

Matthew 7:21-27

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[0:00] Appreciate it. All right. Am I all the way turned up?

Y'all caught that, huh? As Matt said, we are going to be preaching from the Bible tonight. You know, at least tonight, we're going to go with the Word tonight.

We're going to be in Matthew chapter 7. I hope you have your Bibles. Matthew chapter 7.

And we're going to begin in the 21st verse of Matthew 7. Now, while you're turning there, for those of you who may be visiting, it's your first time.

We've been going through the Sermon on the Mount this summer, walking through it slowly, seeing what we can glean from Jesus' words here in what is the lengthiest discourse sermon that we have recorded of him in the Gospels.

[1:05] And so, we're almost to the end of that. And my task tonight is to share with us from the 21st through the 27th verse. And I want to read that for our hearing. And I'll be reading from the English Standard Version.

Matthew chapter 7, verse 21, when you have it, say, Amen. Need a minute? Say, Wait a minute. Nobody ever says, Wait a minute. You just hear the pages turn, and then you look at them like you should have said, Wait a minute.

Matthew chapter 7, verse 21, and it reads thusly. 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, 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. Depart from me, you're not prophesied in your name, but the one who does the will of mine.

[2:28] And great was the fall of it. For the time we have to share, I want to preach from this text, this thought, self-deception and salvation.

Self-deception and salvation. Let's go before the Lord in prayer. Father, yeah, God, this is a warning passage.

And it is one of the most sobering warning passages for me, just to hear Jesus' words, unmistakable. They're clear.

And Father, so our prayer tonight is that by your grace and the power of your spirit, through this word, through Jesus' words, you would do with this warning passage something good and gracious toward us.

That through this warning passage, you might graciously keep your people, those of us who are believers. And through this warning passage, you might graciously call your people, those who are not yet believers.

[3:36] We pray that you would do both through this passage tonight. We pray that you would illuminate it by the power of your spirit, apply it to our hearts for your glory and for our good. In Christ's name, amen.

Amen. So it was about, yeah, about two or three Christmases ago. My bride and I were blessed by her parents, my mother and father-in-law.

We came kind of late into this game, but they bought us a HDTV. And I was excited. You know, like I said, I mean, we came kind of late into the HDTV game.

You know, I didn't know what the big fuss was about. A TV is a TV. You know, it's the same show, it's the same show. You know, what's the point? You know, you either pay \$800 for a TV or \$150.

I'll go with the \$150. Thanks, Alex. But we got the HDTV, and the guy came and set it up and did the HD converter or whatever. And I was like, oh, you can see their nose hairs with the HDTV.

[4 : 43] It was like so crisp and clear, and the picture was just beautiful. But there was something wrong, though. And I don't know if this has ever happened to you, you TV watchers out there, you three of you.

I don't know if this ever happened to you, but there was something wrong. Wow, the picture was beautiful. It was crisp. It was clear. But the video didn't match the audio.

And I hate that. I cannot stand that. The video, the picture was clear. It was perfect. It was crisp. But what they were doing on the screen did not match what I was hearing.

And, you know, like at that point, you kind of have a, you preach a sermon to yourself. Okay, Stephen, it's cool. You can match it up. You know, you kind of get what's going on. But it was frustrating.

It was exceedingly frustrating. I didn't want to watch it anymore because, I mean, audio and video all match, right? What you see all match with what you hear. And if that's not the case, that needs to be fixed.

[5 : 49] That's not a permanent situation, right? When I called, I said, you know, you don't have to fix it today, but you do have to fix this. You know, they're like, yes, sir, Mr. Harris. But, yeah, that situation where what you see does not match up with what you hear, that eventually needs to be fixed.

And in our particular passage tonight, Jesus addresses that kind of mismatch where the video of a professed believer's behaviors, perhaps, does not line up with the audio.

What that believer says, the profession that they make, who they say that they are. There is a mismatch between walk and talk. And Jesus gives us a poignant warning for what would come of someone who has that kind of lifestyle, has that kind of disposition.

In this passage tonight, we see two sets of contrasts. The second is connected to the first. Even as I read it, you probably discerned that. Both distinguishes those who would be citizens of the kingdom of heaven from those who would not be citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

First, Jesus contrasts saying with doing. And then in the second section, he contrasts hearing with doing. Each time, of course, he puts a premium, a salvific premium, if you will, on doing.

