I counted all the doors in our house. I counted about 19 doors. Of those 19 doors, 3 of them would let you into our house: one front door, one door in garage and one deck door. Our house probably is not a whole lot different than yours. Every house has to have doors in order to get into it, out of it, and through it.

Today let’s talk about another house. It is the Mansion the Bible calls heaven. This Mansion was planned from eternity by a very special landlord who built it in a perfect neighborhood. He paid for it out of own pocket so that there would never be any mortgage payments for anyone who lives in it. The landlord’s name is the Lord Jesus. He has made his mansion so big and with so many rooms that there is living space in it for every single person on earth, including you and me. But unlike our houses, this Mansion has no front doors, no back doors, no garage doors, and no deck doors in it. There is just one entrance. Today Jesus talks to us about THE NARROW DOOR TO HEAVEN. We learn it is the only door into heaven and once it is closed, it will never be opened again.

One day someone asked Jesus: Lord, are only a few people going to be saved? We do not know what prompted such a serious question. It apparently came from a person more concerned about how many would be saved rather than how a person is saved.

At least he took his question to the right place. Whenever we have questions about salvation there is no better place to go than to Jesus and his Word. He has all the answers. Jesus not only had an answer for person, he also teaches us this eternally important truth. He says: Make every effort to enter through the narrow door.

Heaven is not a place reserved only for God and all his holy angels. Jesus says there is a door open to all by which we too can enter heaven one day. This door to everlasting life is none other than the one who died on a cross in our place to take away our many sins which should put us in hell for eternity. Jesus says: I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He also says: I am the way - no one comes to the Father except through me. Peter declares: Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given to men by which we must be saved. The only way to a happy eternity in the Mansions of Heaven is through Jesus!

But notice that Jesus calls this door to eternal life the narrow door. Why? Is it because this door is intended only for a chosen few or because its conditions for entrance are so difficult? No, Jesus tells us this one and only door is narrow only because many will not let themselves be made small enough to enter through it by repenting of all sins – that is, humbly acknowledging our complete unworthiness and our total nothingness before God and then relying solely on his Son as our only one who can forgive us and cleanse us of all our sins. You see, this door will always be too narrow for anyone who insists on trying to enter heaven carrying the filthy rags of their own righteousness, or their own pet sins, both of which are an abomination to the Lord. That is why Jesus says: Many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.

If you were to go to Union Station in Chicago, you would find lots of trains there headed in different directions. You do not have to be a Rhodes Scholar to figure out that if you want to go to Denver, you have to get on a train to Denver. If you said: I sincerely believe any train will get me to Denver, you might be as sincere as the day is long, but if the train you are on is heading to New York, that is where you’re going.

Now most people have no trouble understanding that kind of logic when they are at the
train station, but bring some of those same folks into a church and suddenly things become different. Any train will do. Any religion will do. Any door is fine. Do you and I ever need to be warned about such thinking? Being sincere as the day is long is not the door to heaven. Only Jesus is! Being a really good and religious person is not the door to heaven. Only Jesus is! Coming from a faithful Christian family is not the door to heaven. Only Jesus is! Being baptized and confirmed with your name on a church roster is not the door to heaven. Only Jesus is! Holding on tight to certain sinful weaknesses because we figure we have plenty of time in life to deal with those spiritual matters is not the door to heaven. Only Jesus is!

Do you remember that very moral and church-going young man who came to Jesus seeking salvation? When Jesus asked him to give up his wealth and follow him, that young man just could not let go of his pet sin of loving his riches. The Bible tells us this very moral and church-going young man went away sad leaving behind his only door to heaven. What a tragic story!

Is it a story that could also be told of any of us? Being a very moral and church-going person who maybe likes the things of this world a little too much – that is not a door that will get you into heaven. In his sermon on the Mount Jesus warned: Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. Let’s take those words to heart. The only Door to heaven says to each of us: Make every effort to enter through the narrow door.

The only Door to heaven is right now still wide open to all, but it will not remain open forever. One day it will be closed and when that day comes, this Door will never be opened again.

