

THEY ENTERED A DEVASTATING CLASS

Matthew 7:21-27

The title of the sermon this morning is, "They Entered A Devastating Class!" You have no outlines. My message refused to be outlined. And before I begin, let me give you a moment to bow your head and say, "Lord, if there is a need in the message today to speak to my heart, I am asking You to please do so." Let me remind you of something this morning. If you and I are not raptured first, you and I will die. And it may not be that long from now. And whether we are truly saved or not, will never be more important than at that moment. We have to have so many funerals, because in between funerals we forget that we too must die. Listen to this statement Ray Comfort has given; ten out of ten die. I want to tell you this morning, life is very serious.

Now, for many years I have pondered these verses of Matthew 7:21-22, "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. 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?'" Now, here is a class of people who have every appearance of being Christians but they are not. They had entered a devastating class!

And look at what these so called Christians did. They said they had cast out demons in Christ's name. They had prophesied in His name. They had done wonders in His name. Many who call themselves Christians could not make those claims. But these people did. Surely, from all appearance, we would gather that they must be very good Christians!

But listen to what this text says, "Then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me you who practice lawlessness!'" Consider now these people, who not only thought they were Christians, they thought they were among the elite! But, not only were they not the elite, they were not even truly Christians! They thought all along they were Christians, but they were not. They had entered a devastating class of people! They thought they were going to heaven. They thought that when they met the Lord He would say, "Well done good and faithful servant!" But they were not Christians at all! They were an ungodly lot who practiced lawlessness! They had entered a devastating class of people!

I propose to you that this devastating class of people has always been around. They have always been around because Satan has always been around. You see, all throughout man's history Satan has found ways to gather people into this devastating class. If he cannot take them by sin and wickedness and

unbelief, he takes them by religion. Take the first two children born to Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. Cain thought he was in the camp of the blessed. He was not an atheist. He brought an offering to God. But God did not accept his offering because he was in that devastating camp. And what did Cain do when God refused his offering? Did he repent? No, he got angry with his little brother. Take note of what religion does. And his brother was truly righteous and brought a godly sacrifice. How do those in this devastating camp like the righteous? Cain got so angry that he killed his brother. There we have this devastating class right there at the very beginning. You can see this happen from Genesis to Revelation.

One of my daughters shared this verse with us the other day from Proverbs 29:27, "An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, and he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked." You can find this right through the Bible. And what is astounding is that the unjust man thinks he is right! Proverbs 21:2 says, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes..." Who thinks they are wrong? But do you know what the rest of the verse says? It says, "...but the LORD ponders the hearts." Our hearts, the Bible says, are deceitful above all things. The only way we can know we are right is if what we believe about ourselves lines up with the Word of God.

Yes, the devil has been deceiving man all through the ages, and all through the ages people have entered this devastating class. The scribes and Pharisees, the religious elite of Jesus' day were in that class. They, furthermore, helped other people into that devastating class. Listen to what Jesus said to them in Matthew 23:15. He said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, (one convert) and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." I am afraid this is true of much of today's modern churches and missions.

And maybe you say, "We need persecution. Persecution would sift out all these people. Nobody but true Christians would claim to be Christians if they might have to die for it." If I understand Scripture aright, Matthew 25:31-46 is the judgment that happens at the close of the tribulation. Turn to this chapter. And at that judgment the Lord separates the sheep from the goats. The goats are those who had entered this devastating class. They said about the same thing those of our text said to the Lord. The goats are those who have entered this devastating class, and almost unbelievably, they entered that class in the tribulation time, the most horrible time ever in all of man's existence. Now I want you to look at verses 41-43. Here they are! They have entered that devastating class and stuck with it until the end

of the tribulation! And I want you to notice the words that sound so similar to our text in verse 44 (read). They said, we did all that!

I want to tell you that these people have always been around. I want to tell you that they are in our present day churches! Many people say, "Oh, listen, if we can't all get along here as Christians, how will we get along in heaven?" Listen to me carefully. A very large percentage of those who profess to be Christians in our evangelical churches are not Christians at all! It is no wonder we cannot all get along. It would be shameful if we could all get along with all those who profess to be Christians, because many of them are not!