[7 : 16] In other words, saying and hearing only leads to self-deception only, not salvation. Let's pick it up in verse 21 through 23.

Look at what it says again back at the text. Now, everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. The one who does the will of my father who is in heaven.

This is the one who will enter the kingdom of heaven. So right off the bat, you see in this particular passage, and I want to walk through it slowly because I tend to, at least my heart, I like to rush by warnings.

I like to think in my mind who they apply to, not me, probably my older brother or my cousin. And I like to rush by them. So I want to walk through this slowly because Jesus is saying some hard stuff here, but it's important if we receive it by grace.

Like I said in my prayer, it will keep those whom he has called both believers and non-believers. Look at the first thing you can observe. You can't assume, and this is a quote from Pastor Greg from last week, you can't assume that just because someone says, I'm a Christian and I love Jesus, that that means that they are actually a follower of Christ.

[8:39] Greg said that last week. That wasn't me. That was Greg. Pastor Greg. You can't assume that just because someone says, I love Jesus, I'm a follower of Jesus, that they are actually a Christian. In our current cultural context, many of you have become painfully aware of this, perhaps awkwardly aware of this.

Anything that is professed to be Christian is readily received as Christian. Is it not? And if anything that is professed to be Christian is not readily received as Christian, then that is itself not Christian.

Isn't that something? To put it another way, the only thing that is not affirmed, it seems, is the refusal to affirm. You have this cultural context that we're living in where there are so many forms of Christianity, right?

There's so many different professions of what it means, what it looks like to follow Jesus. And the only thing that is rejected is those who would seek to reject a particular form that's out there of following Jesus.

This warning passage, again, is one of the most sobering for me in the entire Bible. And here's why. I, and perhaps many of you, have in common, much in common, with the people in the passage.

[9:58] Look back at the text. They have a sincere profession, do they not? Look at verse 21. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord.

The repetition there of kurios, it's a, it's, it denotes a sincerity, a passion. It's an emphatic, if you will. They, they are, they are sincere in their profession.

They, they, they believe that Jesus is their Lord. Those of us who are professed believers in here tonight, do we not? Would that not be our same sincere profession?

But not only do they have a sincere profession, they evidence a tireless devotion. Look at verse 22. On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?

Cast out demons in your name. Do many mighty works in your name. That repetition is, is, is indicative of the fact that they are, uh, at least according to themselves, devoted to Christ.

[10:57] The works that they believe that they have evidence are in his name. Thrice in his name. They have a sincere profession.

They have a tireless devotion. And it is very easy, friends, to write this warning off and not heed this warning by doing this.

By corrupting their profession and their devotion in a way that the text doesn't do. In other words, you can say, well, the difference between them and me is they didn't mean it, but I really mean it.

Well, the difference between them and me is, you know, there's something going on. They didn't say the right words. Or, you know, they said Lord twice and you don't see that in the Bible. Anything that you can point to to try to distinguish them from you, that's a way that your heart can kind of shun this warning and say, yeah, the people in the text, that's a shame.

That's sad. That's just not me. So I hear you, Jesus. Thank you for the warning. But I think I'm good. I tend to want to do that with warning passages.

[12:03] But no, these people, and this is what's incredible. They actually thought that they were his. I don't think the text is trying to suggest that they're in front of Jesus on that day trying to get over on him.

Like, I know I'm not yours, Jesus, and I'm hoping that you, I can kind of fake you out in this moment. No. They actually believe that they are his. They actually believe that they belong to him.

They actually believe that they know him and that he knows them. Think about that. I mean, this is far worse. And I'm thinking back to my college days.

This is far worse than showing up to an invitation-only event and thinking that your name is on the list. I had dressed up and everything. One of my friends told me that they had put my name on the list.

This is far worse than that, right? This is showing up before Jesus, who is no longer the suffering servant, but now he's the righteous judge. And they're claiming that they've done all of these things in his name.

[13:12] They're claiming that he is their Lord and they are dead wrong. How does that happen? I think that's the question that the text is pointing us to.

