

The Danger of False Assurance

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[0 : 00] Good morning. The scripture reading is coming from two passages.! Isaiah 66, verses 1-6, and Matthew 7, verses 21-23.

! He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man.

He who sacrifices a lamb like one who breaks a dog's neck. He who presents a grain offering like one who offers pig's blood.

He who makes a memorial offering of frankincense like one who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations.

I also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring their fears upon them. Because when I called, no one answered.

[1 : 35] When I spoke, they did not listen. But they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight. Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word.

Your brothers who hate you and cast you out for my name's sake have said, Let the Lord be glorified, that we may see your joy. But it is they who shall be put to shame.

The sound of an uproar from the city, a sound from the temple, the sound of the Lord rendering recompense to his enemies.

Matthew chapter 7, verses 21-23. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do mighty works in your name?

[2 : 52] Then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. Here ends the scripture reading. Have you ever thought that something was true, but it turned out not to be true?

Have you ever thought that something was true and it turned out not to be true? For instance, perhaps on your job, perhaps on your job, you're working so hard that you were totally convinced that at the end of the year you would be employee of the year.

But at the end of the year came and someone else won the award. Or perhaps you thought you were someone's dearest friend.

and it turned out in the end that that was not the case. The truth is those and many other examples could be very, very crushing.

However, nothing compares to what our Lord teaches here in the verses that were just read.

[4 : 40] Believing oneself to be a follower of Christ and finding out in the end that one is denied entrance into the kingdom of God.

Let us pray. Father, oh Lord, we need your help.

Father, we come to words that are sobering, that are clear words that pertain to all of us.

We confess, oh Lord, that apart from you we are inadequate to bring this message to you today.

Therefore, Lord, we ask that you would be pleased to speak to your people through us. In the name of Jesus we pray.

[5 : 54] Amen. You'll be aware that we have been preaching from the book of Matthew, specifically on the Sermon of the Mount, for a number of weeks now.

And today we are coming towards the conclusion of the sermon. Last week we saw one of the concluding messages that Jesus gave his disciples as he preached this message.

And we learned last week that Jesus concluded this sermon with three warnings. The first warning was that we ought to be aware of false prophets.

And now we come to the second warning. The dangers of false assurance.

false assurance. What does it mean to have false assurance? It means believing in this context that one will make it into God's kingdom when indeed or in fact he will not.

[7 : 32] Let me say that again. False assurance means believing that one will make it into God's kingdom when in fact he or she will not.

By way of introduction I want to draw your attention to four things in the very short verses that were read in Matthew.

The first thing we see in these verses in verses 21 through 23 is that it is Jesus who is teaching.

Jesus is teaching his disciples. disciples. The second thing that we see here is he is teaching about entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom of heaven. The third thing that we see here is that we know that the reference that is being made when Jesus talks about on that day he says on that day in verse 22 many will say to me Lord Lord.

[9 : 16] we know that on that day he is referring to judgment day. Perhaps there is some here some theologians present and you debating well if Jesus is here teaching about judgment day and we hear and we know that the Bible teaches absent from the body present with the Lord how is it that Jesus seems to be preaching or teaching about a distinct time and I think that's a reasonable question but the fact is that the Bible teaches both things the Bible teaches that believers when they die that they are in fact present with the

Lord immediately upon death but the Bible also teaches that everyone will face the Lord on a day on judgment day!

But the next thing we see in these verses very broadly is that it is Jesus who decides who enters the kingdom we know that based on what he says he says in these verses he is the one who says depart from me you workers of iniquity or you workers of lawlessness the translation says so how might we sum up those four points and how might we sum up the verses that we just read in the verses we read Jesus mourns his hearers by extension he mourns us to be aware of false assurance and

Jesus does this by using few words few words and he's very very sober this is the essence of what Jesus says many who emphasize forms of spirituality and religious performance will not enter the kingdom of heaven brothers and sisters this is such an important subject for us to consider it's a warning for all of us and in the end Jesus is saying what his apostles what Peter and John and Paul and what they write to the church about in essence really much of the New Testament is to us telling us one thing that we ought to be diligent in making our calling and our election sure because as

Jesus said not everyone who says Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven I've organized my thoughts around two points the first is a sober warning and the second clear evidence let's now consider a sober warning what makes these words of Jesus a sober warning what makes these words of Jesus a sober morning listen to what he says not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven on that day many will say to me