I have heard people say many times, "Well, we have to be very careful. There will be a lot of people in heaven who we never thought would be there!" Where did we get that from? Did that come from the Bible? Let me say this to you that according to our text there are a lot of people who we think are going to be in heaven who won't be there!"

I am to tell you this morning about a group of people who have entered a devastating class. This is a class of people who have every appearance of being fine Christians. As a matter of fact, they have the appearance of the best among Christians. They cast out demons, so they say. They did wonders. They prophesied. They thought they were Christians. They had entered a devastating class! And this devastation will happen on that day when they find out that all the while they thought they were Christians, they in fact were lost, and it will be forever too late. It will be a most devastating moment! This devastation will happen at the judgment. When, in life, they expected that at judgment the Lord would say, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord", instead they will hear these words, 'depart from Me you cursed into everlasting fire!' What a devastating moment that will be.

NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS LORD LORD

Now consider what our text 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." Now let me ask you a question: Who is it that says, "Lord, Lord"? You can't imagine Richard Dawkins or Bill Nigh or Sam Harris or Christopher Hitchens and suchlike calling Jesus 'Lord, Lord', can you? No, no, we are not talking about the atheist here. We are not talking about professed unbelievers here. We are not even talking about Muslims. The Muslims call Jesus a good man, but not "Lord, Lord." No, none of these say, "Lord, Lord." So who does? Well, those who think they are Christians say, "Lord, Lord!".

But notice now that it says not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord" is a Christian. What could be more clear here? You will notice these are not my words. These are the words of Jesus. He said this. And these people who say, "Lord, Lord" are talking to Him, so they think. They think He is their Lord, but He is not their Lord at all.

I must make a note here. Implied in the words that not all who say, "Lord, Lord" are truly Christians, is the fact that there are those who say, "Lord, Lord", who are truly Christians. True Christians do call Him Lord. The difference is that they do what their Lord tells them to do. So, I want you to notice most carefully that our text clearly tells us exactly who is a Christian and from that we can clearly gather who is not. Listen now, and you will hear it in the words of Jesus Himself, "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.'**" Who is the true Christian? It is the one who does the will of God! We can talk all we want. Our talk proves nothing.

We must ever be careful that we are not among those who say, "Lord, Lord", but do not do what the Lord tells us to do. My wife shared an insight with me a while ago on the words, "Faith without works is dead." We say we believe that those who divorce and marry someone else while their first partner is still alive are living in adultery. And the Scriptures teach us to separate ourselves from those who profess salvation and live in such sins (1 Corinthians 5). And when we fail to obey that Scripture, we have faith without works. And James says, "Can faith save him?" And the answer it looks for is, "No!" That kind of faith cannot save.

Jesus said in Luke 6:46, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" Could I ask you this morning, do you do what the Lord says? These people thought they were Christians, but they were not. Notice what they say. They say, "Lord, Lord." But the facts are that they say and do not, just like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day.

Over the years I have taught and preached and practiced a teaching in Scripture that has become a matter that I and most of you are looked down on for. Turn to 1 Corinthians 5:11 (read). Here Paul instructs us as Christians to not keep company with any man who calls himself a Christian and he lives in some major sin. The list given here is not complete. And if you will read Galatians 5 it will add to this list of sins and then say, "...and such like." We are to separate ourselves from those who call themselves Christians and who live like that and I ask, do we say "Lord, Lord" and do not obey the Scriptures?

Now I want to tell you something. I preach against divorce and remarriage. I say it is adultery. I know the majority of so called Christians disagree with that, in what they call special cases. But when a man is married and he cohabits with a woman other than the one he married and his wife is still alive, he is living in adultery. Listen to Luke 16:18, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery." How much more plain can it get? And those are the words of Jesus! And adultery is a major sin. And here, in Corinthians, we are instructed not to company with those who call themselves Christians and live in such sins. And when we do, we are doing what the Bible says we are not to do. And I ask, are we not calling Him Lord, Lord, while we are disobeying His Word? And when we disobey the teaching of Scripture, we need to ask ourselves, "Am I in that devastating class?"

