

The Gospel: Why it's Important

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[0 : 00] All right, we're going to get started this morning, and we're going to be in the book of Romans, as we were able to see from that initial slide this morning.

And do we realize that Jesus is everything, and realize that he's the Alpha, he's the Omega, he's the beginning, he's the end, he's the bread of life, he's the chief cornerstone, he's the creator, he's our deliverer.

He is the everlasting Father, he's God, he is the good shepherd, he's the great high priest, he's the holy one, he's the hope of glory, he's the great I am, he is the image of the invisible God, he is the judge of the living and the dead, he is the king of kings, he is the Lord of lords, he is the only begotten of the Father, he's full of grace and truth, he is the power of God, he is the resurrection, and he is the life, he is the way.

The truth and the life, the very word of God made flesh. Do you realize that Jesus is all these things? And so many more. That's just a small portion of what the Bible calls Jesus.

And I think all too often what we've done in modern Christianity is kind of relegated Jesus to the leader of a religion.

[1 : 21] And him, he being just simply a part of this religion, and we treat him simply as that. And for many people sitting just like you are in churches across not only this country, possibly even the world, believe that as long as they pray to prayer or walk down an aisle and sign that card, that you're saved.

And I think there are many, many people that have deceived themselves and are still today being deceived that salvation is something simple as a rite or a rite of passage that we do as part of a religion.

And that's why this series that we're going to begin this morning is about the gospel. And it's something that I believe is the bedrock. It is the lifeblood.

It is our lifeblood. Because if we don't have Jesus in our life, if we are not a part of the family of God, then everything else is really worthless.

Because it doesn't matter how many times we attend church. It doesn't matter how well we sing the songs. It doesn't matter how great our fellowship is. Because if we don't have salvation settled, if we don't understand fully and completely what the gospel is, what the good news of Jesus Christ is, then I really believe that we have missed the boat.

[2 : 54] And I don't ever want anyone to be under the sound of my preaching, maybe even for years, and stand before God one day and He says, Depart from me.

I never knew you. Because that would be terrible. It would mean your eternity would be spent apart from God.

And it would mean that I haven't spent the time and the energy to make very, very clear what the gospel really is about. And really, the gospel is something that we should never tire of hearing.

The gospel is something that we say, oh, well, I'm already saved. Well, the gospel is exciting. The gospel is what our very life is about.

It's Jesus died, loved us so, God loves us so much. Jesus died on the cross in our place because we are sinners. And if we have not wrestled with the reality of that sin and wrestled with the knowledge and the understanding that apart from Jesus Christ, we are destined for an eternity apart from God.

[4 : 12] And if our sinfulness and our sin has not brought us to that point where we're utterly undone, to the point where we feel hopeless and helpless, and all of life is worthless unless we have Jesus in our life, then I really don't believe we've wrestled with the true gospel.

Because the true gospel is not a prayer. The true gospel is not signing a card and walking down an aisle and, and as some have said, getting fire insurance and say, well, if I pray this prayer, I'm saved.

But then I can live however I want to the rest of my life. I never have to grow. I never, I don't even have to go to church. I don't even, I don't have to do anything. I prayed a prayer. I was saved when I was 14 and I'm good.

And I think we're going to see during these next few weeks, that's not at all what Jesus had in mind. Because you remember when Jesus was speaking to the crowds? You remember what he said is involved with following him?

Never a prayer. It was never a church attendance. It was never signing a card. And it was never making a transaction with, a one-time transaction with him. And then never worrying about him the rest of our life.

[5 : 30] And never even concerned about submitting to him as the Lord of our life. No, Jesus said, if you want to follow me, and the list goes on of what is going to be involved in following him.

It's of eternal importance. Let's listen to Jesus' words this morning. And I'm really looking forward to this series because it, I think, will help those of us who maybe have been saved for many, many years really understand the fullness of what it means to know Christ as our Savior.

And I believe to help us to reignite our passion as to what the gospel really means to not only us, but to those around us who don't know Jesus.

