

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 16TH–17TH // BAPTISM WEEKEND

I NEVER KNEW YOU (MATTHEW 7:21–23)

PROJECT DAY

There was coming a day when the reality of my students' preparation (not just the verbal declaration of their intentions to prepare) would be exposed.

- On that day, excuses and blame didn't matter.
- On that day, the students' good intentions for what they had planned to do someday to get the project done wouldn't matter.

On that day, their verbal profession of how their assignment was ready would not matter if the assignment wasn't actually done.

- The only thing that mattered on project day was that they had heard my words, taken them seriously, and responded accordingly.
- God has given us His Word, and our assignment is to take it seriously and obey it.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

We are sinners who need a Savior, and the Savior we need is Jesus (1 Timothy 1:15).

- The assignment is to believe in Him and surrender to Him as Lord of our lives.
- Not everyone who makes a verbal profession that they have done that has actually done that.
- According to Jesus, many will stand before Him on Judgment Day and be shocked.

There's coming a day of judgment—whether it is tomorrow or 10,000 years from now—where the full and final judgment of God will be poured out on those who did not truly repent and trust Christ's sacrifice for their sins.

- They will be sentenced to a final, eternal Hell (Revelation 20:15), while those who trusted Christ will enter a Kingdom where they will rule and reign with Him for all eternity (1 Timothy 2:12).

Shockingly, many on that day will be horrified and surprised to discover that instead of receiving the Kingdom, they will be cast out from the presence of the King (v. 23).

- Why will they be so shocked?
- They will have false assurance of their standing with Jesus because of their claim that He is their Lord, even though they never truly obeyed God's will in their lives (vs. 21–22).

Calling Jesus "Lord" is much different than actually making Him Lord over our lives.

- We can claim loyalty and devotion to Jesus with our lips, but what Jesus is ultimately interested in is loyalty with our lives.
- Our external professions of faith in Christ as Lord may impress others, but if they are not genuinely grounded in surrendered lives and trusting hearts, they are completely useless.

The second reason many will be shocked to be sentenced to Hell on Judgment Day is because they prophesied, cast out demons, and did "miracles" in Jesus' name (v. 22).

- Spiritual and religious activity can all be faked—even if God uses unregenerate people for His work, these things give no assurance of real salvation if they're done without trust in Christ.
- Religion can't save you. Only Jesus saves.

Just because you have experienced the supernatural or God has used you to do good things, it doesn't mean that you truly have a real, trusting, surrendered heart towards Christ as Lord and Savior (even Judas most likely participated in these spiritual activities).

- It is possible to parrot the language and activities of a true Believer without truly having a transformed, surrendered, obedient heart.

Regardless of the misplaced confidence in their own claims or their religious activity, Jesus says He will cast them out of His presence (v. 23).

- Why? He will say, "I never knew you."
- "Knew" ("*ginosko*") means to "personally know through firsthand or face-to-face experience." It implies the type of knowledge of someone that is intimate, life-changing, transformative, and powerful.

The self-deceived "make believers" will be cast out of the presence of the King.

- They might have intellectual understanding of Jesus and His ideas, but this type of knowledge has no power or authority to transform lives, change hearts, or grant anyone entrance into the Kingdom.
- Real faith implies an actual relationship of trust, dependence, and obedience.

"ONLY THE ONE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER..."

If, according to Jesus, a simple verbal profession that Jesus is Lord (even if He isn't) won't save us...

- And religious or spiritual activity devoid of true faith won't save us...
- Then how can we know who is truly saved? Those who know Jesus truly are those who do the will of the Father in Heaven (v. 21).

WHAT IS THE "WILL OF THE FATHER IN HEAVEN"?

It is that you and I would have authentic, intimate, saving relationships with Jesus the Son that are visible and transformative (John 6:39–40).

- It is to truly know, believe in, and submit to Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives, rather than just professing faith that isn't really ours or performing outwardly religious work.
- Are you doing the will of the Father?

AN AUTHENTIC AND INTIMATE...

To be fully known and fully loved by God (with no hiding) is the core of the gospel. Jesus knows every part of you and doesn't shrink back in disgust; He draws near in love to save, redeem, and transform.

SAVING RELATIONSHIP...

An intimate, personal connection with Jesus is based on faith and trust (not ritual or performance).

...THAT IS VISIBLE AND TRANSFORMATIVE

The result of Christ's saving work in a person's heart and life is an undeniable, external change in their character and action.

- It is a shift in morality, integrity, and how one treats other people.
- Our old, selfish desires get overpowered by new hunger to know and reflect the character of Jesus. We start to image Jesus to our world.