Go to 2 Thessalonians 3 (read 6 and 14). The subject matter here is that if a professing Christian is lazy and talking all over the place, other Christians are to withdraw from such a person. Now I ask you, did I write this passage? Or is this passage something the Lord says? Who wrote these words? It was Paul. And listen to what he says in 1 Corinthians 14:37, "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." You see, if we are going to do what the Lord told us, then we must obey what the apostles taught as well. When you observe the evangelical churches all across our land you would think this passage does not exist. We must be careful that we are not among those who say, "Lord, Lord" while we do not do what He tells us to do.

You see, Jesus said, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say?" And I ask you, who is the true Christian? Well, our text is very plain, it is the one who does what the Lord says. And in verses 24-27 of Matthew 7 Jesus likened the wise man who built his house on the rock to the one who does what the Lord tells them to do. The foolish man builds a house too, but he does not do what the Lord commands. He is in that devastating class.

And think now how devastating it must be to find out in the end of life that you never had the truth all along. You have given your life for some teaching. You thought you had the truth. But you never had it in the first place. How devastating to find out in the end of life that your ladder was leaned up against the wrong wall! It is like climbing a ladder all your life, thinking it was leaned up against the right place, only to find yourself falling into hell when you step over the top.

WHAT IS THIS DEVASTATING CLASS?

Now I ask, just what is this devastating class? Well, you see, we could classify all people into two classes according to the Bible; the saved and the lost. But somehow, it seems, people who profess salvation, but are not saved, yet they say, "Lord, Lord" enter in among those who are truly saved. What is this devastating class? It seems it is a class of people who are among those called Christians. This is most perplexing.

Turn to Matthew 13. In verses 36-43 we have the parable of the wheat and the tares. The tares are those of that devastating class. But they are planted among the wheat. The wheat pictures the saved and the tares picture, not the lost world, but Christian look-alikes. Surely Richard Dawkins does not look like a Christian. These tares look like Christians but they are not. They are those of this devastating class. Now look at verse 41 (read). I never noticed this before. The tares are gathered 'out of His kingdom.' Somehow they got in and they are gathered out.

Jesus said in John 10:1, listen carefully, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Again, this devastating class seems to be among the true believers in the sheepfold. And I ask, how do you get in some other way and must later be gathered out? Well, Jesus said they got in some other way. In Matthew 13:45-50 is the parable of the drag net. It catches the good and the bad. The bad are gathered out and cast into the fire. Here is that devastating class. They are among the good in the net. In Matthew 25 we have the sheep and the goats, and the goats are those in that devastating class and they are gathered out. It seems this devastating class of people are among the true Christians.

We will look at more of this when we go through the parables. But look at another parable in Matthew 22. In verses 1-10, a certain king had prepared a wedding for his son and people had been invited, but they made excuses that they could not come. Then the king sent his servants into the highways and gathered whomever they could find. And they came. Now look at verses 10-13 (read). Now notice in verse 11, there is a man who is among the guests, but he does not have a wedding garment. What is this devastating class of people? It seems it is a group who are among the saved and will be judged with the saved, but they are lost.

HOW DO PEOPLE GET INTO THIS CLASS?

So we ask, just how do people enter this devastating class? How do people come into a place where they thought they were

Christians when in fact they are not Christians at all? How did that happen? How can something like that happen? Oh, you see, we have a very great enemy. He tries to keep people unbelievers, but when that does not work, he does not mind religion at all. And he has ways of making people believe they are Christians, when in fact they have never become Christians. He can make people think they are doing God's work, when in fact they are working for him. Did Jesus not say that wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction? Do we not know that on a broad road there are any number of places we can be on that broad road? There is the right and the left and the middle and all kinds of places in between those points. But they all end up in the same place.

Now notice verse 12 of Matthew 22. The king said, "How did you get in here?" How do people enter this devastating class? The book, "Bible Manners And Customs" suggests that the king provided a robe as an invitation to the wedding (864). If that is correct, it would be easy to see who had been invited and who had not been invited. And the king asked the man without the wedding garment, "How did you get in here?"

Well, our text answers that question too. Here is how they got in. They said, "Lord, Lord." They professed salvation! They were professors, not possessors! Oh how devastating it will be one day to find out one was a professor and not a possessor of eternal life. And notice that when he was asked how he got in, he was speechless! Those who enter this devastating class have no excuse that will stand before the Lord. You cannot say, "I was deceived into this." It is too late. You should have checked it out. You cannot blame your church or your pastor or your brother or sister or mom or dad, not even your circumstances or your past. You should have made sure you were in the right class.

