



Are YOU a Spiritual Olympian?

Sunday, August 21 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, August 22 at 7 PM
16th Sunday after Pentecost / 15th Sunday after Trinity – 2016

Introduction: Dear friends: Jesus lived and died for US, so HE wants US to benefit from HIS work! Though many will be denied entrance into heaven, let us **be diligent in our use of the Word** and **know that the Spirit will keep us in Christ!**

1. **Making the Most:** ²² [And Jesus] went on his way through ~~towns~~ [cities] and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. // Jesus didn't just travel to Jerusalem, *but He taught as He traveled.* Spiritual Olympians also make the most of their time by reading, understanding, living, and sharing God's Holy Word!
2. **Encouragement to Strain:** ²³ And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are [being] saved be few?" And he said to them, ²⁴ "Strive [*struggle, strain every nerve – like an Olympic athlete*] to enter through the narrow door, ~~For~~ [because] many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." // Jesus, *knowing all things*, is well aware that **many will seek to enter and not be able**, so He is calling each one of us to be concerned about our own entrance through the narrow door!
 - a. Right now the door, thus the kingdom of God, is OPEN, but eventually it will be SHUT: **So NOW is the time to enter! But how?** *Through repentance – sorrow for all of our sins and trust in Jesus as our only Savior!* Some are now living

in *continual* repentance – *praise be to God*, while others are being called to repentance!

- b. **The Spirit is the One who works repentance:** He does His work *through the Word of God*; so **Jesus is calling each of us to dig into the Bible in a most serious way!** As an Olympic athlete is most serious about his training, *so every person should be most serious about digging into God’s Holy Word!* **Then the Spirit will do His powerful, soul-saving work.** Dr. Lenski put it this way: “The thought is never that man’s dead powers are to move and to save him, **but** the very Word itself [*thus the Spirit working through that Word*] offers what it demands, bestows what it requires, [*and*] brings those it calls to come.”¹
- c. **Many will try to enter after the door is closed:**
²⁵ **“When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ // **NOW** is the time to enter, but notice what Jesus said: **Many will not begin** to stand and knock and call **UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE!** So Jesus’ message is urgent!**
- d. **No excuse will be acceptable:** ²⁶ **“Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ ²⁷ But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart [*withdraw*] from me, all you**

¹ R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1946), 748.

workers of evil [*unrighteousness; evil doers*]! //

Even their excuses confess their **golden opportunities** to know Jesus – *as He ate, drank, and taught among them, yet they did not repent!* So they heard, but they did **not heed**, **nor respond to**, **nor put into practice** what Jesus taught☹. They expected to enter, *yet they were turned away*☹. Jesus wants us to hear that message **now**, *so that all of us take heed to God's Word every day of our lives!*

3. **The Two Eternal Situations**: One **horrible**, *where the unrepentant will suffer*; the other one **wonderful**, *where the repentant ones will rejoice!*
 - a. **Torment – apart from God**: ²⁸ **In that place there will be [the] weeping and [the] gnashing of [the] teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves [being] cast out.** // Note these **three** things: **(1)** The weeping and the gnashing will be excessive – *beyond anything known on earth*, **(2)** the unrepentant ones *expected* to be welcomed in, and **(3)** the unrepentant ones will see the joy of the repentant *as they are being thrown out*☹!
 - b. **Joy – with God**: ²⁹ **And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and [will] recline at table in the kingdom of God.”** // Eternity with God will include people from every tribe, language, people, and nation **who** have been ransomed by the precious blood of Jesus and **who** – *by God's grace* – continue in

repentance! All such people are hungry *to know and live God's Word!*

4. **The Unexpected:** ³⁰ “And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”
- a. **The last and the first:** The **last** are people who SEEM so far away from God's kingdom – (*Gentiles*) *criminals, drug-users, sexually immoral, non-church attenders*. The **first** are people who SEEM so close to God's kingdom – (*Jews*) *law-abiding citizens, sexually moral, and church attenders*. **BUT** *some who are last will be in eternal joy, while some who are first will be in eternal torment!*
 - b. **Lenski explained:** “Some people have all the means of salvation **but fail to use them and are lost, others** are destitute of these means in the beginning, yet the moment they get them **they make full use of them** and thus obtain salvation.... Not because we have them shall we be saved but only because we faithfully use them” (755).

Conclusion: Let us pray: Father in heaven, thank You for making us Your very own in Christ; keep us in continual repentance! We also pray for all people who think they are **in** and yet, in reality, are **out**; please ♦be merciful to them, ♦open their eyes to Your truth, and ♦cause them to live in continual repentance! In Jesus' name we pray. Amen!