Matthew chapter 7, beginning with verse number 27. Jesus says, Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

[6 : 48] You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?

And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

[8 : 11] And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house, and it fell, and great was its fall.

Father, this morning as we've come together to worship you, to hear your word today, may your Holy Spirit open our minds and help us to see the varied, beautiful truths that are found in your word, and what it means to know Jesus as our Savior, what it means to follow Christ, and what the gospel truly involves.

We thank you, Father, for this. Help us to know for sure that we have a right relationship with you, and that we are growing in our faith, and growing as a follower of Christ.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. So this is how Jesus ends his Sermon on the Mount. Begins in chapter 5, and he finishes it with a picture of a house, symbolizing one's life.

And in so doing, he says that the fall of it, if it's not built on the proper foundation, will be very, very great. What Jesus, I believe, is telling us is it's possible to deceive ourselves on the most important issue in our life.

[9 : 37] And he's speaking, we have to understand, he's speaking primarily to devoutly religious people. When he's speaking on this Sermon on the Mount, he's speaking to the Jews. He's speaking to people who go to temple every week.

He's speaking to people who follow the sacrifices, who don't eat pork, who do everything pretty much that they have been told to do, and they were deluded into thinking that they were on the right

road.

But Jesus is telling them, be careful. It's possible that you delude yourself into thinking that you're on the road that leads to life, when in reality, you are on the road that leads to death.

See, they have their rituals down pat, but they don't have the relationship with Jesus Christ. So I want to begin this series with saying that just because we're here today and just because we think we're right with God doesn't mean that we are saved.

Because being right with Jesus is not a religion. I've heard people say, when I've asked the question, do you know Christ as your Savior? And they'll say, well, I'm Baptist, or I'm Methodist, or I'm whatever.

[10:54] And so what I think that tells us, or what that tells me is, they have deluded themselves into thinking that their religion or their denomination is equal to their salvation.

And so, because they've gone to Sunday school or because they've gone to catechism or because they've gone through the new member class, that they're right with God.

And just because they are good in their denomination, then they're right with God. I think this is where the Jews were. They were being good Jews. So therefore, we must be right with God because after all, are not the Jews God's chosen people?

So I was born into God's family. It was not true then, and it's not true today. So I think that's what we're going to see as we unpack these things that Jesus is talking about.

I want us to know and to make sure for real. And I don't think it hurts any of us. We've been saved for five, six decades to say, you know what? This is why I believe.

[11:58] This is why I know. I know Jesus because I know my relationship with Him is real because, and we can tell someone else, this is why I know I'm right with God and have the right answer to it.

So I want us to very intentionally unpack these three pictures that Jesus gives and what He does in chapter number seven. He gives a picture of roads and trees and foundations.

So I want us to see what Jesus is telling us about the danger of spiritual deception. and we'll start with the first picture in verses 13 and verses 14 in Matthew chapter 7.

So Matthew chapter 7 verse 13 says, Enter in. This is what He says. Enter in by the narrow gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many who go in by it. Verse 14. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life and there are few who find it. So warning number one from Jesus as He is speaking to this crowd of very religious people wanting them to understand don't delude yourself in talking about the danger of spiritual deception.

[13:25] The first thing that we see here that Jesus brings out is human nature. We tend to gravitate toward that which is easy and that which is popular.

So as human beings we take the route from point A to point B and we want it to be the easiest route. And we go where most people have gone before.

We want to go somewhere and what we might do we might look at some reviews and say well people went this way and people went that way you know what I don't know about this way and this way is easier and so we go with the crowd.

That's the way we tend to be. We're like cattle. We go with the herd. So what Jesus is saying to those that He is speaking to He says be careful. Don't go the popular way.

Don't go that way just because a lot of people are going that way and just because it's easy because we gravitate toward that which is easy and popular. The wide gate the broad gate the easy road now don't miss this is the religious road that doesn't require much of you.

