

## I Never Knew You

### Matthew 7:23

***Matthew 7:21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.***

This verse here, in Matthew Chapter 7, is perhaps the most frightening verse in the entire Bible.

We read this verse and are left wondering... what could He possibly be talking about? Who is Our Lord referring to when he says this?

First, The Lord Jesus sets the premise of this dreadful declaration;

***Matthew 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:***

***Matthew 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.***

He states plainly, and without any form of ambiguity, that there are only two ways to travel; a narrow path, and a wide path, or gate. A Highway to Hell and a “*little wicket gate*” (Bunyan, Pilgrims Progress), for those who are a bit more contemporary minded.

The Lord Jesus says that MANY will travel that highway to hell, or wide gate. MANY. Not a few, not some, not most, but many. These people, who name the name of Christ in word (profession) and deed (outward manifestation of godly works; weekly church attendance; paying of tithes, etc.), are being told very plainly, that their professions and works are the evidence of their impending doom. We see this being evidenced by the words of Our Lord back in the previous chapter (Matthew 6:1-8, 16-34).

(I would recommend that you go back and read chapters 5-7 and view it as one train of thought)

Second,

We come to the strength of that which channels man into that wide gate and onto the highway to hell; by means of false teaching and preaching. Corruption; in and from the pulpit.

***Matthew 7:15-20 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.***

(verses 15-20 also validate what the Lord Jesus was referring to when He was talking about judging righteously instead of hypocritically)

The easiest way to discern whether you are being led astray, brothers and sisters, is to observe your pastor. How he acts. How he lives. The things he preaches on and whether or not he is humble and obedient towards God and His Law. (is he or is he not displaying an attitude of meekness).

It is difficult though to judge righteously though if you yourself, are deficient in the ways and manners of what the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul say when they illustrate how to behave as a Christian.

Examine yourselves brethren. To see if you are walking in the faith or not. Be a Berean.

Thirdly,

We now come to the verses that sum up the entire Sermon on the Mount. The results.

We have seen from the start of chapter 5 up to this point, what the Lord Jesus has established for us in the manner of how we are to think and act. Now the Lord Jesus Christ draws the line between true and false. Right and wrong. Now we are plainly told, the terrible truth that *should cause you to tremble and quake with fear...*

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I Never Knew You... What does this mean?

***I NEVER***

This should be simpler than two plus two equaling four.

It doesn't mean anything less than "absolutely at no point or at any time did I ever".

Black and white. I NEVER. EVER. EVER.

***KNEW***

This is where I believe a self-imposed stumbling block is placed. What does it mean, to know?

Let's have a look at the definition of know.

**Webster's 1828 Dictionary [K-Z]**

know

KNOW, v.t. no. pret. knew; pp. known. L. nosco, cognosco, Gr. although much varied in orthography. Nosco makes novi, which, with g or c prefixed, gnovi or cnovi, would coincide with know, knew cresco, crevi, coincides with grow, grew. The radical sense of knowing is generally to take, receive, or hold.

1. To perceive with certainty; to understand clearly; to have a clear and certain perception of truth, fact, or any thing that actually exists. To know a thing pre-cludes all doubt or uncertainty of its existence. We know what we see with our eyes, or perceive by other senses. We know that fire and water are different substances. We know that truth and falsehood express ideas incompatible

with each other. We know that a circle is not a square. We do not know the truth of reports, nor can we always know what to believe.

2. To be informed of; to be taught. It is not unusual for us to say we know things from information, when we rely on the veracity of the informer.
3. To distinguish; as, to know one man from another. We know a fixed star from a planet by its twinkling.
4. To recognize by recollection, remembrance, representation or description. We do not always know a person after a long absence. We sometimes know a man by having seen his portrait, or having heard him described.
5. To be no stranger to; to be familiar. This man is well known to us.
6. In scripture, to have sexual commerce with. Gen 4.
7. To approve.

The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous. Ps. 1.

8. To learn. Prov. 1.
9. To acknowledge with due respect. 1Thess. 5.
10. To choose; to favor or take an interest in. Amos 3.
11. To commit; to have.

He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. 2Cor.

12. To have full assurance of; to have satisfactory evidence of any thing, though short of certainty.

Strong's Greek Dictionary

1097. γινωσκω ginosko

γινωσκω ginosko ghin-ocē'-ko

a prolonged form of a primary verb; to "know" (absolutely) in a great variety of applications and with many implications (as follow, with others not thus clearly expressed):—allow, be aware (of), feel, (have) know(-ledge), perceived, be resolved, can speak, be sure, understand.

Knew and know denote past and present tense.

Now we know what knew is by definition.

Let's first have a look at what some of the reformed writers and pastors have had to say about this terrifying statement by Our Lord.

[Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

## Matthew 7:23

Verse 23. Profess unto them. Say unto them; plainly declare.

I never knew you. That is, I never approved, loved, or regarded you as my friends. See Ps 1:6; 2Ti 2:19; 1Co 8:3. This proves that, with all their pretensions, they had never been true followers of Christ. Jesus will not then say to false prophets and false professors of religion, that he had once known them, and then rejected them; that they had been once Christians and then had fallen away; that they had been pardoned, and then had apostatized; but that he had never known them--THEY HAD NEVER BEEN TRUE CHRISTIANS. Whatever might have been their pretended joys, their raptures, their hopes, their self-confidence, their visions, their zeal, they had never been regarded by the Saviour as his true friends. I know not a more decided proof that Christians do not fall away from grace than this text. It settles the question; and proves that whatever else such men had, they never had any true religion. See 1Jo 2:19.