How does that happen, Jesus? And Jesus, please don't let that happen to me. Verse 23.

Look at the text. And then I will declare to them. And isn't that interesting? They come before Jesus making a declaration, making a profession. And Jesus says, I got a declaration of my own.

It's a good one. Then I will declare to them. They came making a declaration. Jesus declares back to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. That literally can be translated, never at any time did I know you.

[14:11] Think about that. Never at any time did I know you. So, even when they were involved in these works that they were doing in his name, in his name, in his name, it was thrice.

Remember those works? Even as they were doing those works, Jesus says, I didn't know you at that moment. How does that happen? And again, why this hits my heart?

Because what? We as Christians, as believers, those of us who are believers in Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit dwelling on the inside of us, we want to do good works, do we not? We believe that we're engaged in the good work right now.

Lord, I came to church at 630 and it's no AC in here. I'm not the only one who's feeling that tonight, right? But yet, you do those kind of things and you hope that Jesus is looking on and that he's pleased.

But for these individuals who were involved in these remarkable works, according to them, Jesus says, I didn't know you at any time. Never did I know you at any time.

[15:19] Depart from me. Let's complicate this. Because I think that if you've been with us throughout this sermon, you've caught a theme in Jesus' words, a particular focus of his teaching.

And I think that if you take this particular section isolated, I think you can interpret it in a way that I think is decent and I think is good. But I don't know if that's exactly or precisely what Jesus is getting at.

Here's the problem I see. Typically, the common way to read and interpret this passage, these few verses that we just looked at, which is pretty plain and straightforward, is to conclude that these individuals, though claiming some remarkable works, they did, did they not?

These individuals were really just living outward, flagrant, sinful lives. In other words, the conclusion that you can easily draw, and I think it's a good one to have that check is, okay, what was going on here is you have some professed believers who had done, professed to do some good works, but then Jesus exposes the fact that they were just living, you know, they were just living wildly.

Jesus exposes the fact that their lives were just marked by a lascivious, outward, flagrant, I'm just sinning and I love it kind of lifestyle. And what you can do again is say, okay, see, that was their problem.

[16:45] I don't do that. So I'm still good. But who is Jesus talking to? Remember, in the beginning of this sermon, it says that Jesus goes up on this mountainous area and his disciples come to him.

It's interesting, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is really talking to his disciples about what people who are citizens of the kingdom look and live like. Now, there's crowds around, but he's talking to his disciples.

And who throughout this sermon is Jesus consistently indicting? Talking to his disciples, indicting someone else. That's that, right?

That's a textbook move. I'm talking to you, but I'm talking about them. Who's he indicting? The Pharisees. The scribes. And when you think about the indictments that he's brought on these Pharisees and scribes and religious leaders up to this point, you have to remember that the Pharisees did not live outwardly flagrant, sinful lives.

Think about that. So, if Jesus is up to the same thing that he's been doing in this warning, indicting those who are not citizens of the kingdom, it's not a—I don't think it's an appropriate conclusion to say, oh, the problem with these people is that they were living flagrant, sinful lives.

[18:07] Because if Jesus is out to indict the Pharisees and those who are like them, he's got to come with another punchline, doesn't he? Remember in Matthew 5.20, he said this statement, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

This is not what Jesus meant by that. Unlike the Pharisees who are given over to adultery and go to Jerusalem clubs on the weekend, you should stay home on Saturday night.

That's not what he's saying. In other words, when Jesus says, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, he's not saying, everybody knows they're just such flagrant sinners, so you don't be like that.

They're not flagrant in their sins. They're not lascivious in their sins. As a matter of fact, they have an outward righteousness, right, that looks clean and perfect.

They wear phylacteries, which are little leather boxes with Hebrew commands on it so that they would remember to keep the law. So what is Jesus saying?

[19:18] Instead, what I think Matthew 5.20 and this text is getting at is this. Do not fall into the category of what Isaiah 29 says.

They come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. I think that's what he's getting at because Jesus is going to repeat this same prophetic word in Matthew 15, a few chapters later, to the scribes and Pharisees.

I don't think the sin, as it were, the lawlessness of this particular passage is don't interpret lawlessness as merely outward flagrant sin.