[14 : 03] Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name and then I will declare to them I never knew you depart from me you workers of lawlessness sober words one can have a false sense of security believing oneself to be saved when in fact one is not there are two words Jesus uses here that we should pay particular attention to I want you to see these two words that he uses the first word that we encounter that I think we ought to pay attention to this word everyone

Jesus says not everyone who says Lord Lord and that's an interesting word by itself because what Jesus is saying is that everyone who says Lord Lord is not going to make it into heaven now you know as I considered Jesus use of that word during my preparation I thought okay you know that's okay if someone were to say to me well you know not everyone who does X Y Z is going to achieve a negative result that I say okay that's that's all right not everyone it's never the case it's hardly ever the case that everyone pursuing something is going to get the result that they want but then Jesus goes on further and he uses another word that is even more impactful he uses the word many on that day many will say to me it's not just everyone he says but many and that is the word that's the key word you see you can be somewhat heartened by the word by the words not everyone but when you consider this word many of those who are believing themselves to be

Christians then that puts it in a totally different category and that ought to cause all of us to pause those words help to give us a sense of the extent of the concern that Jesus warns us about here you know if you worked in an office with 25 people and one day someone comes to you and says everyone here doesn't like you you're likely to be unbothered by that everyone you know office of 25 people it's it's not a big deal then if they say to you many people here don't like you that's a totally different story that's a totally different ball game you can expect everyone may not like you but many it's a totally different story so our

Lord warns us all of when he says everyone who says Lord Lord and he amplifies that warning with the word many but here is the point that all of us need to take a hold of the point that we ought to take a hold of is this that this is not a fabrication but this is real that the Lord is he is making a point he is saying that the fact of the matter is that everyone indeed many he's not he's not saying that this may or may not be the case he's saying the fact is that many who say Lord Lord on that day they will be denied in these verses

Jesus speaks about three distinct people who will be denied let's consider them in turn Jesus opens this portion of his message not everyone who says to me Lord Lord take a look at that for a moment Lord Lord you know he doesn't say just Lord you get the sense here that when Jesus uses when Jesus repeats the word Lord that these are people you know who are they are just holier than thou Lord Lord Lord but

[20 : 14] Jesus makes the point that these people who may be characterized as people who prioritize religious performance these are the religious folks he wants us to see that words that mere!

words are not enough Lord Lord they're right to call him Lord indeed he is Lord but these people these are people who either know who is who Jesus is or they pretended to know I want you to get this for a moment they called him Lord Lord brothers and sisters we gotta listen to this today because this pertains to all of us and Jesus is saying they say to him Lord Lord Lord now on what basis do they do this on what basis are they doing this because they truly know him or are they pretending to know him it's not clear Jesus doesn't make that clear but it seems likely that these are people who know him because those who are pretending to know him are not likely to be surprised in the end you see

Jesus said that there is a surprise an element of surprise for those who say Lord Lord but these people if one is just pretending think about it for a moment if one is pretending then one won't be surprised but we get the sense that what Jesus is teaching us here is that people will be genuinely surprised in the end so Jesus is here telling us that not everyone who in fact knows he is Lord and says he is Lord will be saved in other words what Jesus is saying is that one can get one's doctrine right and still be lost we are not saved by doctrine we are not saved by words

Charles Spurgeon emphasized that a person can be doctrinally sound but spiritually dead many think that they are Christian because you know they were baptized Bible says they ought to be baptized many think that they were Christian they're Christian because they prayed a sinner's prayer or perhaps they attend church because that's what we are taught many think that they're

Christian because they're involved in ministry but Christianity is not about a momentary one-time decision it is a life that is transformed by God's Holy Spirit when we talk about religious people believe in themselves to be saved you know we can't ever overlook the Pharisees and the religious leaders of Jesus' day they claim themselves to be Abraham's children but Jesus told them if you were Abraham's children you would be doing the work that

[25 : 16] Abraham did but now you seek to kill me you are your father the devil and your will is to do his desire so despite their religious status they were not truly God's children because they rejected Christ how many of you know brothers and sisters but Jesus warns us in scripture that even our worship can be empty remember this remember when he said oh you hypocrites well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said this people honors me with their lips but their heart is far from me the point we make is that religion will not save us and then there's another category of people that

Jesus references here take a look at what he says on that day in verse 22 on that day many will say to me Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name I want you to notice that this is what they said interestingly Jesus does not dispute what they claim but and we won't either but let's categorize these people that Jesus here teaches about as church workers pastors teachers and other workers in the church Jesus says that on that day many will say to me