[14:37] And that's what He's telling these people here. Remember Jesus was talking to religious people. Now the contemporary picture of that would be all that's required for you is a one time decision for Jesus.

Just pray fill out a card walk down an aisle and you don't have to worry about anything else. You've got to pass to heaven and all your sins will be tolerated along the way.

Now don't misunderstand me. Salvation is solely by faith. Salvation does not require any works. Salvation requires nothing but faith in Jesus Christ.

I want to set that stage before we go any further. But also if you read the book of James James says it's not that simple.

Does that make sense? James says it's easy to say I'm trusting Jesus. James says if you truly have trusted Christ your life is going to show it.

[15 : 51] So salvation is by grace through faith no works. But the flip side of that same coin is if you say you got it but your life doesn't show it pardon the vernacular you probably ain't got it.

That's why James is so so very focused on helping us to understand that salvation is not easy. Following Christ is not easy. it takes our entire being it's not just a decision in our head it's a decision in our heart as well and coming to grips and wrestling with the fact that we are sinners wrestling with the fact that we are destined to hell apart from Christ and knowing that following Christ involves more than a prayer.

Following Christ involves our entire life and that is what Jesus is telling these people that he is speaking to. So here they've taken the easy road just like we could liken to like today someone who's wanting to lose weight but they don't want to change their lifestyle.

It's like praying a prayer and saying you know what I'm going to lose weight I'm a thin person but then never changing their lifestyle or those that want to take a pill and say I want to lose weight while I sleep just take this pill but I don't want to exercise I don't want to do anything out of my regular routine and think about that don't many people in today's culture view Christianity the same way?

[17 : 33] I want to pray a prayer and I want to be right with God but I don't want it to change my life. I don't intend on making Jesus my Lord I don't intend on obeying Him I don't ever intend on really changing all that much maybe going to church and being a good person but that's about all and so we have to be careful that we don't delude ourselves into thinking that we're right with God.

So let's take a look at what Jesus is actually saying He says enter by the narrow gate narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life.

What's very interesting is Jesus uses two different words that is often translated as narrow. English same word narrow narrow Jesus used two different words when He spoke this and in the original language of the New Testament the first time you see that word narrow in the New Testament in verse 13 it literally means to groan as if you are under pressure as if you are being pressed in on all sides.

So He says the way to salvation He says it's like being pressed in like being pressured on all sides. That is not a picture of easy of an easy life.

That is not the picture of a comfortable Christian life. So He says narrow narrow is the way or narrow is the gate difficult is the way.

[19 : 09] The first time He says it's being pressured on all sides narrow gate. The second time He uses it narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life. The word He uses here is a verb of the noun form that's used throughout the New Testament to talk about tribulation to talk about persecution.

So I think what Jesus is saying about the narrow gate is He's saying this. The way of Christ is hard to follow.

The way of Christ is hard to follow. Remember what did Jesus say? The popular way the easy way is the way most of the crowd wants to go.

An easy religion. You check off your steps one, two, three, four and you're fine and you're good. We tend to gravitate toward that which is easy and popular but the way of Christ is difficult.

Jesus said it. It's reiterated all throughout the New Testament. See Jesus already set the stage for that in His message His sermon on the mount.

[20 : 21] He said that trusting Him would bring persecution. He said that following Him people would persecute you. This completely goes against that which is expected.

Have you ever heard someone say I trust that Christ is my Savior and it seems like things have gotten worse or it seems like things have gotten more difficult for me. The reality is you're right. Now the Holy Spirit is trying to clean up. He's trying to clean house and you're realizing that you weren't able to go the easy path as you did before now it involves obeying Jesus.

Now it involves maybe someone not wanting to be your friend anymore because you don't want to do what you used to do. Now all you want to do is talk about Jesus and talk about your Christian life and maybe people begin to persecute you and so the way begins to get a little more difficult along the way.

That's what Jesus promised. He says if you follow me you will be persecuted. It goes against what we expect. So the way of following him is difficult and the way of Christ is also hated by many.

