

Matthew 7:21-23
A Tale of Two Confessions

Introduction

- Easily scariest passage in the Bible.
- Old and grey and close your eyes in peace on your death bed, thinking that in moments you'll be in the presence of Jesus and joy forever.
- Or some tragic accident has struck you and you have moments to live and people are comforting you: "It's okay, you'll be in a better place with the faithful saints" - and maybe they comfort themselves with that reality once you're gone.
- But when you open your eyes on the doorstep of heaven you are not met with grace but with eternal judgment.
- You are met with the Lord Jesus Christ not saying "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your master" but you are met with him denying that he has ever known even once.
- It is sobering; a fate many will face. **Read 22**
- This is not a one-off or a rare instance - many will show up on the day of judgement and be cast into hell.

Context:

- Last week: we saw that we need to be on guard for false prophets - others.
- Defined as those who look like sheep, but bear bad fruit - their lives are defined by sinfulness - can lead us astray.
- Issue not necessarily bad theology - though could include that.
- Issue: sinful living, which leads people astray.
- Here, the issue is not being on guard for others, but examining **ourselves**.
- Do **we** really follow Jesus?
- Or will we be those who cry out Lord, Lord and are turned away?
- And if you're thinking "Oh good, I'm glad so and so is here because they really need to hear this" you're actually missing the entire point.
- The point here isn't that so-and-so needs to hear this, the point is every single one of us needs to hear this and examine ourselves.
- This might apply to so-and-so, but first and foremost we need need to ensure that we ourselves are in the Kingdom.
- This is something the Bible calls us to do continually: check to make sure we are actually in the Kingdom/saved/a follower of Jesus.
- **2 Cor. 13:5:** Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not know that Jesus Christ is in you?-unless you fail to meet the test.
- That word examine is to test something closely.
- When someone has an unknown disease usually the first thing doctors do is bloodwork. They take vials of blood and send it off and do dozens/hundreds of tests to see what's really going on.
- That's the idea: examine every aspect of your life, every facet to see if you really are in the faith.
- Are you really committed to Christ? Following him with a whole heart?
- Take inventory of you life.
- **2 Pet. 1:10:** Be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure.
- The Bible teaches election and predestination: the real question is: Are you called? Are you elect?
- Being a Calvinist doesn't get you into heaven. Being a Spirit-filled follower of Jesus does.
- And God doesn't want us to wonder whether or not we're his children - the Bible says we can actually know.
- **1 John 5:13:** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.
- John says that those who are in the faith can actually have assurance that they are in the faith, which also means there will be some who realize that they don't have eternal life.
- They need to repent from their sin and follow Jesus in a faith that overflows in ever increasing obedience.
- This is exactly what Jesus is getting to.
- This is his warning: There will be many people who think they are Christians, think they are heading to heaven when in reality they end up in hell.
- So as we look at our passage, what does Jesus say?

1) This Judgment is Surprising. Read 21-22

- What is so striking here is the surprise: Lord, Lord!! x2
- Earnest pleading / in desperation / utter shock and surprise.
- These people would have never imagined they were not in the Kingdom / Jesus didn't know them.
- **Turn to Matt 25:1-11** - see this same phrase in parable of 10 virgins.
- Point of the parable here: to be ready for Jesus' return; 5 were, 5 were not.
- Always an eschatological focus of following Jesus: how will he evaluate our lives when he returns?
- Their lives were not lived as though Jesus was actually coming back, they backslid their whole lives. **Read**
- Same earnest pleading.
- The same problem: They lived their lives like Jesus wasn't really coming again.
- They called him Lord but lived their lives in sinful foolishness.
- "I do not know you."
- Phrase also used in **Luke 6:46** in Luke's version of SOTM - those who don't build their house on rock.
- "Why do you call me "Lord, Lord" but don't do what I tell you to do?"
- "Lord Lord" always used of unbelievers who are caught by surprise.
- They think they are believers, but they have deceived themselves.
- Jesus is not talking about atheists / agnostics / unbelieving Jews / Muslims / Buddhists who reject him.
- They'll wake up in judgment and know exactly where they're headed - hell will be no surprise for them.
- He's talking about people who call themselves Christians / evangelicals / reformed / conservative / those who have the best church attendance / hardest working / founding members of churches / pastors / elders / deacons.
- We think of big named pastors who have been found out to be in some sort of gross secret in and I usually ask: but what many more are doing that that we don't know?
- But they're easy to take shots at: how many people who are not in any sort of leadership are doing the same thing?
- Deceiving others and deceiving themselves: they have every expectation of being in heaven the moment they die.
- They appear holy and mature but Jesus doesn't even know them.
- They will stand before the Lord Jesus in utter shock and dismay to hear Jesus saying these words.
- I have to tell you that even this week I found myself over and over asking: am I really following Jesus?
- Am I really in? Is my calling and election sure? Have I met the test?
- I don't want there to be any surprises when I stand before the Lord.

