

Matthew 7:21-23 (NKJV)

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.

²² 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?'

²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

I intended to move on the the next passage this morning, but I couldn't do it. I did not believe that I had done this passage **justice**. There is a **message** in this text that is **vital** for us to get. In fact, our whole eternal destiny could ride on it. So it is not something we can make a mistake about. It is deadly serious. The people that Jesus is describing in today's passage are in the **worst possible** state they can be in in this life.

They are absolutely confident that they **are** in Christ, but they are **not** in Christ.

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I would venture to guess that most of us here are confident that we are in Christ. We may have settled this in our heart of hearts. We may have done serious business with this to determine that our soul's are safe. But the question remains, have we looked at the **right things**? Have we examined our souls the way **they need** examined? Have we looked at them the way **God** looks at them?

Could there be a more important question to a person who believes him or her self to be in Christ?

That is what we will look at this morning.

We mentioned last week that the people in our text are saying **Lord Lord**.

They get that **Jesus Christ is Lord**. They understand that He is the Messiah, the one sent by God to save us. They say that Jesus is Lord. That is one of the tests of any message. It **MUST** admit that **Jesus is Lord** to be a **saving** message. It must tell us **more** than that, but this fact must be intact. And for these Lord Lord sayers, it **is** intact. The doctrine is good so far.

Now are these people folks that have just added Jesus to their lives? Like- I have a job. I have a family. I've got vehicles and insurance. I have a place in my world. Now I want to take care of the **spiritual side** of things and everything will be good. So we add Jesus to all the other things in our lives. We go to church. Maybe we do spiritual activities like prayer and Bible

reading in our families. And we do all this to add Jesus to our lives. There are **a lot of people** who fool themselves by doing this sort of thing. They are content with a **proper creed** but they never really **surrender** their lives to the Lordship of Christ. They are not going to reach out to those around them with the gospel. They are not going to risk what they have in their service of Jesus. There are lots of people like this. Are we? Is Jesus just an **addition** to our lives or is He the **driving force** behind all we do?

This is a terrible danger. This is a terrible self deception. Because this kind of environmental Christian has no reason to be confident of his salvation, but he often is anyway. So this is a terrible danger. But that is **not** what Christ is talking about in our text.

Look at what these people **do**? They are out there preaching. They are proclaiming. They are taking a risk at identifying themselves with Christ. They say- **have we not prophesied in Your name?**

Look at this. They are not only preaching. They are preaching in Jesus's name. They are boldly saying Jesus Christ is the Messiah. He is the one. And they are welcoming whatever negative reaction a person might have toward Christ to him or her self. This person has not just **added Christ** to His life. He is boldly proclaiming Him. He sees it as **his mission** to do something about his proclamation of faith.

And they didn't leave it at that. When they encountered demonic resistance, they **stood up to it**. They faced it in Jesus's name. They cast those demons out and the demons **came out**. Which incidentally proves that miraculous ministries are not all dependent upon the **perfect faith** of the **human involved**. Sometimes it just happens to be stuff that aligns with **God's will** and He will do it **for His own glory**.

So these false followers are facing down the devil in Jesus's name. They had an understanding of Christ that Christ was the **source to use** to do this spiritual battle.

And not only that, they did **wonders**. Maybe it was healings? Maybe bringing people back from the dead. We are not accustomed to seeing a whole lot of that kind of activity. I placed a link on Faithlife. We are looking into a ministry who **does** regularly see this sort of thing. The group is called Serve India. The gentleman that oversees it tells of documentable examples of both healings and raisings from the dead. But it is very interesting. He said that the miracles almost always happen **to open up an area to the gospel**. Once a church is established, it is rare that the miracles continue. The pastors often get frustrated because the miracles do not continue. They may pray one person back from the dead but then the next day they cannot even pray

someone's headache away. This ministry has seen enough of this activity that the leadership can comfort these pastors that these miracles are the **exception** to the rule. They are not the **rule** of the Christian life.

But anyway the people in our text are actually **part of** these miraculous works of God. They have been involved in them. They say they have done them in Jesus's name.

Are we getting all this? These people are people who are **active** in their work for God. They are not just sitting around. They are involved in real ministry. And God is using them. He is doing His work in association with their **using Jesus's name** and **preaching Jesus's message**.

They are involved in ministry that I think is safe to say that **we wish** from time to time **we** were involved in. Haven't we all wished we would see God move in such a dramatic way from time to time? Well these people are seeing it.

So we would assume that when they say to Jesus, look at all this evidence.... Look at what I have done. We expect that Christ would say, **yes**, you must have **truly been a believer** to accomplish all that. You must have been a believer to even **WANT** to do all that. You must have been motivated by a **new heart** to inspire such fervent devotion and effort. **Well done** my good and faithful servant.

