**THE SHUT DOOR**

***Luke 13:24-30***

Sunday School Lesson

*Parables of Jesus Christ*

Week 3 – 11/5/2017

**Introduction:** The parable of the shut door is a very sad parable that represents the results of missed opportunities. While the focus of the parable is the tragic conclusion for the person who does not accept Christ as his personal Saviour, there is an important lesson for the Christian to learn as well. God designs every detail of our lives, and He designs each detail for its own specific moment. When we do not adhere to the leading of the Holy Spirit of God, we miss an opportunity to do something that God has planned just for us. While one minor opportunity may not seem like much at the time, we are not always capable of gaging the magnitude of every step we take. Psalm 37:23 tells us, *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.”*

1. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE CORRECT CHOICE FOR EACH DECISION THAT WE MAKE. (vs. 24; James 4:17)
2. **While it may not always be a simple “right or wrong” answer, there is only one answer that is the correct one.** Sometimes Christians struggle to make a decision when it seems that both choices are good choices. We must be careful not to assume that either choice will work out okay for us. There are many people who have made a choice that seemed right at the time, but it ultimately led down a path that resulted in regret or frustration. The only correct decision is the one that keeps you on the path that God has intended for you to be on. We ought to strive to never settle for the second best in our lives. God wants what is best for us. (Romans 8:28)
3. **A common consensus does not always validate that you are making the correct choice**. This goes back to the old expression that your mother probably asked you about jumping from a bridge. If everyone else were doing it, would you do it too? We must be careful not to rush to a decision simply because all of the people around us agree with it. The Bible says that the path to eternal life is a “strait gate.” This means that true Biblical salvation is never going to be the common decision made among the people of this world. The same principal can be applied to decisions that we make. The danger with following the consensus is that we often surround ourselves with people who think very similarly to the way that we do. Rehoboam surrounded himself with young men who viewed leadership similarly to the way he viewed it himself, and it led to him making a very poor choice and losing the favor of the people. (I Kings 12:8-14)
4. **The correct choice will always be in harmony with the Word of God.** The will of God will never lead you to a place or position that disagrees with the Word of God. If the two could contradict, there would be no definite source for truth in this world. God gives us His Word as the guide for us to make the right choices in life. The Spirit of the Lord has been given to us to teach us His Word and guide and comfort us. (John 1:1)
5. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE TIMEFRAME FOR OUR OPPORTUNITIES IS LIMITED BY THE HAND OF THE LORD. (vs. 25)
6. **The Lord does not always reveal the timeframe that we have to make a decision.** Proverbs 27:1 tells us that we do not know what a day may bring forth. While we are young, we tend to think that we still have an entire lifetime to make important decisions. We fail to realize that life is but a vapor, and we let opportunity after opportunity pass in front of us. We must remember that those opportunities can be gone from us in a moment.
7. **We must recognize that every additional opportunity that the Lord provides is only a result of His mercy and grace. He is not obligated to a certain timeframe.** We have to be careful not to look at others to get a gage for how long of a timeframe we have. While the Lord is not a respecter of persons, we must understand that it is His right to give out opportunities as His will dictates. (Psalm 86:15)
8. **Never assume that your opportunity to make an important decision is over.** While there will be some decisions that you may run out of time to make, you should never give up on making the correct decision unless it is clear that the Lord has closed the door. We can limit the timeframe ourselves when we put our own limits on the mercy of God. (2 Corinthians 6:2)
9. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE TIMES WHERE THE RESULTS OF OUR MISSED OPPORTUNITIES CAN NOT BE CHANGED. (vs. 25b)
10. **Even though we may be making correct choices today, we must still understand that there are results for the wrong choices of yesterday.** When a child sees that punishment in eminent, he will typically decide that it is now time to start making good decisions. He will even tell you that he no longer needs punishment, as he is doing right now. However, once the punishment is already set, the parent has to follow through, or the child will learn to push the envelope every time. In our Christian lives, the same is true with our Heavenly Father. In the parable, we see that the people went to the door after it was closed and tried to have the master let them in. However, the decision had already been made, and there was no further opportunity granted. They then had to live with the results of that missed opportunity, as we see in verse number 28. (Proverbs 3:12)
11. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT BEING CLOSE TO THE OPPORTUNITY IS NOT THE SAME AS TAKING PART IN IT. (26)
12. **Acknowledging God during our decisions is not the same as submitting to God for our decisions.** The people in this parable were distraught because they had spent time in the presence of the master. However, while they were there, they continued in their daily activities without actively seeking the master’s will for them. As Christians, we can get comfortable being around God in our lives, but we must actively seek to do His will each and every day.
13. **When we submit to God in each opportunity or decision that we have, we become closer to Him.** Each time we look to God for the answer, it gets easier to look to Him the next time. When we received Him as our Saviour, it was the most important step that we could take to being close to Him. We can not be close to Him without that. However, our relationship does not stay there. The Lord expects us to continue walking more and more down the path that He has prepared for us.

**CONCLUSION**: The saddest thing to hear from a person is that they missed opportunities in their life. The greatest opportunity that we have is the opportunity to accept Jesus as our personal Saviour. Beyond that, we have opportunities every day that can lead to greater fellowship with God and greater joy in our lives. We ought to handle every decision that we make with the utmost care and importance, and we should look to God for the answer to life’s daily challenges.