This past week the JW's were at my door with Plautdietsche tracts. They were not Low German, but were carrying a Low German Bible. They were from Peace River and were learning Low German. Do you think you stand well grounded in your faith? They will leave your head spinning. But if people fall for them, they will never be able to blame them.

How many ways does Satan have to make us think we are Christians? Consider for a moment the cults. My sister-in-law told us recently that she spoke with some Mormon ladies who came to try to convert her to their way. They think their way is the only right way. But they are on the broad road. And then these ladies shared their testimony with her. Listen, they had repented of their sins! They had received Christ! They had given testimonies one might well hear from an evangelical baptismal

candidate. And then she said to them, "Tell me everything about your Jesus you know." And so they began to tell her that he was the Son of God and born of Mary and so on. And then she said, "Do not deceive me now. I have done my homework. I want to know everything about your Jesus." And when they had told her all she said something like this, "You are deceiving me. You have not told me that your Jesus is the brother of Lucifer, that your Jesus is the brother of Satan." And they were shocked that she knew about their beliefs. And do you know what those people are doing? Just like the Scribes and Pharisees they compass land and sea to make one convert, and when they have made a convert, he or she is now twice as much a child of hell than before! I ask you, how did these ladies enter that devastating class of people that says, "Lord, Lord"? They got converted into a false religion. They professed Christ as Lord but did not possess Him as Lord. They were professors, not possessors. That is how some enter this devastating class.

Consider just how broad the broad road is. How many cults are there? By cults I mean those who claim to believe in Jesus but whose Jesus is another Jesus. Listen to what Paul said in Galatians 1:8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." You see, there are other Gospels, but they do not save. Listen to what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:4, "For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!" You see, on the broad road there are other Gospels. There are other 'Jesuses'. There are other spirits too! But they are deceivers! And they cause people to say, "Lord, Lord", but they do not know the Lord. You see, these folk have entered a devastating class! And my sister-in-law said to these Mormon ladies something like this, "I must tell you your Jesus cannot save you. He is not the Jesus of the Bible. He is another Jesus. The Jesus of the Bible does not have a brother who is the devil."

But that is not all. Today there are some 1.2 billion Catholics in the world. All those who truly believe what the Catholic church teaches are lost! They say, "Lord, Lord", but they cannot be saved. Now I do not want to be a cult basher or a Catholic basher. God loves them. He sent His only Son to die for them. But if they do not get saved out of their cults or Catholicism, they are on the road to hell. They have been deceived by Satan. I cannot take time here to prove what I say, but if you do not believe me, read their catechism. Let me mention one thing. Like the NAM, they teach that man can become God. You say, "That

can't be true!" Check out article 460. That book is full of heresy and anyone who believes what it teaches cannot be saved. All those who believe what the Catholic church teaches have entered this devastating class! They think they are going to heaven. They too say, "Lord, Lord." One of the most loving things you can do for those in a cult or in Catholicism is to tell them the truth, and show them they are lost.

But that is not all. It is not only the cults or the Catholics that lead people into this devastating class. It has happened over the years and is happening more and more in so called evangelical churches. Just the other day my wife read this quote for me by Dr. Al Mohler. He said, "Hell will be filled with people who were avidly committed to Christian values". Yes, they said, "Lord, Lord." You see, he knew there are all kinds of people who are committed to Christian values who are not Christians. Let me share with you one of many ways the devil has used very effectively in our day and we could list others. It is by getting half a Gospel out to people who may be spiritually hungry. It is a Gospel that is chopped in half. I call it the sliced Gospel. There are two things God requires for man to be saved. They are repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And what the devil has done is he has gotten us to believe that it is only faith that is important. And I want to tell you that the devil is perfectly happy with churches that get people to believe in Jesus. He gets extremely irritated when they require repentance as well!