But that is the exact opposite of what He says.

And look how confident these Lord Lord say-ers are. Look at the **irrefutable evidence** they site. They are **sure** that they are good with Christ. They are **sure** they are in. But they are **not** in. They are not. What an earth shattering disappointment to be so **confident** and yet be **so wrong**.

This is why I could not go on to our next text.

Whatever we do this morning, we must make sure this is **not us**. We must make sure that we are not the ones who hear from Christ- **Depart from me. I never knew you**. If we just imagine that situation for a second, if we imagine ourselves on judgement day facing Christ and having Him say that **to us**, we immediately get the urgency of this matter.

And we need to keep this in mind. None of these Lord Lord Say-ers **had a clue** that they were lost. They were all completely self deceived.

The danger of being self deceived is that all of us tend to believe what we **tell ourselves** over that which is told **to us** by **someone else**. These people were all **telling themselves** a lie. And they **believed** it.

Now how can we stop this from happening to us?

First, never let your **assurance of salvation** be based solely on the ministry you **have done** for Christ.

Do you notice something about the response of these people that Jesus addresses. They are talking about what **they did**. I did **this** good thing. I did **that** good thing. They are all **external** things. They are all on the **outside**. They are events. They are activities. They are things that can be done for any number of motives, **including**, but **not limited to**, godly motives. For us it could be, I witnessed to my neighbor, I shared the gospel at the fair, I taught Bible Studies, I went to prayer meetings, I took meals to the needy, etc etc.

Now think about this.

If you were to stand outside the gates of heaven, and there were someone at the gate that asks you the question, **Why should I let you in?**

What would you say?

More importantly, right now, what is the **first thing** that comes to mind?

Because the first thing that comes to mind might be the thing we believe to be most important.

You might think-

You should let me in because I have tried to be a good Christian. I have tried to obey Christ. I have done a lot of acts of obedience to Christ. I have strong feelings for the person of Christ.

Do you see the **problem** with that focus?

How is that **any different** from the Lord Lord say-ers in our text?

I did **this** thing and I did **that** thing. What is wrong with all of that? **What really saves a person?**

We have got to make sure the thing that saves us is the thing that becomes our deepest confidence of salvation. It must be the **source** of our confidence. And it is not just that **Jesus is the Messiah**. It is that the Messiah died to **save us**. Why should I let you into heaven? What does scripture say?

Hebrews 4:14-16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession.

¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We come boldly to God how? Because we have a great High Priest. It isn't something I am. It is something He is.

Ephesians 2:4-9 (NKJV)

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He

loved us,

⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

⁶ and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,

⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Why should God let me in? Because Christ has made me alive.

Ephesians 2:14-18 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace,

¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Why should God let me in. Because Christ has reconciled me to God.

1 John 3:1 (NKJV)

¹ Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Why should God let me in? Because God by His love has already called us His children.

Romans 5:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Why should God let me in? Because we have peace with Him through Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:6-11 (NKJV)

⁶ For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

¹¹ And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Why should God let me in? Because through Christ's death we are reconciled to God.

I could go on and on. Why should God allow us into heaven? Our answer, if we understand salvation **AT ALL**, must start with what **CHRIST** did, not what **I** did. It must begin there. In fact if our first answer to that question, why should God let me in, if our first answer was **wrong**, we should not brush that off. Because that tells us something about **ourselves** and **how we view God**. It tells us we need to **rethink** some things. We need to **reorient** to some things.

Our right to enter heaven is based upon what **Christ did**. It is not based upon what **I** did. It is based upon who **Christ** is, not on who **I** am (is).

If our first answer to that question, **why should I let you in?** is wrong, we stand in great danger of being one of the Lord Lord say-ers. When we start with **I did this** and **I did that**, we are looking **just like** them. We have got to know in our heart of hearts what our salvation is all about. Do this test with your kids. Ask them this question. Go over it and over it if you must. They must firmly understand how entrance into heaven is obtained. And it never starts with what **I** did. It always starts with what **Christ** did.

OK so

Now how can we stop this self deception from happening to us?

How can we make sure that our assurance is not **false**?

First, never let your assurance of salvation be based solely on the ministry you have done for Christ. Your assurance has to be based on what **Christ has done for you**. You must truly believe in Christ.

So we could reword this to say, let your assurance be **first based** on what **Christ did for us**, not what **we did for Christ**.

Now there are some who would tell us that our assurance begins and ends there. If we can write down our doctrine of justification clearly and we fully depend upon it, we can be fully assured of our salvation. That sounds very spiritual, but that is not what scripture says. Why? Because God knows we are tricky. God knows we are prone to self deception.

We need to know more than that Christ's work saves **people**. We need to know that Christ's work **saved us**.

Look what Christ told the Lord Lord say-ers.

depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!

