

An Extraordinary Offer



How much does it cost? Is it worth it? How many people have already accepted this offer? What's the bottom line? The answers to questions like these are important because we want to establish parameters. Numbers are pertinent: they don't lie. In Jesus' era, people asked their religious leaders: *How many people will be saved?* Someone asked Jesus for his opinion.

Though this question appears to be simple, it isn't. What must we do to be saved? The rationale behind these questions is to establish the minimum requirements. Some rabbis in Jesus' era answered there were three necessary components salvation: to live within a specific geographic area (to be Jewish), to pray each day, and to be familiar with the language used in the Scriptures. Previously, our religious leaders would tell us to say three *Hail Mary's* each day and go to confession.

Obviously Jesus did not like these types of questions. Instead of supplying specific numbers or proposing strategies, he responded with a brief parable about a narrow door. Though the door is narrow, we can still push our way in. However, if the door is closed, it's too late. Jesus said that heaven wouldn't be restricted to Jews, nor could people assume that they could enter by claiming prior rights. The password that would open this narrow door is *faith* and the Kingdom would be open to all. It's an interesting paradox: a parable of a narrow door that has a password-protected access.

For those who were thinking of doing the least possible, Jesus' message was clear: *Make the effort, don't procrastinate, and don't assume that you will automatically be saved.* Our faith and encounters with God are not sure-fire guarantees if our efforts are only half-hearted and we are satisfied with spiritual complacency.

We have to forget the numbers game, aspire to live our lives to the fullest, and fulfill the destiny that God has created for us.

André Beauchamp

Translated by Honore Kerwin Borrelli