

## **Mt. 7:15-23 (WCF 10:4) “The Pretenders”**

**For the Children:** There was once a man who pretended to be qualified to do a number of jobs that he had never studied for or done before – a lawyer, a doctor, a pilot. Eventually he was caught and got into a lot of trouble. Some people pretend to believe in the Lord. They put on an act of keeping the teachings of the Bible. But they don't really love the Lord from the heart. They will all be caught out on the Day of Judgement, and they will be punished. If such people are rejected by God, we can be sure that those who openly reject Christ will also be rejected by Him. **Questions:** What is the difference between those who truly believe in the Lord and those who pretend? How can we know whether we are pretenders or not? Why do God's children hate the thought of hell?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: False Pretenses**

- 1) **Blatant Rejection of Christ:** The “broad way” (Mt. 7:13-14) is the way of those who blatantly reject Christ, following false religions or philosophies. WCF 10:4 states that such people cannot be saved, no matter how much they strive to live from the light of general revelation or follow the rules of their religion. For they suppress what truth they see (Rom. 1:18f), and they are born in sin. To be saved, they need to hear the Gospel, believe it and call upon the Lord (Rom. 10:13-15). Their pretense is that their own works can save them
- 2) **Rejection of Christ While Claiming to Follow Him:** WCF 10:4 states that even those cannot be saved who claim to believe in Christ, but are only outwardly called by the Word, with some common operations of the Spirit, not the inward or effectual call. Hence the Lord Jesus talks of false prophets; and those who claim to have done great works in His Name; yet He will say to them, “I never knew you, depart!” (Ps. 6:8)

#### **Second Point: How You Know You're Not a Pretender**

- 1) **Fruits and Works Together:** The believer must bear good fruit, and can be known by his fruit. He is one who does the will of His Father, who hears Christ's words and acts on them. A Christian who does only evil works or no works is a contradiction in terms. God works the fruits of the Spirit in us and good works result (Gal. 5:22-23). Works that do not arise from spiritual fruits are not good works. That is why the Lord could reject those who pointed to their works in vss. 21-23. Works alone do not prove we have been inwardly called
- 2) **The Spirit of Adoption:** We do, however, know we are children of God by the working of Word and Spirit (Rom. 8:14-17). Then we will call on God as “Abba,” call on the Name of the Lord and be saved (Rom. 10:13). That means focusing on Christ – to know and see Him, to have His blood cover our sins, to serve Him – rather than focusing on our own works as a proof. Hence in Mt. 25:31f, the righteous have trouble seeing their own good works, and the pretenders make excuses – or parade their works as in Mt. 7. It is the attitude to Christ that is crucial – though good fruit and works will follow from that

#### **Third Point: What Happens to Pretenders**

- 1) **They Cannot Be Saved:** WCF 10:4 makes clear that those who follow Christ only outwardly, and those who do not follow Him in any way, cannot be saved. See Mt. 7:13, 24f, and the fate of the bad trees in vss. 16-20. The pretender is told to “depart” in v. 23. All of these terms are speaking of hell
- 2) **Why We Care About These Warnings:** Even our reasons for worrying about hell will reveal whether we are pretenders or not. The pretender worries simply about his own skin. The believer abhors the thought of hell, because he wants to be with Christ giving glory to Him above all else. It comes down to whether we care about Christ or ourselves

### **Conclusion:**