Lord Lord did we not prophesy and he could have said did we not teach did we not preach in your name did we not cast out demons did we not serve in this office in the church did we not serve in that office in the church brothers and sisters this is really some stuff that we are talking about this is deep because as I speak to you now I know that I'm speaking more so to myself first Corinthians chapter 13 verses 1 to 3 the apostle

Paul writes if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but have not love I'm a noisy gong or clanging cymbal and if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to move mountains but have not love I am nothing brothers and sisters it doesn't matter how big your church is it doesn't matter how apparently effective your ministry is it doesn't matter how much you are loved or even hated for that matter doesn't matter Jesus says that's not one of the criteria being a church worker not one of the criteria and that he offers gives us another a third category of individuals on that day many will say to me

Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and then he says and do mighty works in your name brothers and sisters good works will not get you will not get us will not get you and me into heaven good works will not get us into heaven how many of you remember the rich young ruler the rich young man he he approached Jesus and he asked teacher what good deed must I do to inherit eternal life and then Jesus says to him one thing you lack my brother go sell all that you have and give it to the poor scripture says to us disheartened by that saying he ran away sorrowful for he had great possessions this man thought he was close to

[31 : 27] God but he was unwilling to fully surrender to him I want to say to us that if we could work our way into heaven then God would have been most unjust to crucify his son but there are other things that Jesus might have said here Jesus might have talked about those who believe that they'll make it into heaven because they were born into a Christian family or perhaps they belong to what many describe as a Christian nation the most amazing thing you want to hear well 50% of people in the United States or 60% people in the United States are Christian unbelievable unbelievable the

Bahamas is a Christian nation Christian by what by the Constitution I don't know the preamble of the Constitution Christian by birth Christian by affiliation I want to tell a little friend listen you know I used to be well I was a I was a pretty conservative guy I still am growing up and I had a couple friends I knew that you know they liked me to hang with them because it would give them a little bit of cover kind of thing but over time you know we certainly became very good friends but the point is the point

I make is that we don't become Christian through affiliation we've considered a sober warning to those who profess to know Christ let us now consider a clear evidence that he knows us and we know him known by God it's interesting when you read what Jesus says here in verse 23 let's read verse 22 again on the day many will say to me Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do mighty works in your name and this is what

Jesus says and then will I declare to them I never knew you I never knew you it's interesting when you read those words several things jump out certainly to me immediately the first is that Jesus doesn't say simply I don't know you he says I never knew you now it's interesting that he said that I'm pretty sure brother Tim can preach a whole message in fact he can write a book on this one brother Tim he says not that I don't know you he says I never knew you it's not like you know I used to know you you used to be in the kingdom you used to be a child of

God and then somehow you were unborn and I came not to know you and now I don't know you anymore that sounds confusing doesn't it that's because it is but Jesus says I never knew you now the next question that you might say you might ask is well I thought he knows everybody good and bad well yes he does but that's not what he means yet Jesus is saying I never knew you you were never in my fold you were never a part of my flock never called never elected never a sheep the scriptures teach us that the father knows his sheep and the sheep know his voice isn't what

[36 : 50] Jesus says in John chapter 10 verses 14 and 15 I'm the good shepherd I know my own I know my own and my own know me just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for my feet brothers and sisters I think it's important for us to make this point that underlying all of what we have said to this point and what we will say to the end that those of us who are in fact saved that we are known by Jesus and we can gain comfort in the fact that he is the one who laid down his life for us he is the one who gave his life for us and so while this is indeed a sobering message the fact is that what is much more comforting is that our salvation is not in our works but it is in the death and the sacrifice of our good shepherd 1 John chapter 1 verses 6 and 7 we find these words brothers and sisters clear evidence of our salvation clear evidence of our salvation we find if we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness we lie and do not practice the truth but if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of

Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin brothers and sisters we find in scripture scripture the words of one of Jesus' apostles who says to us that if we are in darkness and we say we have fellowship we lie and we do not practice the truth but if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship not only with one another but with him because the blood of Jesus cleanses us from our sins we can in fact have assurance of our salvation indeed indeed we read in 1st

John chapter 2 verses 3 to 6 and I want to read this I'm going to read a lot out of 1st John because I think it's important for us to hear these words this is what he writes and by this we know that we've come to know him if we keep his commandments whoever says I know him but does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him but whoever keeps his word in him truly the love of God is perfected by this we may know that we are in him whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he want John's telling us brothers and sisters that we can know he's telling us that we can know where we stand he's telling us that we can in fact do introspection he's telling us how to do it he's telling us what to consider