2) Lots of people will face this judgment. Read 22

- This is not one-off / not the rare case / exception to the rule.
- Jesus warns us that **many** will face this reality when they finally see God for the first time.
- **Matt 7:13-14** indicates as much. **Read**
- Many on the broad road think they're on the narrow road / think that Jesus is their Lord.
- Spiritual self-deception is rampant in the church and always has been.
- In Jesus's day it was rampant among the unbelieving Jews & Pharisees - **Read 8:5-13**
- What made the Centurion's faith so amazing was that it was blew away the Jews' of Jesus' day.
- Many from outside (Gentiles) will come, while the sons of the Kingdom - people who thought they were sons of God simply because they were Jewish - are cast out.
- In our day those who hold to the prosperity gospel / easy-believism / Roman Catholicism / Mormonism / JWism / 7th Day Adventism / Christian Science / others
- People who are banking on their parents' faith / my dad is an elder / my mom goes to church / I read the Bible once
- All these people - millions / billions - claim to be Christian / love Jesus / believe in Jesus / "Lord, Lord!!"
- But they are not.
- You think of the 4 soils in Matt 13 - just percentage-wise only 25% get in while 75% of the soils think they're getting in.
- Many will face this reality because they never truly stopped to consider their lies.

3) Your public ministry is no guarantee you will enter the KOH. Read 22

- On the outside these guys looked amazing.
- Frankly, we don't do these things: You ever cast out a demon? Done even one miracle?

- I haven't & most of you haven't or haven't told me if you have.
- But all the guys Jesus is referring to had - over and over.
- All had prophesied: spoke for God with authority.
- All had cast out demons - plural.
- Exorcism was usually an apostolic gift - something only the apostles could do but apparently they could do it.
- They had done many mighty works - referring to miraculous gifts.
- And all in your name; this is the emphasis: τῷ ὀνόματι is at the beginning of each phrase:
- **In your name** prophesy / cast out demons / many mighty works.
- "Jesus, we did this all for you!!" Adds to the surprise and incredulity.
- We don't have people in our congregation who do these things.
- And if they didn't make it in, certainly we should check our lives.
- Q: Did these guys really do these things? Maybe.
- **Acts 19:13:** Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims."
- **2 Thess. 2:9-10:** The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.
- Remember in **Matt 10: 5-8:** These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.
- You know who was with them at the time? Judas.
- Judas did all of those things, no one suspected Judas - the treasurer - was any different than the others.
- What a person does at church / for non-profits / in the background / up front is no guarantee they are saved.
- You can't say "I was an elder / deacon / music team / cleaner / S.S. teacher / etc." and think that legitimizes your faith.
- It might actually make your eternal destiny all the more tragic.

4) Their fate is hell. Read 22

- Just in case we missed this: this is an utter renouncing of any affiliation with Jesus.
- Depart from me - get out of here.
- Where are they going to go? Damnation.
- This is eschatological judgment.
- **Matt 25:46:** They go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.
- **Rev. 20:14:** Death and Hades are cast into the Lake of Fire that burns forever and ever.
- **Luke 16:19-31:** Rich man is in anguish and torment and flame.
- It's the flame of hell before the judgment and the lake of fire after the judgment.
- Depart from me - he commands them away from his presence.
- Chilling words: I **never** knew you.
- Notice this: there's no thanks at all from Jesus.
- No "thanks for casting those demons out, sorry I gotta send you to hell."
- No "Thanks for healing all those lepers and blind people" "thanks for preaching in my name."
- There's not even a hint of thankfulness / gratitude.
- Jesus treats them as though they are utterly treasonous / they are completely wicked.
- He has never, ever known them ever.
- Gk emphasis on never: **Never** have I known you.
- It's not that Jesus didn't know **about** them at all.
- He knows all things; Jesus is God - he is omniscient - which is why their deception doesn't fool him in the first place.
- The point is that they were never ever his people.
- They never did Jesus any favors by doing these things in his name.
- Unregenerate people who claim to know Jesus and claim to work in Jesus' name and do "big things" for Jesus are not on his good side in any sense.
- People who are not in the Kingdom don't aid the Kingdom.