[21 : 34] The way of Christ is hated by many. Look at Matthew 10. Matthew 10 verse 17 he says but be aware of men for what will they do?

He says they'll deliver you up to the councils they'll scourge you in their synagogues. Why?

Because they hate Jesus. And Jesus says because they hate because people hate men hate me those who don't know me hate me and in turn if you want to follow me people will hate you so the way of Christ is not only hard to follow but the way of Christ is hated by many.

So that's why it's easy for some people to delude themselves into thinking if I go this easy way if I attend church then I'll be okay with God or if I pray this prayer then I will be okay with God never intending to go anything beyond that prayer just wanted it's just wanting to join the club it's just wanting fire insurance for some people but never intending to change their life go down to verse 21 now brother will deliver up brother to death that doesn't sound very encouraging does it and a father his child and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death and you will be what's the word there he says you will be hated by all for my name's sake that does not sound like modern Christianity because I think we don't fully understand what it means to follow

Christ and I think often often what we do is we take what's easy and popular rather than being fully totally surrendered and following him to the point of death just like his apostles did now I'm not saying we've got to go just because you're not persecuted means you're not a good Christian I'm not saying that but there will be times when you might find yourself persecuted because of your faith in Christ he says but he who endures to the end will be saved look at verse 37 of Matthew 10 he who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me so how is that for hard to follow Jesus if you love your mother and father more than Jesus if you love your children more than you love Jesus he says you're not worthy of me that's hard for us to hear that's difficult now some of you may be thinking that a little extreme what were you talking about

Jesus I mean wow I thought we're supposed to love our families I thought we're supposed to love our children what is he saying don't put anything or anyone before me whether it be your parents or your children they do not go before me Jesus wants to be number one so he's trying to get across I believe the point of spiritual the dangers of spiritual deception it's that we tend to gravitate our first point we tend to gravitate toward that which is easy that which is popular and that which is comfortable so we have to be careful that we haven't diluted the gospel of Jesus into something that's convenient that we haven't diluted the truth of the message of Christ into something that it's just a one two three step formula and if we follow that formula then we're okay it's way way way more than that salvation is simple it's faith in Christ you can't you can't make it you can't make it anything else now when it comes out to what it really means to trust in him and what if we really understand what it means to trust in him that's where

[25 : 47] Jesus talks about following me involves understanding that you may have to die for me because of your faith because following Jesus it might be simple but it's not easy that's the first point secondly I think what we see Jesus saying in Matthew chapter 7 in what he was saying to these religious people is we can profess publicly we can tell people we're right with God but yet not possess it personally you see there are many who profess Christ there are many who say I am a good person I know Jesus but yet they are not a part of the family of God and Jesus is telling that to these people this is verses 15 through verse 23 back in Matthew chapter 7 this is what Jesus is saying where Jesus addresses the false professors the false prophets he says watch out for these false prophets he says they come to you in sheep's clothing that is they look like they know

Christ they sound like they know me they even say they speak to me as if they know me see that's the picture in verses 21 to 23 look at verse 21 back in Matthew 7 going back to Jesus words he says not everyone who says to me Lord Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my father in heaven they're crying out to Jesus Lord Lord this is not just fervor but it's orthodoxy they were doing what they were commanded to do in the Old Testament but remember what is it that provided salvation for Abraham was it the sacrifices no it was his faith his faith is that which was counted toward him for righteousness not going through the rituals same thing here in the New