I was saved in 1972. I did not realize back then that Christianity had taken a turn for the worse by then already. I thought that mostly, the evangelicalism of the day was normal Christianity. Well, I got saved much the same time as David Cloud was saved. I read the writings of John R. Rice and followed the Sword of the Lord paper as did David Cloud. But David Cloud went to Bible school in schools such as those preachers promoted. And he got the kind of teaching they gave in that day. There were a lot of wonderful things happening and the devil noticed and he did not like it. He is a most capable deceiver.

The thing stressed above all others was soul winning. And churches that won the most souls got into that large paper edited by Dr. John R. Rice. And competition to win souls set in. It was a day of many people making professions of salvation. And then I remember when John R. Rice passed away and Curtis Hutson became the editor of the paper called the Sword of the Lord.

It seems to me now in hindsight that Satan threw this great effort to win souls a curve and it has brought horrible results to the church. Here is one major error that crept in, and I have

heard it in our town. Many Christians say, "Unbelief is the only sin that will keep you out of heaven. Accept Christ and you will be saved." Now, if that is true, what do you have to do to be saved? The answer is easy, believe in Christ! What is missing? Repentance! I tell you that many who professedly got saved under that teaching had never become lost! They just got saved, so they thought. Listen now to this subtle twist. Curtis Hutson, the new editor of the *Sword of the Lord*, is quoted by David Cloud as saying, "The problem and confusion is not preaching repentance but attaching the wrong definition to the word. For instance, to say that repentance means to turn from sin, or to say that repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action, is to give a wrong definition to the word" (Curtis Hutson, *Repentance: What Does the Bible Teach?* *Sword of the Lord*, 1986, p. 16). And thousands upon thousands got saved under this new push. And the devil used that so successfully that many churches are now filled with people who say, "Lord, Lord," but they are not saved.

That was in 1986. I never picked up on it. But it has had horrible results! Nobody would have believed that from one godly editor to the next editor, such a drastic change could come in such a short time! I went to Prairie Bible Institute. Nobody would have believed that from the death of the founder until today such a drastic change could come. I think it safe to say that almost all modern missions and almost all modern Bible schools are compromised institutions.

Anybody who knew the paper called the *Sword of The Lord* would be shocked how much it changed from one editor to the next. In the same paper, Jack Hyles, who was highly esteemed in that paper, is quoted as saying, "What makes the wrath of God abide on a person? Believing not! So, from what must a person repent in order to be saved? He must repent of that which makes him lost. Since 'believing not' makes him lost, 'believing' makes him saved. The repentance there is a turning from the thing that keeps him from being saved to the thing that saves him. So, yes, there is a repentance from unbelief in order to believe. It is simply a change of direction. It means a turning around. You are going away from not believing, and you decide to turn around and believe. You change your direction; you change your mind. With your will you believe and rely upon Christ to save you. In order to believe, you have to repent of unbelief. That which makes a man lost must be corrected" (Dr. Jack Hyles, *Enemies of Soulwinning*, 1993).

Now I do not have time to deal with the errors in that quote. Let me just say this, it is a lot easier to get people to say they believe in Jesus than to get them to admit they are lost

and need to repent from their sins. The major reason we are lost is sin. Unbelief keeps us there. But let me tell you what happened as I see it. Many, many of those converts in those churches who were led in a so called prayer of salvation, were never saved. They entered this devastating class. They had not been told they needed to repent of their sins. They had not been taught to make right, wrongs they had committed to others. Then when they professed to believe they were taught they had eternal life.

And then they went to Bible school. And then they became pastors. And some of those pastors became Rick Warrens, Rob Bells and Brian MacLarens. And many of these people who got this unrepentant kind of salvation never saw the seriousness of sin when they made their profession, nor ever saw the seriousness of sin after it. And it is these converts that brought about the seeker friendly church, and then brought into existence the emergent church.

Let me read A. W. Pink's quote that has gripped me, "The nature of Christian salvation is woefully misrepresented by the present day evangelist. He announces a Saviour from hell rather than a Savior from sin and that is why so many are deceived, for there are multitudes who wish to escape the lake of fire who have no desire to be delivered from their carnality and worldliness." And when did A.W. Pink write that? Well he died in 1952. He saw it back then. And men like Rob Bell became known as no hell Bell.