Don't interpret lawlessness in this passage to merely mean that. I think that's a good check. We need to have that check. That's a Romans 6 check, right? When you receive the grace of God, that grace is not only a saving grace, it's a sanctifying grace, right?

So Paul closes that back door really quick. If you're saved, you don't keep sinning. We need that check. But don't interpret this lawlessness in this text as merely that. I think Mike preached on this back in June when he was preaching in Matthew 5, verse 20.

[20:33] Lawlessness could also be a mere external righteousness filled with all the good works that you could ever imagine. Church attendance, one-on-one discipling relationships, offerings, mission trips, three weeks or three months.

Do not think that lawlessness is just this flagrant outward sin, but it could be a mere external righteousness with a wicked heart that is far from God.

So when you take that mindset and look at this particular passage, perhaps it's not perhaps just that these individuals were saying, Lord, Lord, they were doing these remarkable works, but they were just living wild.

It could be that as they were saying, Lord, Lord, as they were, quote-unquote, doing these works in his names, their hearts were still far from him. Perhaps they had a righteousness like that of the Pharisees.

And I think that brings this warning a little bit closer to home, doesn't it? Because now you're like, oh, man, okay, that still could be me. These kind of warning passages come so close to not people out there, but people like us.

[21:46] So when Pastor Greg was preaching on the wide and the narrow way, the same kind of concept. Don't think that the narrow way, or the wide way rather, merely means flagrant sinning.

The wide way can also be the way that assumes that an external righteousness is good enough. In other words, the wide way that is easy and leads to destruction is the way of the Pharisees.

And we don't often think that that's easy, but that is very easy. It's easy to put on outwardly. It's easy to have your list with the things that you do and some of the things that you don't do, and to count them up and to be proud about them, right?

Remember the Luke 18 story, I fast, I tithe, and he does not leave justified. Remember that? It's easy to have your list. The narrow way is to evidence what Jesus began in this Sermon on the Mount, these beatitudes, this broken spirit.

That's the hard way. We don't often think about these kind of passages in that regard. Let me illustrate it with this, if I've just been totally not making any sense.

[23:04] And you can tell me that later. I'm cool. Yeah, so I clap a lot. I'm sorry. Yeah, so when I used to be in pastoral ministry in Kentucky, I used to teach a lot of Wednesday night Bible studies.

And our Wednesday night Bible studies would go from like 7 to like 8.30. We'd just be in it hour and a half. Bam, bam, bam, right? We'd just be hour and a half. And there was this brother.

He used to sit way in the back, last row, every Wednesday night. We called him Buzzer Beater Phillip. Because Phillip, as I'm teaching this out, when I'm teaching, I like to interact, and you can raise your hands and ask questions as I'm teaching.

Phillip wouldn't take that route. I teach from 7 to 8.30. Phillip would wait to 8.29 and raise his hand. And I remember the first time I taught and Phillip was sitting in the back, and he did his Buzzer Beater.

It was 8.29. Boom. Got a question. I was like, oh, man. Yes, Phillip? He said, and he literally said this. My bride can attest to this. Yeah, nothing you've said for the past hour and a half makes any sense at all to me.

[24:20] This is what I'm doing internally, right? He literally says, nothing that you've said for the past hour and a half makes any sense at all to me. And he says this at 8.29.

So imagine, like you all sitting there, the whole congregation does this. They look back at Phillip, and then they look at me in unison. I am heated.

I'm heated, like steaming heated. Because he just undermined an hour and a half worth of teaching with one statement. He doesn't want a response. Because we're about to go in 30 seconds.

I'm steaming. But this is what I do. Because I'm in pastoral ministry. I'm a leader. He's a brother in Christ. I say, you know what, Phillip? That's a fair assessment, brother.

Let's talk one-on-one afterwards. If you want me to clarify some things right now, I'd be happy to do that, brother. You know, the scriptures are inerrant. They're accurate. And I may be errant in my interpretation, so let's search the scriptures together.

[25:21] I give the perfect Christian response. Bam! Got him! And I give the perfect, like, righteous, external Christian response. And you can see the faces of everybody in the room.