Testament these people were even driving out demons these people were performing miracles and Jesus says they're calling me Lord they're performing miracles they're driving out demons in my

name now how's that for being misled now think about this all throughout scripture God uses people God has used people who don't know him for his purposes think about Satan God's allowing Satan today to have a free reign for a period of time do you realize that God even uses Satan to accomplish his will and his plan think about Old Testament think about Balaam think about Balaam's donkey have you ever known of a saved donkey no but God used a donkey what about Caiaphas who prophesied what about the sons of Ziva who prophesied and cast out demons Jesus said they're not mine they don't believe in me they say they do and they're even performing miracles and casting out demons and then Jesus quotes Psalm 6 and he says to them depart from me you workers of iniquity I never knew you so how do we know that if we profess publicly even here what we're singing and we say I'm a member of Faith Bible Church and I love Jesus and I sing the songs and I pray to prayer there is a possibility that we have confused religion with a relationship with Jesus Christ so I want us over the period of the next few weeks for us all to be sure that we understand what salvation really means there have been often during our 30 years in ministry that we've had individuals who maybe walked an aisle and prayed a prayer when they were a teenager or maybe when they were a young adult and realize at one point in their time sometimes after 20, 30, 40 years that they got religion confused with relationship and they thought because they were a good church member that they were right with

Christ and they never really fully trusted Jesus alone devoid of any of their works and were trusting him completely and in tears and in total brokenness would come and say I don't think I'm right with Jesus because I think I've been relying on my goodness or relying on my church membership so I you know what they said you know what held them from having that dealt with they said an issue of pride what will people think you know I've even heard of elders and deacons I've even heard of pastors coming to know Christ as their savior years after they began their ministry because just like these people Jesus was talking to they deluded themselves remember the movie what was the latest movie about the rapture the book series yeah left behind and one of the characters in the movie was a pastor and he was left behind because for him it was religion that's altogether possible and when they finally broke down to the point where they say

[31 : 38] I want to make sure and I won't be ashamed of Jesus you know what nobody judged them because there was joy we're so glad that you finally know for sure that you're right with Jesus and I just want us all to make sure we're right with him now here it is Jesus says two things about professing publicly and not possessing personally here's here's what we see number one let's look at verse before we get to that verse 22 and 23 many will say to me in that day Lord Lord have we not prophesied in your name cast out demons in your name have done many wonders in your name and then I will declare to them I never knew you depart from me you who practice lawlessness and I think what we see is the way of Christ is always fruitful if we truly are in the family of

God if we are in the body of Christ just like James says over in the book of James he says if you really are in the family of God your life will show it look at Matthew 7 16 and 18 because this is what Jesus brings out in this same discourse he is saying don't delude yourselves make sure don't just go the easy path of a religion that allows you to fill in the blank and check off the boxes and think you're right with me because he says in verse 16 to those remember those who were false professors that professed publicly but didn't possess personally a relationship with Jesus Christ he says you will know them by now he's talking about the bushes do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles even so every good tree bears good fruit but a bad tree bears bad fruit a good tree cannot bear bad fruit nor a bad tree bear good fruit it's not about the extravagant things they did it was not about the miracles they performed it was not about the demons they drove out but he says they will bear the righteousness of

Christ if they truly are in the body of Christ their life will show it they will show the love of Christ their lives will display the righteousness of Christ now what this means is if you don't see the righteousness of Christ then Christ is probably not there because the way of Christ is always fruitful because what does the Bible say about when Jesus Christ comes into our life he will do the cleanup the Holy Spirit will change us because if the power of the Holy Spirit is within us as believers and the Bible tells us that the moment we trust Christ as our Savior we are baptized into his family into the body of Christ the Holy Spirit comes to reside within us and at work in our life and it will be making a difference it will cause us to sense the guilt of our sin it will cause us to sense when we have disobeyed him when we disobey him it's it's like it's like a little one who knows what they did was wrong we had one of the little ones this morning who got into a drawer and got into something

and when

I came out of the bedroom he was like standing there knowing he did something wrong and we are like that when we sin against God it's like God oh I know I sinned we're not our conscience is not seared because the Holy Spirit has lets us know that we've sinned against him look at James 2 I mentioned James this morning James chapter 2 verses 14 through 18 and if someone says he has faith can faith save him if a brother or sister is naked or destitute of daily food and one of you says to them depart in peace be warmed and filled but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body what does it profit this also or thus also faith by itself if it does not have works is what's the word dead but someone will say you have faith and