May I say this to you, salvation is first from sin, then hell. And if we are not being saved from sin, neither are we saved from hell. Multiplied thousands have followed or are following the teachings of these men and other men like them entered the church, and thought they were saved when they were still lost. And of this kind are those who say, "Lord, Lord", but they are workers of iniquity, they are lost.

Now let me read our text for us again. Jesus said, "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. 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 here is the Lord's response in verse 23, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Now when we come to this verse, surely we say, "These kinds of people who claim to cast out demons and do wonders but who are hypocrites and workers of iniquity or lawlessness must be easy to recognize. Surely they are easy to recognize. Why, they must

be adulterers and thieves and such like. Surely they would be easy to recognize!

Consider Matthew 23 once more. Turn to it. Here are the religious elite of the day. They rule the religious life of Judaism. They were the copiers of the Bible. They had among the most holy of offices. They were also the defenders of the Bible, so they thought. Look at verses 27-28 (read). Do you know what they looked like on the outside? You would never know what is going on, on the inside. Not only do you not know what goes on inside of a hypocrite. They themselves don't know. They think they are righteous. Our text is clear on that also. And just like in our text, they would be very surprised if they should learn the truth about themselves. No, they are not lawless in that they are obvious adulterers or thieves or liars. They have every appearance of a true Christian. They are tares. These are goats. They have no wedding gown. But they are lawless in that the Word of God does not rule over them. And do you know what Jesus said of tares? He said the devil puts them there! (Matt. 13:39). They think they are Christians, and the devil put them there.

Look at verse 28 in Matthew 23. It says, "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." You see, they were hypocrites and lawless! Weymouth's translation says, "The same is true of you: outwardly you seem to the human eye to be good and honest men, but, within, you are full of insincerity and disregard God's Law." How many in the church disregard God's law? And how do we not excuse disregard of the Word of God? How about those texts that instruct Christians not to company with those who profess to be believers and are living in sin? Are there those kind in our community? What about those texts that say we are to avoid those who call themselves Christians and they live in such things as laziness and talk all over the place? How many obey that? And if we don't obey those Scriptures, may I ask you, could we be those who practice lawlessness? "Oh," but you say, "family is very important!" And now we have become lawless and excused it by family! We do not pay heed to the Scriptures and we disobey under the guise of all kinds of excuses. We do not heed Scriptures that say that he that loves father or mother or son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And how often do we not hide our disobedience to God's Word under the word 'love'.

Under various guises, we excuse sin. That is hypocrisy. We excuse smoking. We excuse drinking alcohol. We excuse dating non-Christians. We excuse disobeying the law. We excuse breaking agreements. We excuse lying. We excuse disobedience to the law.

We excuse not paying one's bills. We excuse overcharging. We excuse unfaithful young people. We excuse all kinds of things. No, I am not promoting legalism. I am promoting transparent godliness, those who do the will of God!

You see, Scripture says that all those who name the name of Christ are to depart from iniquity. I have been shocked to learn how much sin is tolerated in churches by professing believers. And not only do they tolerate sin, they think they are serving the Lord! Now you see, when we talk about passages like we have here, we may look at the Scribes and Pharisees of 2,000 years ago and shake our heads, but never notice what is happening right around us. When we hear of workers of iniquity, we think far away. Ought we not to be looking closer to home? We are not exempt from the same sins the religious people of Jesus day were involved in. We need not think these kinds of people were any easier to recognize back then than they are today. But most of all, we should examine our own lives. Do we do what He tells us to do? Surely if we are truly Christians we do not mind to be asked to check our own lives.

Look at our text once more. They thought they were workers of wonders. They claimed they cast out demons, but they had no idea that all that time they are hanging over hell by a thread and that as soon as that thread is cut they would fly into hell. They had no idea. They cannot believe they are not wonderful people. They are convinced they are. But, alas, they had entered a devastating class!

MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY? WHAT DAY?

Now notice that our text says, "Many will say to me IN THAT DAY..." And so we must ask, in what day? It is my view that this passage, and all similar passages speak of those who are alive at the end of the tribulation. You might jot down these passages: Matthew 13:47-50, 24:45-51; 25:14-30; and Matthew 25:31-46, and I think you will find that these are living people who are judged at the end of the tribulation. Now, you see, they are judged while they are alive.