They're just like, oh, man, Stephen is just so godly. Because I would not have been able to do that. And so I'm happy, right? But internally, I'm still what?

Steaming. I'm still furious. And I didn't get checked on this until my gracious bride checked me. Because Sonny knows me. And she comes up to me later and she says, babe, that was good.

She said, but you got to watch that. And I'm like, watch what? I gave him the perfect Christian response. She says, I know. But I know that you're still steaming on the inside. And you got to watch putting on an external righteousness while your heart is still wicked.

Everybody in the room saw what? My external response. What did God see? He saw the internal response. And that can be an example of lawlessness.

[26:25] Lawlessness would not, if I went off on field, of course that's lawlessness. But lawlessness could also be an external righteousness, but with a heart that's still deceitfully far from God.

See that? Let's go to the next section. While we close it up. Everyone then who hears these words of mine. Look at that. Interesting. In the first section, Jesus says that these individuals do not do the will of my Father.

But as he begins this next section, he says, everyone who hears these words of mine. So you see, even Jesus is subtly equating, yeah, what I want you to do is what he wants you to do. Why? Because we're one. That's a subtle claim to deity.

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Rain fell, floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock.

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. Rain fell, floods came, the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

[27:34] Now, I think when Jesus says these words of mine, I don't think he's simply and merely referring to the section we just finished. I think it includes that, but I think Jesus is encapsulating all where he's been, right, from beginning of chapter 5.

So, I've done a lot of teaching, perhaps days of teaching, and now with these words that I've given you, I am the par excellent interpreter of the law, right?

Jesus is now interpreting the law, showing his relevance, showing his depth. He's the greater Moses, as it were, giving the law from a mountain. Now, Jesus says, all that I've done, all that I've said, now you have an option.

You have a choice to make. You're either going to build your life, your spiritual life, on me and my words, which is to build it on the rock.

And that's a simple illustrate. That's not. It's like, Jesus, I'll get you. There, you're the rock. Got it. Got it. Good. Right? Or, you're going to just hear my words, but not build your spiritual life on me and my words, and that's the equivalent of building your spiritual life, your house, on sand.

[28:41] No one intentionally builds a house on sand, do they? Not intentionally. When I used to do teach young adult ministry in my local church, I used to always tell them that my fear was that they had become professional sermon listeners.

A professional sermon listener is someone who likes to listen to sermons. They come to the sermon, and they sit, and they take their notes, and they got their notes, and taking notes is great. So, if you're taking notes, don't slam your Bible like, he don't want me to take notes.

Don't do that. But a professional sermon listener is one who listens, sits, and takes notes, and they're like, mm, good, mm, yes, good. Once the sermon is over, they're done with it.

Don't be a professional sermon listener. Jesus says, I've just done days of teaching. I've given you the depth of the law. What does it look like to be a kingdom citizen, a citizen of my kingdom?

Here's what my disciples live like. Build your life on this. Don't just listen and be impressed, but build your life on me and this word.

[29:41] And notice in the text, for all intents and purposes, the houses might look identically the same.

What's different is the foundation. And he says that if you build your house on me and my words, if you build your house on my words, when the rain comes, when the flood comes, when the wind comes, so you have this hitting from all sides, right?

Wind coming from side to side, rain coming from the top, flood coming from the bottom. The house is being attacked. And in an immediate sense, this could refer to the trials and tribulations of life.

But I think ultimately it refers to that judgment pronouncement on that day. And I think another thing that indicates that it refers to that future judgment is because he says a person who builds his life on these words will be like.

You see that? That's a future tense. Will be like. In other words, when that person comes before me, that person will be like on that day, someone who has built their house on the rock.

[30:50] But for all intents and purposes, they could look exactly the same. They could have the same works. They could both come to church at the same time. They could pray the same amount of time. They could give the same amount.

They can go on the same amount of mission trips, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. But that day will reveal the foundation that they've truly built on. And if it has not been built on Jesus and his words, and I think Jesus and his words there, I think we can extrapolate that out to Jesus meaning his salvific work, his person and work.

I think Jesus is projecting here almost anachronistically, right? I think Jesus knows obviously what's ahead of him. He knows what's in store. And so building on me and my words will mean something that not even his disciples realize at this moment.