John first John chapter 3 verses 4 to 10 this is what he writes everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness brothers and sisters take a look at what Jesus says here in verse 23 Jesus said and then I will declare to them I never knew you depart from me you workers of lawlessness the point that Jesus what Jesus is saying to us is that the problem with at the core of it is that these people they were lawless they were sinful they never knew God and the evidence of it was that they were lawless that they were sinful and

John tells us this John says everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness John helps us to see what lawlessness is sin he says is lawlessness he says it's all right sin is lawlessness you know that he appeared in order to take away sins and in him there is no sin no one who abides in him keeps on sinning no one who keeps on sinning has ever seen him or known him this is what John writes no one who practices lawlessness no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him little children let no one deceive you whoever practices righteousness is righteous as he is righteous whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil for the devil has been sinning from the beginning the reason the son of

[43 : 55] God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil no one born of God makes a practice of sinning for God's seed abides in him and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God by this it is evident who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God nor is the one who does not love his brother brothers and sisters I could not have said it more plainly I could not have said it more plainly John tells us that if we keep on sinning then we are not of God God John also teaches us that if we say that we have no sin then we are liars because we know that all of us have sinned and all of us do sin but he helps us to see we don't make it a practice brothers and sisters

I've got a question for you how do you and I respond to a message like this as we conclude how do we respond to this message this sober message I would suggest here's something we should not do I would suggest that we should not use these words of Jesus to judge and to condemn one another not do that I think that would be evidence of pride perhaps warn perhaps warn you might say to someone listen I believe that you are to do introspection because of my observations I know that you go to church

I know that you under praise team I know that you preach I know that you lead the choir I know that you are always present but these are my observations and based on what Jesus says in Matthew chapter 7 perhaps you ought to do introspection so warn yes condemn no next thing that I think we ought to do is what Peter tells us we ought to do in 2nd Peter chapter 1 verses 10 and 11 Peter says to us he says be diligent brothers and sisters to confirm your calling and your election make your calling and election sure that's what he says make it sure make it sure says do introspection therefore brothers be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election for if you practice these qualities you will never fall brothers and sisters let's be diligent to make a calling and election sure can

I I want to invite you to really I don't want to do it now but I want to invite you to read 2nd Peter chapter 1 the verses leading up to verse 10 see what Peter says we ought to do because remember I said verse 10 starts with therefore you want to see what he says just before that therefore brothers be the more diligent to confirm your calling and election for if you practice these qualities he mentions some things that I think you all want to pay attention to you will never for yes Jesus is concluding words call us to do introspection these words are deep strong and convicted to those of us who professed who profess us to know

Christ may we do as Peter instructs to be diligent to confirm our calling and election if today you conclude that your faith is false run to Christ run to Christ don't try to compensate with works brothers and sisters I say to us let's not try to work our way to salvation run to Christ don't compensate run to Christ Lord have mercy on me if you know that you do not know Christ then there is no doubt whatsoever that on that day you will hear him say depart from me that need not be the case today is the day of salvation the

[50 : 50] Lord is able to draw you to himself and to save you to the utmost in a moment we're going to sing a well-known song in seven grace circles all I have is Christ the song reminds us that indeed all we have is Christ it was he who it is he who died for us it is he who made a way for us to enter his kingdom it is he who gives us strength to follow his commands on that day what will matter is not what we have done for Christ but whether we belong to him he is the one who will hold us fast hallelujah all

I have is Christ hallelujah Jesus is my life father we thank you for bringing us to this place we thank you oh lord for making the truths in your word known to us we pray oh god that it will be true for us that you know us that you know our names that you know everything that there is to know about us and lord we pray that it will be true that on that day none will hear those awful words said oh lord that each one will hear well done thou good and faithful servant oh father lord we pray for the one today who is uncertain we pray oh lord that you will cause him or her lord to rest in the truth that it is the finished work of Jesus Christ that we ought to look to that our faith should not be in faith but in Christ Jesus that our faith should not be in our works should not be in our religion should not be in what we say lord we ask that you would have mercy on us oh have mercy on us lord what a fellowship we have what a fellowship we have with one another and lord we yearn for that day that together we will have fellowship with you lord let not one be lost in the name of Jesus we pray oh father have mercy on us have mercy on us we pray now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy to the only

God our savior through Jesus Christ our lord be glory majesty dominion and authority before all time and now and forever and all God's people say amen amen amen to to to to to