All through history Satan has had his ways of creating this devastating class of people. We see it in the Scribes and the Pharisees, and we see it in the Gospels over and over. We see it in our age and can read of it in church history, and most unbelievably, we see it will happen in the tribulation as well. All those passages that speak about living people being cast into hell where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, speak of that judgment at the end of the tribulation, as does our text. People have entered this devastating class throughout history because the devil has been there throughout history.

And now I ask, if there are this kind of people after very severe persecution such as happens in the tribulation, and there are many of them, I ask you, how many are there in the church in a time and land like we are where there is little persecution? And let me tell you what happens to those who die before that judgment at the end of the tribulation. Let me tell you what happens to people who die in our age. Jesus did not speak of these in our text. I can tell you what happens to people who die now because Jesus told us. Jesus gave the account of the rich man and Lazarus. And the rich man died and he went where? You see, the people Jesus was talking about in our text are judged before they are cast into hell. They are told why they are going there. But in every day life as we know it, people who are lost die and go to hell, and as far as we know they go there without being told why they are going there. They die and wake up in hell! There is no time to argue.

Let me tell you what happens over and over, even in Christian churches. I am talking about those who had entered that devastating class in our day, and they die. They had every look of a good Christian, but they were in that devastating class of those who profess Christianity. The day of the funeral comes and the preacher speaks about how good this person was. Maybe they say, he cast out demons. He prophesied in Jesus' name. He did wonderful things. He gave to the poor. He helped many neighbors. And all the while the family is mourning, and the preacher is preaching, and eulogizing and comforting all those present about how good this person was, and this person is already burning in hell! Does that happen? It happens over and over again.

And in many cases it may actually be worse than that. The person died in a state of sin. But the preacher and all the people gathered around the casket count on that time when this person made a commitment at camp long ago. They count on this person going to heaven because they made a commitment long ago, or maybe not even so long ago. But they were living in sin when they died. But you know what our text said about those who are saved? It did not say they made a commitment. It said they did the will of God! And even if the person who died was bad, we hark back to some commitment, and we preach them into heaven. And at that very moment the preacher is preaching, those who entered that devastating class while they were alive are already burning in hell. I know there is such a thing as backsliding, but I would not encourage anyone with that.

HOW MANY WILL THERE BE IN THIS DEVASTATING CLASS?

So, we ask, of all those who profess salvation, how many are in this devastating class? Our text says there are many. It says, many will say to Me in THAT DAY. There is a day when it is too

late, and it will be too late for many. Life is very serious. And THAT DAY for multiplied millions has come already when they died. You know how the rich man in hell begged Abraham to tell his brothers lest they come into this place of torment. But do you know what he was told? He was told, "They have the Bible. If they don't believe the Bible, nothing will make them believe."

Many will say, "Lord, Lord!", but for them it is too late, too late! They had entered a devastating class! There can be no more devastating moment than when a person has lived a so called Christian life and given time and money to one's efforts, and then he dies and wakes up in hell. I ask you, according to this text, does that happen? And I ask you, according to this text, to how many does this happen? Of all those who profess salvation, our text says this happens to 'many'. You see, we are not talking about such people we see as vile sinners who are ungodly atheists. We are talking about people who have every appearance of being Christians. They thought they were going to heaven but when they died, they went to hell. Many, many of these, at their funeral people are told what wonderful Christians they were. But while the preacher is saying that, already they are burning in the flames of hell! Is it not amazing how deceptive Satan is?

Picture with me now the two roads to the two final destinies of all mankind. One is broad and flat and paved and there are all kinds of people on that road. And there are those on the left and those on the right and those in the middle and those in between the left and the middle and the right and the middle. But picture now the narrow road, leading up steep terrain and through deep, dark valleys, filled with dangers. There is no left and there is no right and there is no middle. It is a narrow road. And if you insist that the road is narrow, and that the Lord expects obedience, you will be called all kinds of things by other professing Christians.

In our community there are many who believe that being divorced and remarried constitutes adultery. They believe the Bible is the Word of God, so they say. But you would not say by their actions that they believe what they say they do. The word they say they believe says, "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is a fornicator, or covetous etc... etc..." But they may go to the weddings of the divorced or they go fishing with them. And how do they reconcile their actions with what the Bible says? They say they love them. And how can you argue against loving someone? So much is hidden under the word love. When someone excuses his actions by saying he or she loves them, now nothing negative can be said to that, and so now it is OK to disobey the Word of God on one hand and

say you believe it on the other. But I raise this question: Is that love? Is disobedience to the Word of God love?