But those who build their lives on him, his words, this gospel, they'll be like a house that built on the rock. This gospel, we've been calling this sermon on the mount.

We've been calling this kingdom that Jesus has invited these individuals to be a part of. It's one that you enter by grace, is it not? Because Jesus Christ is the only one who has truly and fully, perfectly fulfilled the law of God.

[32 : 07] He lives his perfect life. He dies this sacrificial substitutionary death for the sins of his people. I get in, you get in, anybody who will repent and turn from their sins and place their faith and trust in Christ, we get in by grace alone.

But here's the beauty about it. All of these kingdom principles that Jesus has laid out. Once you enter this kingdom by grace through faith, he gives you his spirit.

And now you are empowered to live towards these principles, are you not? So then why would you, why would you settle for an external righteousness?

When Jesus says, no, I want to give you my spirit so that you will not just be satisfied with an external righteousness, but you can have a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees and the scribes, because I will change you from the inside out.

But that's the narrow way, isn't it? The wide way is to, I'll just stick with the external. The wide way is to, I'll just say the right things.

[33 : 11] But no, this gospel has given us not only a salvation, but it has given us a sanctification. It will ultimately give us a glorification.

These are all benefits of this gospel of grace. Why wouldn't you afford yourself of these riches, to use Ephesians 1 language? I'll leave you with this.

Because we, when we lived in Kentucky, we used to drive a lot back and forth to Chicago. And this was before we had Easy Pass.

If you don't have Easy Pass, I don't know what you're doing with your life. You should get Easy Pass. But this was before we had Easy Pass. And so we would drive back and forth from Kentucky to Chicago, and there'd be all these tolls.

And me and my bride, we are, I guess they call us millennials or whatever. We, you know, we don't carry cash. We never have any change. We don't got no quarters. You know, people, it just amazes me.

[34 : 13] People, you ever walk around and ask somebody, do you got six quarters? They're like, oh yeah, I got six. Where do you get six quarters from? But we don't ever have any change. We don't ever have any money. And so every time we would go through a toll booth, they're like, this will be me.

I'll pull up. I'll look at the attendant. I'll look back down. I'll look at the attendant. I'll say, I don't got anything. And she would say, Billy, we got another one who claims he don't have anything, right?

What she could do is she could say, oh, that's okay. Don't worry about it. Just pass on through. She could do that. She didn't do that.

Pull up again. This happened several times. Pull up again. Look down. Look at her. Look down. Look at her. I ain't got nothing. Billy, we got another one. She does the same thing. It's a whole different thing if she says this.

That's okay. Because the person who came before you paid your toll. That's a whole different thing, isn't it? The gospel is not the first scenario where she just says, don't worry about it.

[35 : 25] Just keep on going. No, no, no. God upholds his standard. His standard is his standard. The gospel is not he lowers the bar so you can leap over it. No, no, no. The gospel is someone else leaps over that bar because you can't.

And so when I pass through the second time and she says, don't worry about it, it's not because she's lowering the standard, but it's because someone else paid my debt. This is what Jesus does for you and I. He fulfills the righteous requirements of the law for us.

And he dies in our stead as those who deserve death because we could not, did not fulfill those requirements. And God vindicates him.

He accepts that payment. Jesus is resurrected from the dead. He's seated at the right hand of the Father. This is a payment paid in full for all who would turn and place their faith in him. And all the riches of eternity are yours in that instant.

This could be you tonight if you are not a Christian. You don't have to hear, depart from me, I never knew you. And if you are a professed Christian and you're being challenged by this word to test yourself, to see whether you are in the faith, 2 Corinthians 13, 5, that doesn't have to be your lot.

[36:37] Depart from me, I never knew you. You can hear the other thing that we're all hoping to hear. Well done, my good and faithful servant. Let's pray. Father, we are so thankful for your word.

Lord, we're thankful for even the warning passages that, as for me, it kind of rocks us. It shakes us. It makes us look introspectively at our lives, not just at our talk, but at our walk.

And Lord, we're so thankful that you use these warning passages to graciously keep us. You keep us on the right path by giving us these warnings to make sure that we ourselves walk worthy of the calling wherewith we have been called.

