1. **Intro:**
   1.1. **City Event** – On behalf of Dean & myself “Thank you to all the helpers”.
   1.2. I felt it was **Our Harvest** in the Park. Healthy, safe environment.
       Great feed back from those working & walking around.
       1.2.1. Gal at Starbucks, “Hey I hear your church is helping out the city, see you when I get off work.” [Many compliments]
   1.3. **Life’s little Miracles #101** – Nick & Monique, & Jacob(3).
       1.3.1. Fell out of 2 story window (explain plastic trash cans cushioned fall)
   1.4. **A Parable about Parables!** - Imagine Jesus out in our parking lot this morning speaking to a huge crowd saying, “Inside is a stage with things on it” - Then a small group pulled him aside & ask to see it - He takes them inside & sits in the sound booth where are lighting board is.
       1.4.1. Slowly He turns one of the 12 sliders on at a time - thus revealing the stage & all that was on it!
       1.4.2. Each Light sheds new color, & new illumination, revealing a different part of the stage, & its contents. - So, each **new Parable** sheds **new light** on a different part of the **Kingdom**.
       1.4.3. The stage was always set (kept secret), but now the lights are turned on!
   1.5. **“Kingdom”** - refers to the **kingly rule** of God in the **hearts & lives** of people of faith. As it begins w/ **the individual**, it will reach a **future climax** when **He returns**.

2. **GOD’S KINGDOM IS LARGE!** (18,19)
   2.1. Both of these parables teach about the expansion(growth) of the kingdom.
   2.2. A couple of different ideas on these 1st 2 parables.
       2.2.1. Possible birds & yeast represent **evil in the church/kingdom**.
       2.2.2. Possible it is simply pointing to **the growth of His kingdom** because of the concern of its humble beginnings.
   2.3. **MUSTARD SEED!** (18,19)
   2.4. Is there going to be any success in your work?
   2.5. God’s kingdom will **grow large** from humble beginnings.
       2.5.1. From **insignificant beginnings**, a **great movement** develops!
       2.5.2. The kingdom’s influence extends to encompass **many**.
   2.6. Birds? – Do they have to represent evil?
       2.6.1. **Ezek.17:23** “On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell **birds** of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they(Gentiles is context) will dwell.”
3. **GOD’S KINGDOM PERMEATES ALL PEOPLES/PLACES!** (20,21)

3.1. **LEAVEN!** (20,21)

3.2. Leaven is found 98 x’s in scripture & every time it is a symbol/linked w/evil!

3.3. But is he here speaking to the kingdoms corruption?

3.3.1. Or, His Kingdom spreading to all nations, permeating all cultures, & infiltrating Satan’s very kingdom…like yeast to dough!

4. **GOD’S KINGDOM IS NARROW & BROAD!** (22-30)

4.1. **NARROW WAY!** (22-28)

4.2. (22-24) Lord, are there few who are saved?

4.2.1. What’s Jesus’ answer to the question? [U can’t grab a percentage on this!]

4.2.1.1. Only means that many will look when it’s too late! (24,25)

4.2.1.2. The “many” are those who try once the door is closed!

4.2.1.3. Will not be able - only because they missed their opportunity.

4.2.2. The real question is not “are there few who are saved”, but “will you be among the saved?”

4.2.3. Instead of entering the kingdom, some people only ask questions about it. But…

“Salvation is not a theory to discuss; it is a miracle to experience.”

4.2.4. In our soft age we are more concerned with statistics than about spiritual power.

4.3. (24) Strive = to agonize as an athlete; or to fight or struggle in war.

4.3.1. No, not that were saved by our hard work; rather it warns us to avoid an “easy, complacent, & theoretical attitude” toward the eternal destiny of the soul.

4.3.2. We are to fight, or be at war with, Who? - Not who, but what?

4.3.2.1. Be at war with sin(esp. our own sin!)

4.4. Strive to enter the narrow gate – because God’s way is narrow.

4.4.1. Not every claim can fit through the door.

4.4.1.1. (example) Haiti goats with 3 sticks to make up yoke/hindrance.

4.4.1.2. (example) I don’t picture a wall w/1 door in it. I picture an open line where you can cross over anywhere & 1 door on that line.

4.4.1.2.1. The thought… “why should I go through that narrow door when I can cross the line right here?”

4.4.2. And so people read diff claims on the floor & say, “I will enter here!”

Nope, it’s narrow! “Nothing to the cross I bring, Only to the cross I cling!”

4.5. (25) I do not know you, or where you are from –

4.5.1. Everyone’s eternal destiny hangs in the balance of Jesus saying, “I know you” or “I don’t know you!”

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1 Warren Wiersbe; With the Word; pg.678
4.5.2. It’s a **personal relationship** issue. [some say the bible doesn’t say you have to have a **personal relationship** w/Jesus!]

4.5.3. Him **knowing us** is having familiarity with Him.

   4.5.3.1. Paul once spoke of **knowing God** then changed it to **being known by God**. (See Gal.4:9)
   4.5.3.2. “But now after you have **known God**, or rather are **known by God**”
   4.5.3.3. Thus, man’s salvation is based on **personal relationship** not familiarity.

4.6. (25,27) **Q:** What determines whether a person is saved or not?