In my own life, as a pastor, I have found that it is accepted by people and sometimes even liked, when one preaches strong messages against sin. But when you live what you preach those same people will lose interest in your preaching and may even speak out against you. If one should preach against divorce and remarriage yet so strongly, and would but sit and visit with them at social functions or family things, such preaching might even find favor with many. But as soon as one puts his money where his mouth is, things change.

May I tell you what Jesus said about those people who are in this devastating class I am telling you about? Here is what he said, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not." There is faith without works. They said the right thing, but they did not do the right thing. And they were hypocrites and they were going to hell. They had entered a devastating class.

I fear many preachers and teachers are hypocrites. I have read recently of preachers who say repentance is not necessary. May it be that they are covering over some area that needs repentance in their own lives? There are those who teach confession is not necessary. I am talking about evangelicals. But may it be they are simply covering some need to confess? People say, "Oh, you are judging. You must not judge. The Bible says, 'Don't judge.'" But is it because they do not want to face the truth where they should? Or could it even be that there is something that needs judgment in them? If we cover ourselves by claiming Christians should not judge, that is nothing but hypocrisy. When we make ourselves look to be biblical, but the facts are we are not willing to do what we ought to do, that is hypocrisy.

How many hypocritically hide behind love? I cannot spank my children, I love them too much. But it is plain disobedience to Scripture. We cannot withdraw from the divorced who profess to be Christians. We love them too much. We associate with those the Scriptures say we ought not to associate, and we hide it under the word love. "Oh, I have to love them. I have decided to love them. I could never do something like that. I cannot do something so unloving." But are the facts not rather that all this talk of love is nothing but hypocrisy?

Our text says that these people who thought they were Christians were workers of iniquity, or lawless. The Online Bible says of

this word iniquity or lawlessness, that it is those who disobey the law or those who are ignorant of it. One wonders how many professing believers even have a regular diet of Bible reading. I am not talking about devotional books. I am talking about the Bible. I wonder sometimes if there are not more people reading devotional books regularly than those who read their Bibles regularly.

Now let us pay attention to what the Lord calls these so called Christians. They thought they were a rare specimen of Christianity. But notice what He called them. He said to them, "Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness". How far is that from what they thought they were? You would not get any idea of that from what they thought about themselves. But the Lord knew where they were. Let us ask ourselves, where am I really? Our hearts are deceitful above all things. We have an ability to justify almost anything we have done. But does what we have done line up with the Word of God? That is the question. Do we do what He says?

Now you see, you may be here, or listening to this message somewhere on-line and you do not profess to be a Christian. Scripture tells us that the day of salvation is today. You are a most fortunate person to still be alive. You are also a sinner. You have come short of His glory. You have offended Him by your life. And if you do not make that right, if you should die you would meet the consequences of sin and you would wake up in hell. But I can tell you on the authority of the Word of God that God loves you. He sent His Son to take your punishment, and if you truly repent of your sins and trust in His Son Jesus Christ, He will save your soul from sin and from hell. You will be set free from sin through obedience to the Word of God. If you have wronged fellow man, you must deal with that sin. Where you have sinned against God, you must confess that to Him. And when you confess those sins He will forgive you. And then you need to find a good church, which is hard to do in our day.

If you think you are a Christian, it is a most opportune time to make sure. May I ask you, when did you get saved? Was there a day when you took care of your sins and you were truly saved? And if so, do you do the will of God?

There will be no more devastating day than the day when those who thought they were saved, and who had said, "Lord, Lord", meet the flames of hell. What a day it will be when there is no more turning, when there is no more opportunity to repent. Oh, what a devastating class to enter! Oh, what a devastating day that will be!

But what a blessed day will it be when the Lord says, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord!" If you are not sure where you stand with the Lord, today is the day to make sure. Confess any wrongs that need to be cleaned up with the Lord. And if the wrong is with people, take care of it with them. And then surrender yourself to the Lord, and tell Him you will do the will of God.