I have works show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works so James is saying if you have Christ in your life your life will show it if your life doesn't show the fruit of being in the body of Christ James says your faith is devoid and you don't have Christ in your life Christ in your life life will show it life doesn't show it no Christ in your life I think James is very plain about that here's the next thing not only is the way of Christ fruitful but the way of Christ is faithful the way of Christ is always faithful listen to what Jesus says Matthew 7 21 not everyone who says to me Lord Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my father in heaven do you hear that the one who enters the kingdom of heaven is the one who does the will of the father now let's be careful let's not twist salvation to being something it's not salvation is not of works salvation is not something that you know we show it's like a grace period where

[37 : 51] Jesus waits to know if we mean it and then he gives it to us for real without being able to take it away that's not salvation salvation is by grace through faith alone but Jesus says if those who truly trust me will be obedient to me so but hold on to this phrase not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven so he says my ways are always fruitful and my way is always faithful we will be faithful to him if we belong to him and really this haunts me as a pastor is having you having anyone who's under the sound of my preaching and maybe just doesn't get it so I want to make sure that we all know what it means to know Jesus as our Savior and to know that it's not a religion to know that it's just not a rite of passage it's not something that we check off or a prayer that we pray it's something that we truly mean in our heart and understand that we've wrestled with our sinfulness we've wrestled with who

Jesus Christ is and we're ready to surrender and trust him alone for our salvation so we gravitate toward that which is easy and popular we it's possible that we can profess publicly what we do not possess personally and then thirdly I think what we see Jesus saying is often as salvation without biblical foundation we assume salvation without biblical foundation now here we come into the last two of the illustrations it's a picture of the builders those who build a house and they have a couple of things in common both builders have heard the word of Christ both of the builders construct homes that I believe is implied here from the outside or virtually the same you know often I think what we have tended to do when we take this picture of what Jesus is giving us the house built on the rock the house built on the sand I think some of us tend to introduce a fable I think what we tend to do is we tend to think of the three little pigs now think about that house built on the rock house built on the sand house built on the rock was made of bricks the house built on sand was made of straw now I think what Jesus is implying here both houses are pretty much the same probably if you look at them exteriorly pretty much the same because think about it who in their right mind would construct a house that they knew would fall so I think Jesus is saying is they both have a foundation they just don't have the same foundation and one was built on the bedrock of rock and the other was built on sand they both had good intentions they both thought they were building something on a foundation that would last so

Jesus says how do you know that when your life your house is built on a or how do you know when your house is built on sand and I think two things are summed up in verse 24 and they're repeated also in verse 26 here's what Jesus says verse 24 therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine remember both builders heard the word of Christ and does them I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock so here's what Jesus is saying he says those who hear my words and do them that's the one I likened to the house being built on the firm foundation so the way of Christ if we want to know that we are truly right with him we can't trust tradition we cannot trust religion we can't trust what a person says we have to trust what

God's word says don't miss this Jesus is not saying to the people who built their houses on the sand that they didn't have a foundation they had a foundation it just wasn't a good one it wasn't the proper one it was a bad foundation instead of being built on the words of Christ they're being built on external circumstances they're being built on external traditions being built on opinions rules and regulations that they have constructed and they have packaged together to say if you do these things then you'll be valued by God and then you will be right with God if you do these things you'll be okay with God and that's the picture of the culture Jesus came into the Jewish culture if you do these sacrifices you have these feast days and you stay away from pork you're going to be right with God and remember

[43 : 18] Jesus said it's not the outward trappings that make you right with me it's faith and understanding what these things mean so biblical evangelism I believe involves wrestling with the depth of the sinfulness in our soul biblical evangelism involves crying out to God realizing we have absolutely nowhere else to turn realizing that we're utterly undone without him and that Jesus is infinitely worthy of all the glory he's infinitely worthy of our obedience he's infinitely worthy of everything immediate and total surrender I think that's what biblical evangelism shows us is in order to be right with God we have to understand that we're not right with God and we have to understand who he is remember it says and believe that he is the son of God and believe that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him biblical evangelism knows nothing of saying a prayer biblical evangelism