These warning passages make us make our calling and election sure. And so, God, we're grateful for your word tonight. I pray that we would heed these words, that we would not just be false professors, self-deceived, that we would just not be hearers, but that we would be doers of all that Jesus has said and done.

Lord, we thank you for the gospel of grace that has saved us. We thank you for sending your son and the power of the spirit in our stead. You made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so then we can become the righteousness of God in him.

[38:05] And Lord, we're so thankful. We pray all these things in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. that work, but I'm going to ask you how do you reconcile those two? Because you were referring to those individuals, and people ultimately are displaying our righteousness, but inwardly, somehow, something is not right.

Yeah. So, how do you reconcile that? Yeah, so my, what I wanted to say is that it's, it's, it can be both, right? So I don't think that, I think that certainly that's true. I think that a bad, a bad tree will be a bad fruit. Eventually, the lifestyle will portray what the life is.

But I also wanted to give, right, this qualification that just throughout the span of the Sermon on the Mount, the way Jesus is indicting the Pharisees and the things he's calling out, it's not evidently outward flagrant things, is it? Right? When he's calling out the Pharisees, it's that they're doing the right things publicly, but that their hearts, right, they're doing it for the wrong motives, they're doing it to be seen, those things, right, aren't as open and flagrant.

So you're right, I want to keep that, I don't want to deny the tree analogy. I think that's right and that's true. I think certainly your sins will find you out. But I do want to say that there's also another way that we can fall into this kind of sin, right?

[40:04] And it's not always this outward flagrant. And I think the way Jesus has talked about the Pharisees up to this point displays that. So the righteous, so again, going back to that statement, righteousness is needed that exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees, right? It's not that the Pharisees are, right, people are looking at the Pharisees at that point and they're, right, the question that can be asked about them is, well, I don't see any bad fruit in the Pharisees.

And that's kind of true. They're doing all of the right outward things. But I think what Jesus is getting at is, no, they're doing the outward right things, but their hearts are sinful. They're empty tombs, to use biblical language.

So I think, yes, so I think the tree analogy is spot on. I'm not denying that. But I'm saying that there is another unrighteousness that we have to be wary of. Is that answering your question?

So I'm not saying that the model I gave is refuting the tree analogy. I'm saying that the model I'm trying to give is another way that we need to check our own hearts. I think he started another way of looking at it before this section, just throughout this sermon, right, when he's indicting the Pharisees for unrighteous hearts, right? The Pharisees at this point are, in many's minds, the picture-perfect model of what it means to follow God, right? They are the religious leaders. They are the religious right.

And I don't mean political. I mean they're right. They're doing the right things. But Jesus has strong indictments for them. Why? Because they have wicked hearts. They're far from God.

[41:41] Yeah. Yeah. So I wasn't, I think that, yeah, I think that's certainly true. And I think in many cases you see that. In many cases you see a bad tree, you'll see bad fruit immediately. Or, you know, it's evident. The lifestyle is evidently displaying that they don't know God. But there is another unrighteousness that especially Christians like us need to be wary of.

And it's not a confidence in the fact that, you know, well, I'm not living flagrantly. That's great, right? We don't continue in sin so that grace may abound. But I think throughout this sermon, Jesus is pointing to a deeper heart issue, right? So it's not that I don't commit adultery. Great.

That's good. But it's also that I can't be looking at another woman lustfully. Right? And that's a whole other issue. That's internal and you don't see that. So I think it's both. I think it's both.

Yep. So I feel like doubt is something that creeps up. I think in every Christian life at some point. Are there any resources given by the Lord for assurance? Because the warning passages, I mean, that's one of the things.

They set up this binary. You're in or you're out. And are there any resources that we have for assurance that we're in? Should that be true?

[43:08] Yeah. I think a couple. So I think ultimately assurance comes from the Spirit. And I'm not punting there. I think that Romans 8.16 is true. The Holy Spirit will bear witness with our spirits that we're chosen to God. So ultimately assurance comes from the Spirit.

That's an internal witness that the Holy Spirit will give you evidences and let you know that you're His. And that can be encouraging. I also think that assurance is like a community project.

So I'm thinking Jude. I'm thinking 1 John. So for a Christian who's wrestling with assurance, you're not called to wrestle with that assurance alone.