Jesus tells a story about the master of a certain house waiting for invited guests to come. He waits patiently for a long time. But finally the hour comes when he decides to close the door to his house. Once he closes it, he will not open it ever again, no matter how much the latecomers plead with him to do so.

The meaning of that story is clear. The house is heaven. The Master is Jesus Christ. And when will the Master of this house close the door? Ultimately it will be Judgment Day, which could be any day. It could also be the day you or I die, which could also be any day. But it could also be that time when Jesus decides to take his Gospel from one place and from one people and move it to another place, and give it to another people. When people despise his Word, when they grow disinterested and bored about coming to hear it preached to them, when families do not bother to read or study it anymore in their homes, Jesus finally says: You don’t want the Word? Fine! Somebody else will! So hold on tight to the good news about our Savior living, dying and rising for us. If we don’t, Jesus will most certainly move it on somewhere else.

Yes, the door of heaven that now is wide open will not stay open forever. Notice that Jesus says that after the door is closed, suddenly there are all these people outside, pounding to get in. But where were they before? What were they doing all those years when their parents, grandparents, their friends and pastors were begging them to come in? What were they doing during all those years when the Lord gave them their time of grace?

They thought there were always other more important things to do than hearing the Word of their loving Savior and being committed to him. There would always be time for that stuff tomorrow. But Jesus gives us a glimpse of the damnation coming when those tomorrows run out. Once the owner of the house closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading: Sir, open the door for us. But he will reply: I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me all you evildoers! There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.
Forever outside the door! The door forever shut! I pray none of us ever have to experience the horror of that moment. Jesus does not want that to happen. That is why he came here to be our Savior. That is why he has loved us so much to go to a cross and suffer there as he sacrificed himself for the sins of the whole world. He did that so that you and me and believers from every corner of the world could live forever in his Mansion!

A story is told about a man approached repeatedly by an insurance agent who urged him to buy fire insurance for his house. No, the homeowner kept saying, It’s well-built, and I maintain it properly. You are just trying to scare me. My house will never catch fire. But one day it did! As the story goes, while the house was burning, the owner of that house was seen running down the street to the agent’s office to purchase a fire insurance policy.

You say: How foolish and I agree. Yet, how much more foolish is it for any sinner to put off receiving that free eternal life insurance policy offered from the Lord Jesus. He has given each of us a lifetime to repent of our sins, a lifetime to trust in him, a lifetime to live for him. But there is a date on his calendar when that time of grace will end. Are you on the right side of that narrow door to heaven today? The Bible says: Seek the Lord while he may be found. If there be any listening today who are on the outside of Jesus the Door, now is the time to stop trusting in your own goodness. Now is the time to bring whatever sins you may be toying with and lay them all at his feet. Now is the time to believe and trust completely in him as your Savior. Now is the time to start living your under his direction. Don’t put it off until another day. Tomorrow may be too late.

To all committed Christians, Jesus says: Make every effort to enter through The narrow door. When Jesus says make every effort, he is not saying we must earn our own way to heaven. Heaven is a gift of God’s grace. No, when Jesus tells us to make every effort to enter through the narrow door, he is reminding us that Christianity is not just a face you put on every Sunday morning or every other Sunday morning or maybe one Sunday/month.

When Jesus tells us to make every effort to enter through the narrow door, he is reminding us that keeping our Christian faith will be a struggle until the day we die. The Christian’s life is not a playground, but a battleground against fierce and mighty Satan, a wicked and ungodly world and our own sinful flesh within us, all of which daily tempt us to give up the struggle. Just think back over this past week and the many times we were tempted to give up the fight or how many times we gave into temptations! That is why you and I need to walk close beside our Jesus every day! That is why we need to confess every sin to Jesus and beg for his forgiveness every day! That is why we have to lean on his Word in every situation of every day - every teaching in it, every promise in it, every Word of correction in it, every sentence of strength in it! Here is the good part. Our Jesus will help us to live as people prepared to die. And our Jesus will help us to die as people prepared to live.

Jesus has built a Mansion where he wants every one of us to live forever. He is the only Entrance to that Mansion. Stick with him and he will make sure we all get there! Amen.

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