I think demands radical obedience to Christ because think about it if you look in the Bible there's nothing in the Bible that talks about walking down an aisle to receive Christ there's nothing in the word of God that talks about signing a card or joining a church to be right with Christ as a matter of fact there's really nothing aside from one scripture and I think if we look in the total context that's not quite what's meant but that there is nothing in biblical evangelism that even talks of praying a prayer when the Bible talks about the gospel it means coming to him in total and complete surrender acknowledging our sinfulness acknowledging that we acknowledging that in and of ourselves we cannot be right with God and like Isaiah when he came to the when he was in the presence of God it made him completely and utterly ashamed of his sinfulness when he realized the holiness of God and when he realized that he was not worthy and it's only in our total and absolute surrender to him that we can add nothing to salvation or that we can add nothing to our righteousness and when we wrestle with that and realize that and we say

Jesus I can't I need you and I believe that's what biblical salvation is understanding that Jesus is the answer he is the one he is God he is our salvation he is our hope and coming to him and realizing that and as Jesus says you hear my words and you obey them just like James says we know that we're saved when our life shows it when we have works that prove that we have come and we know him as our savior so the way of Christ is dependent upon his word don't trust what somebody says somebody comes along and says you know what this is what the bible means it's like the book of Galatians that we're studying on Sunday evenings people came into the church and said no you got to do this and they threw them all in a tizzy and said well wait a minute I thought salvation was just Jesus and now they're saying no you've got to do these things and they began trusting in what people said rather than looking at the firm foundation of being dependent upon the word of God that they had been taught by the apostle

Paul and then secondly the way of Christ is obedient to his word we've already talked about that in verse 21 everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is the one who is likened to the one who builds his house on the rock and so this is what differentiates the guy with the rock house and the guy with the sand house it's obedience to his words so if I could sum it up I believe Jesus is saying you live your life you build your house on the righteousness of Christ and the word of Christ and obedience to the word of Christ and then when the storms of life come and when judgment comes you will be standing on the power of Christ on the rock the power of his words and the foundation his righteousness in your life not your own righteousness if you build your house on the words of man even the words of the Christian culture that you're in your house built on these things will not stand and because you hear my words but do not do them then you built your house on the sand on the sand and when the storms of life come your house will fall and great will be the fall of it or your life will fall and great will be the fall so as I close the path to spiritual authenticity remember there's a danger of spiritual deception thinking we're right with him because we come to church thinking we're right with him because we turned over a new leaf thinking we're

right with him because we're trying to live a good life there are many who will say to you when you ask them do you know Jesus and they'll say well I try to live by the ten commandments what are they doing they've deceived themselves into thinking that it's something they can do so in closing I think first of all listen to our savior listen to the words of Christ listen to what he says now here's what I want to challenge you to do in the days and the weeks to come I want you to take God's word the book of Romans is a great place to really understand the gospel the gospel of John is a great place to really grasp and wrestle with what it means what the gospel really entails read again Jesus's words from Matthew chapter 5 through Matthew chapter 7 and kind of put everything else out of your mind kind of put everything else put everything you've been taught out of your mind I'm not saying that we've taught you anything wrong I'm just saying I want us to make sure that we're listening to Jesus and listen to what he says salvation involves listen to our savior listen to his words because there is a danger of spiritual deception we can heap on traditions and sometimes even our wording can sometimes cloud the issue sometimes we say well ask Jesus into your heart that can be very misleading especially to a child it can be misleading to adults what does it mean to ask

