

**Father Brad Neely**  
**Spss – Nezperce: Aug 22, 2010**  
**21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: Cycle C**  
**Is 66: 18-21; Heb 12: 5f; Lk 13: 22-30**

The Gospel today should cause us to stop in our tracks. Jesus speaks to a questioner about a narrow door through which we enter salvation. The door descriptor is important--- *narrow* door, not *wide*.

Scripture scholars believe that Luke, in this passage, was addressing the question of the Jewish people of the time---  
???really?---Gentiles inside the heavenly banquet???  
The Jews were God's chosen people. Gentiles had always been "the other"---  
*not to be associated with*.  
The Gentiles had been the ones conquering the Jews, and occupying their land.

It is interesting that Luke, in this Gospel passage, includes the details that the **master** of the house "**arises**" and locks the door to salvation, and those outside call, "**Lord**, open the door for us, [we are your people, remember?]" And the Lord does not know them. Thus, the **master**---the **risen** Christ, at some point, shuts the door to salvation, and calls everyone to an account.

This all suggests that there is something more to salvation than being given the opportunity for it. Everyone must enter the kingdom of heaven through the narrow door. Stopped as we are in our tracks, the first question to ask ourselves is, "are we living our lives as though the door to salvation *is wide*?"

It is good to note something of Luke's environment at the time this Gospel was written. The majority of his audience was Gentile Christians---non-Jews who accepted the New Testament faith of Christ. Luke believes they need to understand Judaism in order to understand Christ, and the Christian faith.

And the key to this is that---  
Christianity is the *fulfillment* of Judaism. It is the *fullness* of the course of salvation history. Luke's audience were feeling distanced from Judaism, because the majority of Jews did not accept this fulfillment, and approximately 10-20 years earlier, in 70AD, the Temple had been destroyed in Jerusalem. The Gentile Christians were feeling disconnected, and wondering "who they were?"

We've had the answer to the question of **who we are** for 2000 years. There is no need to wonder. **Who we are**---is every human being, in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Luke's audience, who believe that Jesus Christ, a Jewish man and God made flesh, made it possible for us to make our way to eternally "saved life."

But that isn't enough. We must go beyond the *possibility* of salvation, to the training of ourselves to fit through the narrow door. *Yes*, the door is only made possible through Christ. But there is nothing forcing us to go toward it, or fit through it. Going to the door and fitting through is the response of our own **free will**.

Any guesses are why the door is narrow? One good hunch is that not everything that could travel through a wide doorway is **fit** for the kingdom of God. The path to the door **is** paved with divine forgiveness, but once at the door, there are many things that must be left behind---most importantly--sin. If we cling to sin, we don't fit.

The good news is that Christ left a diet-plan for fitting through the narrow door---that being His Bride the Church. The revelation brought forward through time in His Church is the golden key. In the greater scheme of the church world, we hear plenty about people who rail against the key, spit on the key, abandon the key because it is carried by imperfect human beings also in need of repentance. We hear of people who pridefully imagine

that they have their own key---  
that Christ's key does not relate to the real world in  
2010.

I'm not going to put a box around  
how God works in the world  
or in His own heavenly kingdom.

But we *do have* the Word of God before us today  
whereupon someone  
is dumbfounded as to why they are locked out of the  
kingdom---  
crying "we ate and drank in your presence."  
The question is,  
"do we eat and drink to be fit for eternal salvation."