horse hides the danger and is a mere tool used for personal gain. That is to say, there are many, many people who profess to be Christians, who

might even be very zealous in their works, to whom their religion is a mere object to hide behind and to obtain for them worldly benefit – money, fame, image, or whatever else the world offers. A stalking-horse, you see. Such people are that infamous character Mr. By-ends:

Shortly after they departed from the fair, they caught up to a man walking ahead of them whose name was By-ends. They asked him, “Sir, what country are you from? And how far are you traveling in this direction?”

“I’m from the town of Fair-speech,” the man said. “I am going to the Celestial City.” But he didn’t mention his name. “From Fair-speech?” Christian said. “Is there any good that lives there?”

*(When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart. – Prov. 26:25)*

“Yes,” By-ends said. “I certainly hope so.” “Then, sir, what name may I call you?” By-ends said, “I

am a stranger to you, and you to me. If you are going my way, I shall be glad to have your company, and if not, I must be content.” “I’ve heard of this town of Fair-speech, and from what I remember, they say it’s a wealthy place.” “Yes, I can assure you that it is; and I have very many rich relatives and friends there.” “May I be so bold as to ask who they are?”

“To be honest, almost the whole town.” By-ends shrugged. “In particular, my Lord Turn-about, my Lord Time-server, my Lord Fair-speech (from whose ancestors the town first took its name). Also there is Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Facing-both-ways, and Mr. Anything. The parson of our parish, Mr. Two-tongues, was my mother’s own brother. And to tell you the truth, I have become a gentleman of good quality, though my father’s grandfather was nothing but an oarsman for hire. He would look one way and row another. I gained most of my estate by the same occupation.”

“Are you a married man?” By-ends nodded. “Yes, and my wife is a

very virtuous woman, the daughter of a virtuous woman. She was my Lady Feigning's daughter; therefore, she came from a very honorable family. As a result, she has a high level of breeding and she carries herself impeccably to both prince and peasants. It is true, our religion somewhat differs from those of the stricter sort, but only in two small points.

*"First, we never strive against the wind and tide. Second, we are always very fervent in following Religion who parades silver slippers. We love to walk with him in the street when the sun shines and the people applaud him."*

Then Christian stepped a little to one side to speak with Hopeful. "It comes to mind that this fellow is in fact By-ends, of Fair-speech; and if it is true, we have quite a scoundrel in our company, the likes of which is often found in all these parts." Hopeful said, "Ask him to be sure. I would think he shouldn't be ashamed of his name."

So Christian sidled up to By-ends once again and said, "Sir, you talk

as one who knows more than all the world, and, if my guess is right, I surmise your name to be Mr. By-ends of Fair-speech. Is it not so?" "This is not my true name," the man said. "But it is a nickname given to me by some who could not put up with me." He let out a sigh. "I must be content to tolerate it as a reproach, just as other good men have done before me."

Christian didn't let the subject rest. "But were you responsible for situations that caused men to call you by this name?" "Never, never! The worst I ever did that might have caused them to give me this name was when luck was on my side. I made profitable judgments at the right time. But if I'm to be criticized for these times that are by chance, then I choose to count them as blessings rather than to let the hatred of such men force me to bear a malicious load of hatred."

Christian's eyes narrowed. "I was sure you were the man I had heard about, and to be honest, I fear this name more appropriately belongs to you than you might want us to think." By-ends dismissed the

comment with a wave of his hand. “Well, you can think whatever you like. I can’t help what you think. However, you’ll find me a fair-minded companion, if you will still allow me to travel with you.”

“If you want to go with us, it will require you to go against wind and tide, which I understand goes against your convictions. You must also embrace Religion in his rags as well as when he wears his silver slippers. You must stand by him too, even when he is bound in shackles, as well as when he walks the streets with applause.”

By-ends’ expression soured. “You must not impose this on me or coerce my faith. Respect my freedom and allow me to go with you.”

“No,” Christian said. “We’ll not travel another step together unless you agree with what I propose.” “Never,” By-ends said. “I shall never abandon my long-held principles, since they are harmless and profitable. If I’m not allowed to go with you, then I must do as I did before you caught up with me.