I think your being involved in Christian community is helpful. One of the things that kind of rocked me when I asked a pastor who I had spent a few months with, you know, to kind of give me a check on my life.

You know, I was just like, hey, you know, what do you see? You know, am I good or am I not? And I was really subtly asking him, tell me if I'm a Christian or not. And this is what he said. He said, you might want to ask someone who knows you well.

[44:18] And I didn't like that answer because I wanted him, you know, just give me a yes or no. That's what I'm asking for. But what he was getting at was that kind of question is a good question, but you ask that of the individuals who you're in community with who know you well.

The community of the saints is one grace that keeps you from self-deception. So if I'm not living right, I'm going to encounter my brother Antoine to call me out on that. If I am living right, then Antoine is going to give me words of grace.

You know, Stephen, you've been really, you know, your life has been encouraging. You know, I can see the Lord working through you. That gives you assurance. And I think the spirit uses that. But that happens in community.

If you're wrestling with assurance on an island, that's rough. Because you've got nobody to give you good words. You're like, can somebody call me? Right? No, but you wrestle with assurance in community.

And God uses that community to affirm when he wants to affirm and to rebuke and check when he wants to graciously correct you. Yeah. Yes, sir.

[45:18] That's right. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. That's another great passage. I think what's that Matthew 25? Yeah.

[46:41] And then particularly there, I think that Jesus is harping on the love that we show for one another, for other Christians. And I think that's in keeping with even what he says in John, right?

By this, people will know that you're my disciples, but how you show love one for another. So, yeah, there are myriad examples of evidences of authentic conversion.

And I don't think we all take one evidence as the evidence, but I think throughout the New Testament, you see multiple evidences. And a strong one that you see in multiple places is what?

Love for other Christians, right? That's there in 1 John. That's there in James chapter 1. And that's in Matthew 25. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. We got time for one more question.

I heard a bunch of people. I saw his hand. You all want to break paper, rock, scissor?

[47:41] Okay. We'll let you go. Yes, sir. So, in verse 22, how do you think Jesus is out of those three years?

Yeah. Is that kind of thing that's the truth of the works? Yeah. His question was, in verse 22, you know, those seem to be very particular and remarkable signs and works.

Let me say this. I don't think that Jesus is trying to make a statement about charismatic gifts and people.

I don't think that's what he's doing, right? So, you're not getting in because I told you that I'm a sensationist. No, I don't think he's saying that. I think that, you know, these are certainly remarkable things, right?

These are things that, and even in the way it reads, it kind of sounds like that they are trying to gain merit on this stuff, right? And, like, if you're trying to gain merit on something, you know, you don't name something that's kind of, you know, by and by.

[48:47] You know, Jesus, I cast out a demon in your name. That's pretty huge. You know, I did mighty miracles in your name. That's huge. I prophesied in your name. That's huge.

These are these kind of remarkable, you know, outward kind of showy signs. Yeah, so I think I would say he's pointing to them not to kind of make some kind of big statement about these particular things, but to say that even if you do this kind of stuff, because I don't even think he's making a statement about the authenticity of these.

I think a case can be made that they're not authentic. I've heard that case made. But I think, I don't even think that's his point. I think he's saying that there is a disposition of the heart or an outward display of life that negates me knowing you, even if you participate in things like this.

Yeah, I'm thinking of Thessalonians. I think it's 1 Thessalonians where you see this phrase, lying wonders. There is a place where even things like these aren't true fundamental signs of you being known by the Lord, even stuff like this.

But it's much deeper than that. Yeah, that's my shot on it. I don't think he's saying anything spectacular about these things. I think these are just things that people would, on that day, if I'm clamoring for things to gain merit on, a demon sounds really good, right?

[50:18] I cast out a demon in your name. And I think Jesus is saying even that won't keep you if you have an unrighteous lifestyle in a particular way. So, anybody else, any other thoughts on that?

You want to shoot at that? Anybody? Nope. Okay. I think we are out of time. Amen. We are. Yes.

Thank you, brother. Steven, hey, thank you guys for coming. I'll just point out in your bulletin there are a couple of announcements. If you're a member, regular attender, we want to...