These people were saying- look at **this** good thing I did for you. Look at **that** good thing I did for you. Then look at what Christ **did not** say. Christ did not say, depart from me you who **did not have faith in me for salvation**. No, Christ said Get lost because you never experienced a true life change that happens when a person believes in Me. **You practice lawlessness**. You talk about isolated things in your life, but your whole life was never under submission to me. You gave me time and effort but you did not give me yourself.

Isaiah says this:

Isaiah 29:13-21 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore the LORD said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

Isaiah is addressing the same kind of problem that Jesus is addressing. **False devotion** that does not come from **new life**. It consists of acts of service that were not done from a changed heart.

Jeremiah says this

Jeremiah 31:33-34 (NKJV)

³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Here we see what a real follower of Christ will look like. They will not serve

Christ in **evangelistic efforts** and live in **sin** in other areas of their lives. They will not sacrifice to pour out their hearts in **preaching** and then cater to all their **sinful habits** on the side.

No, what the Lord describes here is a changed life that is dedicated to Him. That is what true spirituality always **has been** and always **will be**. God's law is in our minds, it becomes how we think, how we live. We crave knowing what Christ wants for our lives so we can do it.

A person who is born of God **cannot practice lawlessness**. We might **fall into** it some. It can certainly be a struggle that we **lose** to sometimes. But it cannot be a secret way of life that we guard and foster in private.

So how can we avoid this self deception of false assurance?

First let your assurance be first based on what Christ did for us, not what we did for Christ.

Second, look for the proper evidences of godly living. Look for evidence that we are not practicing lawlessness.

A lot of people talk about either 1) salvation **by faith** and **works** are not any part of the equation, or 2) salvation **by works** and what one **believes** does not matter all that much.

What Jesus expects is salvation **by faith** that effects **all of life**. So we can tell what we **truly believe** by what we **actually do**.

We just finished the book of First John a while ago. In it we were given all kinds of signs of life. If you are concerned that you might be a **false believer**, go re-read that book.

We find encouragements that a true believer walks in the light, confesses sin, we keep His commandments, we abide in Him, we love fellow believers by meeting their needs, we live like Jesus lived, we do not love the world, we believe what Jesus said, we purify ourselves, we practice righteousness. There is more but I think we get the picture.

The **pharisees** had a mindset more like these **Lord Lord say-ers**. The Pharisees did their **exceptional works of obedience** while **hating Jesus Christ**. The people that Jesus is calling out, these self deceived followers, never caught the Christian disease. They just imitated some of the symptoms. It is very clear true Christianity changes everything about us. It is a heart change that spreads out to a life change.

We could lay out passage after passage to prove this, but a true follower of Christ experiences a life change that displays itself for the rest of his or her life.

Ok so we have two points in avoiding false assurance.

First let your assurance be first based on what Christ did for us, not what we did for Christ.

Second, look for the proper evidences of godly living. Look for evidence that we are not practicing lawlessness.

I would like to add one more.

Third, look for the evidence of orienting one's life primarily to what is coming as opposed to that which is now.

Here is another example Christ gave of people who were self deceived. This time it is a parable. Note that he tells these virgins something very similar to our text. He says "I do not know you."

Matt 25 1-13 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. ³ Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶ "And at midnight a cry was *heard*: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹ "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'

¹² But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

¹³ "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

My intent in reading this was not to go into all the nuances of the story. I just wanted to show that while all 10 virgins **identified themselves** the same, only 5 got **the benefit** provided by God. And the 5 that were true lived differently than the other 5. The prepared ones lived with the priority of the Lord's return. They were continually making sure they were ready for the most important event in life. And they saw that event as being **in the future** and being **worth every effort**. They were not absorbed with the comfort of here and now. Their minds were continually focused on **that which is to come**.

They were essentially **seeking first things above**, not things on earth. They may have looked much like the 5 that were **un prepared**, but they were fundamentally **different**. While both talked about the same event being important, some made **life decisions according to** that priority and some lived as if that event **may** or **may not** happen. It certainly wasn't today's priority.

The issue was not that they made **one life decision** that just happened to be better than the other 5. At the end of the day the issue was the same as in our text. The unprepared weren't victims of circumstance. No. They **proved** by **how they lived** that they **did not know** the savior.

And that is what this is all about. Our greatest need in life is to be **known by our savior**. And we can examine our lives to know if we are known by Him or if we are not. But there is one thing for sure. If we are known by our savior, it will affect every area of our lives.

OK so how can we avoid false assurance in our Christian life?

First let your assurance be first based on what Christ did for us, not what we did for Christ.

Second, look for the proper evidences of godly living. Look for evidence that we are not practicing lawlessness.

Third, look for the evidence of orienting one's life primarily to what is coming as opposed to that which is now.