I’ll just travel by myself until someone else overtakes me who will be glad to have my company.”

Bunyan, John. *Pilgrim’s Progress* (Parts 1 & 2): Updated, Modern English. More than 100 Illustrations. (Bunyan Updated Classics) (pp. 118-119). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

These kind, the By-ends, the ones whose religion is determined by the *ends* to which it leads – these are the ones who will hear Christ say “I never knew you.” They will never walk together with Christ’s true people because, like By-ends, they are unwilling to pay the cost. Their religion is a mere stalking-horse by which they intend to get what this evil world offers.

I hope that the Lord has removed all the By-ends from this church and that none of us here are of his kind. *Many, many, many are counterfeits. Few are they who are truly the Lord’s people.*

**The Importance of These Words**  
**– “I say unto you” (I tell you)**

"Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, **I tell you**, will seek to enter and will not be able." (Luke 13:24)

We have been reminded repeatedly in this series of messages on the doctrine of eternal punishment, that no one in the Bible spoke more to us than the Lord Jesus Himself. And so we have it here – *I tell you*.

Furthermore, we have seen that the **YOU** is His own followers. *I tell YOU*.

"For many, I say unto you." These words, I told you, carry in them a double argument for confirmation of the truth asserted before: **first**, that professors are here particularly pointed at; and, **secondly**, it is the saying of the Truth himself: for these words, "I say," are words full of authority; I say it, I say unto you, says Christ, as he saith in another place, "It is I that speak; behold it is I!" The person whose words we have now under consideration was no blundering raw-headed preacher, but the very wisdom of God, his Son, and him that hath lain

in his bosom from everlasting, and consequently had the most perfect knowledge of his Father's will, and how it would fare with professors at the end of this world.

And now hearken what himself does say of the words which he has spoken; "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall "I say unto you."

The prophets used not to speak after this manner, nor yet the holy apostles; for thus to speak, is to press things to be received upon their own authority. They used to say, *Thus saith the Lord*, or Paul, or Peter, an apostle, or a servant of God. *But now we are dealing with the words of the Son of God; it is HE that hath said it*; wherefore we find the truth of the perishing of many professors asserted, and confirmed *by Christ's own mouth*. This consideration carries great awakening in it; but into such a fast sleep are many now-a-days fallen, that nothing will awaken them but that shrill and terrible cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

Bunyan, John. The Works of John Bunyan, complete 3 Volume Set, including 62 books (with Active Table of Contents) [Annotated] (Kindle Locations 26598-26605). Niche Edition. Kindle Edition.

## Two Things

Finally, consider two things very, very carefully and let each one of us examine ourselves-

The Bible tells us plainly that 1) There is such a thing as a false grace, a false and counterfeit “work” in many people supposedly a saving grace. And, 2) There is a sin which is called the sin against the Holy Spirit from which there is no redemption.

Two things. Now, who are the people who perish by these things? Just anyone? Certainly not. These two evils are to be found in one category of persons – *false professors*. People who claim to be Christians but are not.

First, the Bible tells us that there is a false grace, a false work of God

within counterfeits. We know this because the Bible uses phrases for them such as:

- Those who make a fair show in the flesh (Galatians 6:12)
- Those who glory in appearance (2 Cor 5:12)
- Those who appear beautiful outwardly (Matthew 23:27)

All of these scriptures and more warn us that there can be a show of saving grace when in fact it is not to be found. That a man may think himself to be something, may think that he has saving grace, when he has nothing. He is self-deceived about heaven.

And when the Lord warns us that there is a sin for which there is no forgiveness, He shows us that this sin is one which is committed most typically by the false professor – the false “Christian.” You have it quite plainly in Hebrews:

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy

Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. (Heb 6:4-6)

Peter as well:

For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." (2Pe 2:20-22)

What, then do all of these things have to do with this doctrine of

eternal punishment? Simply this – these are still more of the snares and traps of the enemy by which he deceives the slothful and simple-minded so that they end in hell. Let's each one of us hear these warnings well and examine ourselves.

*Many, many, many. I say unto you.  
Few, few, few are they who find it.*