



Things to Talk About and Reflect Upon

“The Narrow Door”

Points from Sunday’s Message

- Point 1 - We strive to enter by faith, not by works.
- Point 2 - The door is open now, but it won’t stay open forever.
- Point 3 - The proof isn’t the practice; it’s the presence.
- Point 4 - We strive to enter because He agonized to open the door.

Key Verse:

“Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

—Luke 13:24

Discussion Questions:

1. “Lord, are there few?”

Someone on the road to Jerusalem asked Jesus a question about other people. Pastor Miles admitted we all ask it — pulling out of the garage on Sunday morning, seeing neighbors who aren’t even up yet, and thinking, “Oh, so few, I’m among the few.” The question usually hides the answer we’re hoping for: a small number, with us inside it. Jesus didn’t give a number. He turned to everyone listening and said, “Strive to enter.” As Miles put it, the question isn’t how many — it’s “are you among those who know me?” Read Luke 13:22–24. Why is it more comfortable to talk about who else is in or out? What changes when the question becomes personal?

Further Reading: Isaiah 6:1–5; Luke 18:9–14; John 21:20–22; Romans 2:1–4

2. The good agony of faith

“Strive” is *agōnizomai*, the word behind our “agony,” and Paul uses it when he tells Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith.” Miles pointed out the order in 1 Timothy 6:11–12: first the fruit — love, patience, gentleness — then the fight. “The fruit precedes the fight.” We don’t strive to earn God’s presence; we strive because His presence came to us by grace through faith, and he reminded us that faith means trust, not just agreeing with something in our heads. Read Ephesians 2:8–10. Miles said that on Monday, when

we fail and our conscience accuses us, we tend to run to our good works to cover our sin instead of confessing it. Where is that most likely to happen to you this week? Decide now what you'll say to the Lord instead.

Further Reading: 1 Timothy 6:11–12; Titus 3:4–8; 1 John 1:8–9; 1 Corinthians 15:10

3. Three-quarters of an inch too big

Miles and Andrea bought a couch at Costco, wrestled it up the stairs and down the hallway, and found it was three-quarters of an inch too big for the door. After an hour of angling and re-angling it went through, and if it ever leaves that room, it's leaving in pieces. That's how many people come to the narrow door, trying to squeeze through with their record of good works, their religious résumé, their pride. "The door isn't the problem. What we're carrying is the problem." Read John 10:7–10. What are you most tempted to carry to the door? And when a neighbor asks, "Are you really saying Jesus is the only way?" Miles suggested simply reading John 14:6 and asking, "How do you interpret that?" Practice that conversation with someone in your group.

Further Reading: John 14:1–6; Acts 4:12; Philippians 3:4–9; Isaiah 64:6

4. When the door is shut

"When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door..." Miles took us to the airport: you run from Terminal A to Terminal X, reach the gate, and the agent says the door is closed. The plane is right there. It doesn't matter; you're not getting on. Jesus told the same kind of story about ten virgins. All had lamps, but five had no oil, and oil in Scripture is so often associated with the Holy Spirit. "What they lacked was not activity. What they lacked was the evidence of the presence of God." Read Luke 13:25 and Matthew 25:1–13. Yet the door is open now — "now is the day of salvation" — and Jesus is the one knocking. Is there someone you've been waiting for the right time to talk with about Jesus? Pray for them by name this week and watch for an opening.

Further Reading: 2 Corinthians 6:1–2; Revelation 3:14–22; Hebrews 3:12–15; Isaiah 55:6–7

5. Near, but not known

The people at the door had been close: "We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets." Twice Jesus answered, "I do not know you, where you are from." Miles noted that "where from" is the same word Jesus used with Nicodemus about the wind and everyone born of the Spirit, so the real question isn't your family, your city or your church — it's "Where are you born from?" He quoted Spurgeon: "If attendance at the temple could save the soul, then Caiaphas the high priest would be in glory." The proof isn't the practice; it's the presence, and the first fruit of the Spirit is love. Read Matthew 7:16–23 and 1 Corinthians 13:1–7. If someone looked for evidence of the Spirit in your life, not your attendance, what would they find? Which fruit do you most want God to grow in you right now?

Further Reading: John 3:3–8; Galatians 5:22–25; 1 John 4:7–12; Romans 8:9–16

6. He agonized to open the door

Before the cross, Jesus sat at the Passover table, and Judas sat there too. “Just being in proximity... does not make one a child of God.” Then in Gethsemane, “being in agony, He prayed more earnestly” — the same root as “strive.” Miles said, “Christ struggled once for all to make the way open,” which is why people will come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and sit down at His table. Read Luke 22:39–44 and 1 Corinthians 11:23–28. Paul tells us to examine ourselves before communion, and Miles put the question plainly: am I trusting in my attendance, my giving, my serving — or in the finished work of Jesus? Take ten quiet minutes this week to ask God that question, and bring Him whatever you find yourself carrying. He doesn’t say try harder. He says, “Come to Me.”

Further Reading: Isaiah 53:4–6; Hebrews 10:19–22; Matthew 11:28–30; Revelation 7:9–10

Use these blended questions for deeper personal reflection, prayer, or small group discussion.