

**WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, September 19, 2023**  
**Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN**

**“Who Are You?”**

**READING:** Luke 13:22-27 – Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?” He said to them, “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’ Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’”

Recently one of our insurance companies informed us that they had had a breach of their computer system. They had taken steps to correct and protect our information, but they admitted that they had no idea whether our information had been taken, nor could they guarantee that some crook wouldn’t make use of it for nefarious purposes. As a result they had made arrangements with a credit monitoring service and were offering us two years of free credit monitoring. I decided to take them up on the offer.

I went to the website for the service, entered my membership number, my name, and my zip code. That got me into another page that asked for email information, social security numbers, date of birth, etc. (It felt a little funny to be giving them my personal information when we were trying to keep it all secure, but the insurance company had sent us multiple mailings about it so okay.) Then I came to a page that was called “VERIFICATION”. The information there said that I would be asked a series of questions based on the information they had found in my credit history. I had fifteen minutes to answer the questions, and I would only have three attempts to get it all correct. After that I would be locked out and have to deal with a customer service rep. Ugghh!

The page came up and it was only five multiple choice questions. Some had a right answer listed. Some had no right answer and a choice that read, “Not applicable or not available.” It took me all of a minute to answer all five and I was all correct on the first attempt. I answered questions that only I could answer, and the program accepted my identity and my authority to set up the monitoring. The program said, “Who are you?” I gave answer, and the program said, “I know who you are and where you’ve come from. I accept you.” Hurray!

In our text for today someone has asked Jesus if only a few people will get to heaven. This one probably is thinking that only the most religious of the Jews will find God’s grace because Jesus warns his listeners that while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will sit at the Lord’s banquet table, they may find themselves on the outside looking in. He says that only those who enter the “narrow door” will find salvation. Those who stand outside knocking will hear the most tragic words possible, “I don’t know you or where you come from.” In other words, “Who are you?”

The “narrow door” is indeed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is salvation that comes by God’s grace, through faith, in Jesus alone. Jesus doesn’t say only a few will get in but he does say that only those who trust in him will be saved. For after naming the patriarchs and the prophets of the Old Testament he goes on to say that people will “come from the east and west, from the north and south and sit down at the Lord’s banquet table.” Those are the Gentiles who will believe in Jesus and also be saved.

**You and I can rejoice that already in our baptisms God wrote our names in the Book of Life. He knows us intimately. He knows our hearts and faith. He knows our weaknesses and sins. He forgives us for Jesus' sake, calls us his children, and promises us life eternal. Because Jesus is the "gate for the sheep", because Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life", because Jesus is "the name above every name", you and I are known by the Father, and we know that "heaven is our home."**

**I had to verify my identity to a company that did not know me until I proved it. Until they verified who I was, they would not open the account or let me in. Thanks be to God that when the day comes when I come to the Master's house, he will open the door, call me by name, embrace me as his own, and welcome me into his sanctuary. You will have the same welcome because you believe that the Son is your Redeemer. We need not fear those terrible words, "I don't know you or where you come from. Go away from me, all you evildoers." He won't have to ask, "Who are you?" because he'll know us because he already loves us. Thanks be to Jesus. Amen.**

**PRAYER:**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- 1) LOOKING AHEAD: September 24 – Elders BBQ**
- 2) St. Paul Lutheran Church, Royal Oak, MI – 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year. PK to preach there 9/24**
- 3) Introducing to you Seminarian Bieri and family. We are adopting them this school year. We'll help them financially, support them with our prayers, and keep up with his progress at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, IN. One of these months we'll also have them come down for a visit. Stay tuned.**