DO YOU TRULY WANT TO KNOW JESUS AS LORD?

If we really see Jesus as He is (the sovereign King over all), we begin to understand that surrender isn't optional; it's the natural response of a heart that truly knows Him.

- Many carry false assurance because they want the benefits of salvation without lives that are actually yielded to Jesus.
- *Do you still want to be in charge?*

HOW ARE WE TO RESPOND TO JESUS AS LORD?

- Faith: Believe in your heart that Jesus is the Son of God who died for your sins and that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9b).
- Repentance: Turn from your sins and self-lordship towards God (Acts 3:19).
- Confession: Acknowledge with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord (Romans 10:9a).
- Receive: Invite Christ into your life (John 1:12).

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Water baptism is something we do physically that illustrates publicly what God has done in us spiritually through Christ.

- It's how we, as followers of Jesus, profess an active faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38).
- The water illustrates the washing and cleansing of sin that we experience in salvation (Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16). It shows we've been forgiven and cleansed by Jesus' blood.

Water baptism illustrates that we've been given a new identity with a new heart and a new nature.

- Our old self gets "buried" in the waters of baptism as a way of illustrating God's removal of our old heart of stone (Colossians 2:12).
- We come up out of the water to symbolize being raised with Christ into a new kind of resurrection life with a new heart and a new nature (Romans 6:4).

Water baptism illustrates that we've been given the Holy Spirit to indwell and empower us.

- God's work to save us, clean us, and give us His Holy Spirit is an inner work of God's grace.
- Baptism is a tangible, visible, and public profession of that inner work.
- When the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our lives, there will be tangible, visible, and public signs—God calls it "fruit."

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22–23, CSB).

WHY SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BE BAPTIZED?

- 1) Baptism is commanded (Matthew 28:19).
- 2) Jesus modeled it (Matthew 3:13–17).
- 3) The early church baptized (Acts 2:38–41).
- 4) If you're a Christian, you should want to, and if you don't, something is terribly wrong.

BUT DO I HAVE TO?

- When we ask that question, it proves that our hearts are in the wrong place.
- If we have a new heart, spirit, and nature through Jesus that desires to obey and please God, why wouldn't we get baptized?
- Once we grasp the lengths Jesus went to for our redemption, we should want to do ANYTHING He asks us to do.

OUR FOUNDATION (MATTHEW 7:24–29)

"THEREFORE...EVERYONE WHO HEARS...AND ACTS"

Because of the reality of God's coming judgment, we better be sure we're listening and obeying.

- Jesus gives a picture of two builders—one who built a house on the rock and another who built a house on the sand.
- The wise man represents "everyone who hears these words...and acts on them..." (v. 24).
- Faith expressed in action is what Jesus is after.

WE ARE NOT TO JUST HEAR THE WORDS OF JESUS. WE ARE TO ACTUALLY DO THEM (JAMES 1:22).

Hearing God's Word without implementing it in our lives through obedient faith is ultimately meaningless and shows that we don't really value it or even believe it.

- When it started raining, the floods and wind came to the wise man's house, but it didn't fall because it was built on the rock (v. 25).

IT'S GOING TO RAIN. OUR PROFESSIONS OF FAITH IN CHRIST AS LORD WILL ULTIMATELY BE TESTED.

We will be tested by the trials, storms, and troubles in this life. When life becomes difficult, many who professed faith in Christ but had no real commitment to Him walk away.

- Our faith will also be tested by a final and devastating storm of the future judgment of God.

There is coming a day when those who claimed to trust Christ yet who have not truly obeyed the will of God with their lives will be exposed by the storm of God's final judgment.

- The foundation of their profession will be revealed as nothing but sand (v. 26).
- "It collapsed" is a chilling declaration about the finality and horror of God's final judgment towards those without true faith.

Those who spend their lives building exterior, phony, self-righteous facades of religion that aren't grounded in real faith, commitment, and obedience are ultimately considered fools by Jesus (v. 26).

- Why? Because life's trials will shake us to our cores and reveal what we built our lives on.
- God's final judgment will expose everything—nothing can be hidden from Him.

CHRIST, THE SOLID ROCK

- Everyone is building their life upon something. Is it money, success, reputation, pleasure, or the Word of God and the promises of Jesus?
- There are storms in life that will expose your foundation. If you have a true, saving relationship with Jesus, those storms will actually drive you deeper into your foundation.
- What is *your* foundation? Rock or sand?
- Have you believed in Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Do you truly know Him? Have you repented of your sins and put your faith in Him in obedient surrender?
- If so, have you been baptized as a profession of your faith in Him and a declaration that you have trusted in Him, that He is your Lord, and that you belong to Him?