- God will use their work in spite of their rebellion to his glory but what does that really matter if in the end he casts them out?
- “But I know Jesus” - not if he doesn’t know you, you don’t.
- I know Donald Trump, but that doesn’t get me into the White House, why not? Because he has no clue who I am.
- That’s what matters here: Does Jesus know us?
- That will determine whether our knowledge of him is true.
- **Turn to John 10:27-30** - Jesus talks about his knowledge of his sheep. **Read**
- What makes a sheep a sheep is that Jesus knows us personally and intimately as the shepherd who lays his life down for us.
- To be fair: Every true sheep does know Jesus.
- But the greater truth: **1 Cor. 8:3**: But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.
- **Gal. 4:9** But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the [law]?
- I like that: yes Christians know God, but the better reality is that God knows us and loves us.
- Back in Matt 7 what Jesus is saying is that he has no saving knowledge of these people.
- They claim to know him, but devastating reality is that he has never known them.

5) What’s the real issue here?

- This is a scary warning - but what about these people should we be warned about?
- See if you can find it - Jesus says it in 2 different ways, see if you can spot it. **Read 21-23**
- Here’s the problem: although they do things for Jesus, they have no devotion to obeying Jesus.
- **Vs. 22**: They do not do the will of his Father in heaven.
- **Vs. 23**: They are workers of lawlessness.
- Yes they have amazing outward ministries, but inwardly they love their sin and do their sin.
- They’ve never really repented from their sin.
- Clear: Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ alone.
- We do not contribute at all to our salvation except the sin that necessitates it.
- BUT the gospel includes the call to lifelong repentance from our sin - inside and out.
- That’s what Jesus has been emphasizing throughout the whole sermon: devotion to God is inward and outward.
- If our lives have not changed at all, it means we are not filled with the Spirit.
- If the only reason you obey Jesus is for social acceptance / because you like churchy things, Jesus is not your Lord.
- If you coddle and hide your sin - if you delight in your sin, Jesus is not your Lord he is your enemy.
- Jesus died for the sin of his people - but not simply so that they’d get a free ticket to heaven.
- **Titus 2:14**: he died to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous - excited about about - good works.
- Not just apathetically doing good, but who are excited and zealous about holy lives because it brings God glory.
- Yes, through faith alone in Christ alone your sins are erased and righteousness has been placed on your account.
- But genuine believers will be earnest in doing good works.
- **Heb 12:14**: There is a holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
- We are saved into holiness and righteousness.
- **Gal 6:7-8**: Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that he will reap; For the one who sows to his own (sinful) flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. The one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
- All through the SOTM we’ve been warned of hypocrisy: This is it big time.
- What do these guys call Jesus? Lord, Lord!
- Q: What does “Lord” mean?
- It means master / chief / head / sovereign.
- Someone who has absolute control of your life, who you obey and respect and submit to in secret as well as in public.
- These guys called Jesus their Lord, but never lived like it.
- Even in their ministry they harbored sin, loved sin, cherished it.

- Their faith - because it had no works - was what? Dead on arrival.
- Beloved, there will be many on the Day of Judgment just like them.
- Don't let it be you.
- You say: It might be me; now what?
- "I believe in the Lord Jesus, that he died on the cross in my place for my sins and has given me his righteousness."
- But you must also turn from your sin - repent - and walk according to the Spirit.
- Dr. Charles Hodges: "Do I want to please God more than I want to breathe?" Some may question the intensity of this question, but it is an excellent indicator of our commitment. Just as the air we breathe gives us life, we must hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6), and Jesus promised that if we do, we will be filled. (Moles, Domestic Abuse)
- Do you do the will of the Father in heaven - on the inside and the outside?
- Do that and live.

Pray