### John Calvin's Verse Commentary

#### Matthew 7:23

23. *And then will I confess to them* 1 By using the Greek word "homologeō"

#### Strong's Greek Dictionary

3670. ομολογεω homologeō

ομολογεω homologeō hom-ol-og-eh'-o

from a compound of the base of 3674 and 3056; to assent, i.e. covenant, acknowledge:—con- (pro-)fess, confession is made, give thanks, promise.

I will confess, 2 Christ appears to allude to the vain boasting, by which hypocrites now vaunt themselves. "They indeed have confessed me with the tongue, and imagine that they have fully discharged their duty. The confession of my name is now heard aloud from their tongue. But I too will confess on the opposite side, that their profession is deceitful and false." And what is contained in Christ's confession? That he never reckoned them among his own people, even at the time when they boasted that they were the pillars of the church.

*Depart from me.* He orders those persons to go out from his presence, who had stolen, under a false title, an unjust and temporary possession of his house. From this passage in our Lord's discourse Paul seems to have taken what he says to Timothy,

*The Lord knoweth who are his: and, let every one who calleth on the name of Christ depart from iniquity, (2Ti 2:19.)*

The former clause is intended to prevent weak minds from being alarmed or discouraged by the desertion of those who had a great and distinguished reputation: 3 for he declares that they were disowned by the Lord, though by a vain show they captivated the eyes of men. He then exhorts all those who wish to be reckoned among the disciples of Christ, to withdraw early from iniquity, that Christ may not drive them from his presence, when he shall "separate the sheep from the goats," (Mt 25:33.)

### John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

#### Matthew 7:23

Then will I profess unto them,... Publicly before men and angels, at the day of judgment,

I never knew you; which must be understood consistent with the omniscience of Christ; for as the omniscient God he knew their persons and their works, and that they were workers of iniquity; he knew what they had been doing all their days under the guise of religion; he knew the principles of all their actions, and the views they had in all they did; nothing is hid from him. But, as words of knowledge often carry in them the ideas of affection, and approbation, see Ps 1:6 the meaning of Christ here is, I never had any love, or affection for you; I never esteemed you; I never made any account of you, as mine, as belonging to me; I never approved of you, nor your conduct; I never had any converse, communication, nor society with you, nor you with me. The Persic version reads it, "I have not known you of old", from ancient times, or from everlasting; I never knew you in my Father's choice, and my own, nor in my Father's gift to me, nor in the everlasting covenant of grace; I never knew you as my sheep, for whom, in time, I died, and called by name; I never knew you believe in me, nor love me, or mine; I have seen you in my house, preaching in my name, and at my table administering mine ordinance; but I never knew you exalt my person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; you talk of the works you have done, I never knew you do one good work in all your lives, with a single eye to my glory; wherefore, I will neither hear, nor see you; I have nothing to do with you. In this sense the phrase is used in the Talmud: "Bar Kaphra went to visit R. Juda; he says to him, Bar Kaphra, מעולם מכירך יאני, "I never knew thee". The gloss upon it is, "he intimates, that he would not see him."

So here, Christ declares, he knew them not; that is, he did not like them; he would not admit them into his presence and glory; but said,

depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. The former of these expressions contains the awful sentence pronounced by Christ, the judge; which is, banishment from his presence, than which nothing is more terrible: for as it is his presence that makes heaven, it is his absence that makes hell; and this supposes a place and state, whither they are banished; which is elsewhere called their "own place, the lake" which burns with fire and brimstone; "everlasting fire", prepared for the devil and his angels. Departure from Christ's presence is the punishment of loss, and being sent to everlasting burnings, is the punishment of sense; and the whole, as it is an instance of strict justice, so a display of Christ's almighty power. The latter expression contains the character of these persons, and in it a reason of their punishment; they were "workers of iniquity": it may be, neither adulterers, nor murderers, nor drunkards, nor extortioners, nor thieves, or any other openly profane sinners; but inasmuch as they did the work of the Lord deceitfully, preached themselves, and not Christ; sought their own things, and not his; what they did, they did with a wicked mind, and not with a view to his glory; they wrought iniquity, whilst they were doing the very things they pleaded on their own behalf, for their admission into the kingdom of heaven. Some copies read, "all the workers of iniquity", as in Ps 6:8 from whence the words are taken.

Finally,

A.W. Pink says in his work on the Sovereignty of God, Chapter 5,

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23). In the previous chapter it has been shown that the words "know" and "foreknowledge" when applied to God in the Scriptures, have reference not simply to His prescience (i.e., His bare knowledge beforehand), but to His knowledge of approbation. When God said to Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2), it is evident that He meant, "You only had I any favorable regard to." When we read in Romans 11:2 "God hath not cast away His people (Israel) which He foreknew," it is obvious that what was signified is, "God has not finally rejected that people whom He has chosen as the objects of His love"-cf. Deuteronomy 7:8. In the same way (and it is the only possible way) are we to

understand Matthew 7:23. In the Day of Judgment the Lord will say unto many, "I never knew you." Note, it is more than simply "I know you not." His solemn declaration will be, "I never knew you"-you were never the objects of My approbation. Contrast this with "I know (love) My sheep, and am known (loved) of Mine" (John 10:14). The "sheep," His elect, the "few" He does "know"; but the reprobate, the non-elect, the "many" He knows not-no, not even before the foundation of the world did He know them-He "NEVER" knew them!"

And if at this point, there were still any confusion or lack of clarity of what the Lord has told them (us), he finished the chapter with this final illustration.

***Matthew 7:24-29 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.***

Now that we have an idea of what the Lord Jesus is talking about with regard to his statement, "I NEVER KNEW YOU", I will stop here.

Let those with ears to hear, hear what is being said.

May the Lord bless and preserve you.

World without end,

Amen.