[50 : 38] Jesus in my heart the Bible never says that we use sayings in our particular Christian culture that are not biblical so we have to be careful that we use biblical terminology we have to be careful to use what the Bible says it's faith it's trust in Christ it is surrendering to him it is realizing our sinfulness these are elements of true saving faith you know not just saying Jesus come into my heart Jesus come into my life those are things that are involved and I think they're not wrong sayings it's just sometimes I think that can cloud the issue and be it can make it difficult for people to understand so listen to the Savior and let's let Christ by his spirit open our eyes over the next few weeks to know God I know that like the song says

I know that I know that I know so if someone asks you are you going to heaven you can say yes a resounding yes because I know why I'm going to heaven it's because I'm a sinner Jesus died in my place I am totally utterly incapable of doing anything worthy of God smiling down on me I know he loves me but it's only because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross of Calvary and it's his righteousness that's applied to my account when I put the full weight of my faith and trust upon him and trust in that for my salvation these are this is biblical terminology and I want us to understand fully completely if we know that we're right with him that we aren't deceiving and deluding ourselves and then lastly I think the path to spiritual authenticity is to examine ourselves I know so what do you mean by that well I think we need to be asking ourselves the question

I know I was told when I was seven I know that I was told that when I was twelve I trusted Christ as my savior but I want you to know for yourself don't go on what your parents told you I know that sounds dangerous but I want you to make sure you may have prayed that prayer when you were seven or when you were eleven but I want you to understand what that means understand completely what it means to know Jesus as your savior so examine yourself let's look at 2nd Corinthians 13 5 2nd Corinthians 13 5 now Paul was speaking to Corinthians here remember he was speaking to a church that had a lot of issues he was speaking to them as brothers and sisters in Christ and I think primarily he was talking to them about examine your behavior make sure that your behavior is worthy of Christ but I believe as we see in the end of this verse that I think we can expand it a little bit he says examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith test yourselves do you not know yourselves that

Jesus Christ is in you so what he's saying is don't you know that if Christ is in you your life needs to show it he says you guys wouldn't be doing all these things if Christ was in your life so let's examine yourselves make sure that your behavior is worthy so so don't know so Christ is so so know that Christ is in you because if he's not then you're what you're disqualified that means you're not in the family of God and you're not going to spend eternity with him he says don't you know that if you're in Christ your life will show it but if Christ is not in your life then you are not right with him so we need to examine ourselves and realize God am I right with you do

I really understand what salvation is can we truly be saved when we pray as we have termed the sinner's prayer yes of course if we have truly wrestled with our sinfulness who Jesus is what he did on the cross of Calvary and if we realize that as Jesus said when you follow me it means dying to yourself surrendering to me and understanding that you are not resting on yourself but you are resting on me that salvation so let's let these next few days and weeks be a period of soul searching understanding for sure because I don't ever want anyone here myself included to stand

one day before God and he says get out of here because I don't know you just as
[56 : 03] God is a jealous God that's what the Bible says he doesn't want us to be worshiping
anything or anyone else I want to make sure that we all know Jesus as our Savior because it means
your eternity and because I love each and every one of you I want to make sure that we're all sure I
don't want us to be one of these local churches that just goes with the flow and never really wrestles
with the gospel and to say well I've been there for 10 years but I don't really know how to be saved I
don't want that to be faith I want us to all know that this afternoon given what you've heard today
you could go out and lead another person to Jesus do you realize that because you know it Jesus
says if you know it your life needs to show it

I know he didn't rhyme like that don't deceive yourselves and ever and ever and ever it beats the
alternative let's pray Lord God thank you thank you so much for making your gospel clear and I
thank you Lord that it's not having to do anything it's not having to work it's not having to change my
life but it's allowing you to change my life by your Holy Spirit being placed in our lives and Father I
thank you that you have made very very clear what it means to be placed into your family Lord help
us to not only understand ourselves examine ourselves and to know for sure why we believe what
we believe and why we know that we're right with you it's because we have trusted
Christ as our Savior Father may we surrender to you to our Lord Jesus Christ completely as Lord
and obey him each and every day Father we pray this in Jesus name Amen