



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**21st Sunday in Ordinary Time.
August 24th 2025**

Theme: "Strive to enter by the narrow door"

Gathering Prayer

All: God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Luke 13:22-30

²² Then he said to his disciples, 'That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. ²³ For life means more than food, and the body more than clothing.

²⁴ Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouses and no barns; yet God feeds them. And how much more are you worth than the birds!

²⁵ Can any of you, for all his worrying, add a single cubit to his span of life?

²⁶ If the smallest things, therefore, are outside your control, why worry about the rest?

²⁷ Think of the flowers; they never have to spin or weave; yet, I assure you, not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. ²⁸ Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field, which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will he look after you, you men of little faith!

²⁹ But you, you must not set your hearts on things to eat and things to drink; nor must you worry.

³⁰ It is the pagans of this world who set their hearts on all these things. Your Father well knows you need them.

Gospel Focus

A relationship with Christ is not an insurance policy whereby we pay our pre-miums and expect to receive a settlement when needed. This relationship with the Son of God is not so transactional that we do x, y, and z and Jesus in return grants salvation. If such were the case we would be effectively earning our own salvation by our works. But salvation is a free gift, undeserved, no matter how much we might feel we deserve it. The master locks the door on the evildoers, barring entry to them. The fright-ening thing is that some of those locked out know the Lord. Would they con-sider themselves evildoers? Not likely.

Where are we in this story? Are we striving to enter through the narrow door? Are we waiting until later before we make up our minds? When will the door be shut, not in

some apocalyptic sense, but when we come to the end of our own personal life? There will be a reversal of fortune. Let us be prepared and manage our expectations lest we be disappointed.

Gospel Reflection

Nobody likes disappointment. Dealing with it can be a difficult lesson that many of us learn in childhood, and some still struggle to learn as adults! We can avoid disappointment in a number of ways including being prepared, having proper expectations, and knowing a given situation. When we employ these strategies our chances for disappointment diminish. For example, we don't expect a friend who is chronically late to be punctual. It's a matter of managing expectations.

Today's gospel gives us a somewhat troubling story of those who were undoubtedly disappointed. Can we imagine standing, knocking on the door to the house only to be told by the master, "I do not know where you are from"? or even more, "Depart from me, all you evildoers!" Yet this is precisely the story Jesus tells someone who asks whether only a few will be saved. Matthew (7:21-23; 25:31-46) tells a similar story and we are thereby reminded that simply knowing the Lord is not enough to be saved. Jesus exhorts the man to enter through the narrow door. And what is more, he is advised not to wait too late, for there will come a time when the master will lock the door.

This passage and others in the gospels like it remind us of an uncomfortable, and perhaps even disappointing, truth. The effective answer to the man's question about salvation is that many will attempt it but not be able. And some of those who know the Lord, who ate and drank in his company, are those who will be shut out. Such a message is far from the feel good, open wide, broad path to salvation that we might imagine. And the warning to those who know the Lord should fall squarely on us.

Still, those who will be saved may not be those who expect it, for in an echo of Mary's canticle and earlier Lucan themes, there will be a reversal of fortune. "[S]ome are last who will be first, / and some are first who will be last." Moreover, salvation is not limited to a particular group of people as they will come from all directions to recline at table in the kingdom of God.

Are we open to disappointment? Or do we need to be prepared, manage our expectations, and know the given situation? Salvation is for all; many attempt to enter but are not strong enough. Even those who know the Lord are not guaranteed salvation.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading – Isaiah 66:18-21

¹⁸ "For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, ¹⁹ and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations. ²⁰ And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the LORD, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their cereal offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. ²¹ And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.

Responsorial Reading - Ps 117:1, 2

R: Go out to all the world and tell the Good News.

Praise the Lord, all you nations; glorify him, all you peoples! **(R)**

For steadfast is his kindness toward us, and the fidelity of the Lord endures forever. **(R)**

Second Reading – Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13

⁵ And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him.

⁶ For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." ⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ...

¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. ¹² Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.

Sharing and Discussion

1. The Letter to the Hebrews says, "[D]o not disdain the discipline of the Lord." How have you experienced the Lord's discipline? What place does discipline have in your spiritual life?

2. Jesus tells the people, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate." What do you think he is referring to? Where in your life do you find the "narrow gate"?

Closing Prayer

All: Faithful and merciful God, you call all people to yourself. Hear our prayers that we might build communities of welcome and refuge. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.