

The Character of Jesus 52
The Narrow Door and a Warning about Herod
Luke 13:22 – 35

- Characteristic: Uncomfortable truths spoken in a comfortable way
 - Notes:
 - Jesus is on His final trip to Jerusalem, presently in Perea, on the east side of the Jordan River.
 - The quantity of material per period of time increases. This scene is about half-way through the gospel account, but 98% through Jesus' earthly ministry.
 - The Narrow Road parable is in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:13 – 14.
 - The Herod in verse 31 is Herod Antipas who was king of both Galilee and Perea at this time.
 - (23) The “few” question likely arose from Jesus' constant emphasis on being consistent, a descriptor that few can claim whereas other rubrics are much more inclusive. People would have many different concepts of acceptability ranging from the whole nation of Israel to one sect to various levels of religious practice.
 - (24 – 25) In certain situations in Jewish society, punctuality was very important. On some occasions, the gate to the compound was left open so that passers-by could see the festivities. More often, the host did not want to feed everyone and did not want riff-raff wandering through. Further, being late was considered an insult to the host. So, being late could mean being locked out. See also Matthew 25:1 – 13, the parable of the Ten Virgins.
 - (26 – 27) The late-comers tried to make excuses based on their own importance (not apologizing or giving excuses for tardiness). The host dismissed them as strangers who likely were criminals.
 - (28 – 30) In the application section, Jesus did not answer the “few” question directly. He acknowledged that many in attendance would be “late” if they did not get on board with the Kingdom being preached by John and Jesus. If they waited, they would be treated as thieves who came by night. But Jesus opened up the group of partygoers to people from all over the world, those whom most Jews would dismiss as unworthy.
 - (31) Whether this warning is legitimate or a ruse to cause Jesus to leave hurriedly and appear weak is unknown.
 - (32 – 33) Jesus appears to assume that His message would get back to Herod, which is likely since Pilate had Jesus followed (as evidenced by his reports), so Herod probably did, too. He announced His unconcern, rather giving the details of His plans in case Herod wanted to catch Him. But, Jesus was certain that He was in no particular danger because everyone knew that things would come to a head in Jerusalem at the next festival.
 - (34 – 35) Always focused on the needs of others, Jesus expressed His concern over Jerusalem and the plight of the inhabitants in its upcoming destruction (desolation: Daniel 9:27). The quote from Psalm 118:26 is just after the part about the “stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.” So, the audience should have understood the Messianic image and what it claimed.
- Application: Uncomfortable truths spoken in a comfortable way

- Many views exist concerning the percentage of people who will be admitted to heaven. How do we copy Jesus' attitude that waiting to get on board likely will not end well?
- Many views exist concerning the nature of those who are accepted. How do we introduce the idea of unexpected groups without suggesting that everyone is OK?
- How should we respond to potential political or legal repercussions to faith?
- Do we experience and express sorrow for the plight of those who fail to respond?