

Salvation Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, October 31, 2018 Eph
6:1-9; **Lk 13:22-30** (Jesus uses it to encourage people not to get lazy, not to be
presumptuous, not to delay unnecessarily one's work.)

“For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

It's very important that we watch carefully our own thoughts when we read Scripture because we can easily jump to conclusions.

Now this particular text from Luke is very interesting because it raises this question: **will only a few people be saved?** How strange it is that many people throughout time have thought that, that ultimately salvation is only for a small, elite group. Well if you notice, he doesn't actually answer the question—he doesn't answer the question here.

But he does say something, **“Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough.”** Now this should not be over-read to mean that some will be excluded forever. **What it means is that some are going to try, but they are not going to try enough.** This is **trying to encourage diligence in the pursuit of goodness, godliness, virtue.** It's not actually pretending that we do all this by ourselves, which you could interpret, you could, by this statement “will not be strong enough.” Oh, so it's a matter of being strong. Well **it isn't a matter of being strong in the New Testament as a whole.** That is not basically a teaching of Jesus, as you know. But here **he uses it to encourage people not to get lazy, not to be presumptuous, not to delay unnecessarily one's work.** And, after all, following him is about work. “We work while the light lasts.” And there are all kinds of things about human beings that would tend to put off what is difficult. And this is about **don't put off what is difficult; get with it; it's important.**

Then the rest of this is about people saying, well, “We ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets.” This is the idea of familiarity. But Jesus' point is **being familiar is not the**

same thing as being a follower. I'm looking for followers, not for friends, per se, companions buddies. I'm not looking for that. I'm looking for followers. **I'm looking for people who are really obedient.**

And then of course the end of this is obviously aimed at the self-righteous. "There will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out." That of course would be a great surprise, and even that is not necessarily permanent, but is meant as a very important lesson for people who think they are on the inside. Well **people who think they are on the inside will end up on the outside, at least for a while.** That's what this ends: "Some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last." That's the reversal of priorities. **The kingdom of God is not organized like human society and doesn't follow human priorities, so get ready for surprises.** However, ultimately **the Church teaches**, as does the Letter to Timothy, that God actually wills—**God actually wills—the salvation of everyone.** Does that mean the salvation of everyone will be accomplished? No, not necessarily because **we have free will and we can refuse it.** But what does that look like? That will be the subject of Friday's homily.