   4.6.1. Intimately knowing Him, or not.

4.7. (26) **Q:** What **inadequate grounds** of confidence are here exposed?

   4.7.1. Communion & attending Jesus’ Bible studies.
   4.7.1.1. (i.e.) Ate & drank in is presence & heard Him teach.
   4.7.2. It is **origin**, not **association**, that counts!
   4.7.3. Spend all the time in church you want. Association w/believers won’t make you a Christian. You must have the life that comes from God!\(^2\)
   4.7.4. It’s more than just **being in His presence**, you must **know Him**.
   4.7.4.1. But don’t only **know Him**; seek to **be in His presence** once you do!

4.8. **NARROW ENTRANCE BUT BROAD INVITATION!** (29,30)

4.9. (29) **All nations** are invited, & some from each accept the invitation.

4.10. (30) Anyone who places their trust in their **physical birth** will **not** be allowed into heaven. **Anyone** who depends on their **spiritual birth** will be allowed into heaven.

4.11. **The picture:** The owner shuts the door once all his family is in. Its night time & strangers come & knock. Yelling threw the door He responds, “I’m not sure who you are, or where you’re from.” [We’re Jews from Jerusalem, open up!]

   4.11.1. Walking away they peek into the front window. A light is on, & lounging around the Owner’s table is Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all the prophets, & wait…a bunch of Gentiles, eating & drinking.
   4.11.2. And they find themselves outside, in the darkness, forever, & they weep & gnash their teeth.

4.12. **Those who think they’re 1\(^{st}\)** (like the Pharisees, because of their phys birth & religiosity) will be **last**; & those who think they are **last** (like the tax collector who said, “God be merciful to me a sinner”) will be **1\(^{st}\)**.

\(^2\) Warren Wiersbe; NT Outlines.
5. HEADING TO & WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM! (31-35)

5.1. HEADING TO JERUSALEM! (31-33)
5.2. The game seems to be, “find the weakness!”
   5.2.1. Let’s see if He’s afraid to die!
   5.2.2. As if they cared if he lived or died!

5.3. (32,33) Today, tomorrow & the day following – an idiomatic expression for a short period.

5.4. Herod wants to kill you – “Oh, I will perish/die, but not by Herod, & not outside Jerusalem.” - I will not die a victim but a victor. (Acts 4:27,28)
   5.4.1. “No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.” Jn.10:18
   5.4.2. Even hell could not interfere with this divinely ordained pathway or program of high heaven.

5.5. Q: How does Jesus deal with the opposition & unbelief of man?
   5.5.1. Never flees, but stays His course.
   5.5.2. Q: How should we, when faced with opposition & unbelief? (same)

5.6. “I must Journey” – I love that phrase!
   5.6.1. Note He saw himself “on journey” in vs.22 also.
   5.6.2. Q: Are you on journey?
   Q: Do you see your life as an adventure with God?
   5.6.3. Journey = an expedition from one place to another.
   5.6.3.1. {Journey, trip, expedition, excursion, trek, march, mission}
   5.6.4. Oh that we would say, “I must journey”!
   5.6.5. Jesus’ journey led him to Jerusalem, yours also is to your cross!
   5.6.5.1. It’s a road to travel down to…come & die!

5.7. WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM! (34,35)
5.8. Here we tread with holy trepidation...tentative to even read, let alone try to interpret…the heart-break of God. {It’s like me trying to explain the feelings you experienced in the death of a loved one}

5.9. No wonder why Jesus wept when he saw sinners passing by their opportunities to be saved!
   5.9.1. The Mother hens wing is still extended for you today.
   5.9.1.1. This is the great Mother heart of God!

5.10. (35) At the beginning of His public ministry he said, “My Father’s House”, now he says “your house”.
   5.10.1. If the Temple of God is left to us without the God of the Temple, it is desolate indeed!
5.11. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord – They wouldn’t see Him again until he comes as Messiah.
5.11.1. The crowd quotes this at the *Triumphal Entry*, but religious leaders disapproved.
5.11.2. Ultimately He is talking about when He comes again as the mill. ruler.

5.12. (34) But you were not willing - The saddest refusal of all!
5.12.1. Often our total focus of what we call “sin” is committing something shameful; instead of refusing something high & heavenly.
5.12.2. It is like: The priest & Levite that passed by the Good Samaritan. They didn’t commit some great evil against him. They didn’t hurt or kick him when they passed by.
5.12.2.1. They selfishly refused to go higher; to help one hurt who was “the least of these”. Thus refusing Christ Himself!
5.12.3. They’re like rosebuds that fall away without blooming, & leave only a sharp thorn!
5.12.4. It’s refusal of Christ; refusal of forgiveness; refusal of the narrow way; …which wounds God’s heart!
5.12.4.1. We must be responsible to His call, His invitation!

5.13. End: The Way I See It #128 (Read cup)
5.13.1. Flying by myself in a tiny aircraft over lonely woods: I have no one to blame if I make a bad judgment, & the law of physics won’t listen to my excuses. What would my life be like if I always had to take full responsibility?
Mark Olson Plant biologist & National Geographic Emerging Explorer.

Chinese proverb: You don’t drown by falling in the water, you drown by staying there.