

“True Disciples” Delivered by E A Terry 10 15 17
Matthew 22: 36 – 39; James 1: 19 – 27; 1st John 2: 3 – 11; **Matthew 7: 15 – 23 (Sermon)**

To me one of the saddest verses in scripture is Matthew 7:23. ***“Depart from me; I never knew you.”***

There are several aspects of this passage that make it very sad. First, not everyone will be saved from spending eternity in hell.

Secondly, not everyone who expects to be saved will be saved.

Third, not everyone who prophesies in Jesus’ name, casts out demons, and / or performs miracles will be saved.

And fourth not every one who calls on the name of The Lord will be saved.

Most people will call on The Lord when they are very sick, but not everyone who calls Jesus Lord will be saved.

People will call Jesus Lord when they are in trouble and are desperate but not everyone who calls Jesus Lord will be saved.

We call Jesus Lord when we are in church but not everyone who calls Jesus Lord will be saved.

Here in this passage Jesus tells us that on Judgment Day there will be some people who fully expect to spend eternity in heaven but Jesus will have to tell them, ***“Depart from me; I never knew you.”***

Not only is this one of the saddest verses of scripture it is one of the most sobering verses in the Bible.

In order for us to understand this passage we first need to establish who Jesus is referring to.

Jesus is talking to religious people.

Jesus is talking to the people that were following Him as He taught.

Jesus is talking to His disciples.

Jesus is talking to me and to you.

This scripture challenges all of us who profess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior to examine every aspect of our lives to see if our motives and our ministry are aligned with God’s plan and purpose for our life.

Next we have to wonder how people could prophesy in Jesus’ name, drive out demons, and perform miracles and not be saved.

Earlier in this chapter Jesus warned us about false teachers.

And in Luke 9:1, 2, and 6 we read that Jesus called the twelve disciples together ***“and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.”***

Remember Judas Iscariot was one of the 12 and Jesus gave all 12 of the disciples authority and power.

Judas Iscariot as well as the other 11 could preach, cast out demons, heal the sick, and raise the dead.

Yet Judas is in hell according to Jesus.

Judas had been called by Jesus and Judas had responded to Jesus' call.

Judas had been ordained into a world-changing ministry yet Judas' life was not changed.

The Bible said Judas was a thief. (John 12:6).

Judas answered Jesus' call to follow Jesus yet Judas rejected the life-changing saving grace that Jesus offers.

Judas' life was not changed because Judas never truly repented of his sin.

Judas was not saved because Judas never asked for forgiveness.

Even after Judas realized he had betrayed The Lord Judas hung himself rather than asking Jesus to forgive him.

Judas made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ but Judas did not possess that faith that changes lives and saves us from hell.

Judas was in Jesus' presence for three years but Judas did not enjoy a close personal relationship with Jesus.

So the next question becomes, "***Who can be saved?***"

In Acts the Philippian jailor asked "***what must I do to be saved?***"

Paul and Silas answered "***believe in The Lord Jesus and you will be saved***" (Acts 16:30-31).

In John 6:28-29 Jesus was asked, "***What must we do to do the works God requires?***"

Jesus answered, "***The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.***"

Believe that Jesus is God and believe that Jesus died for your sins is critical.

But remember belief is much more than lip service.

Believe means to act on that belief. In John 14:23 Jesus said "***if you love me you will keep my commandments***".

Romans 10:9 is crystal clear; "***If you declare with your mouth "Jesus Is Lord", and believe in your heart that raised Him from the dead you will be saved.***"

The answer to who can be saved is also found in verse 21 of our text.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7: 21)

So what is the will of God? In Genesis we read that God created man in His image.

God created humans in His image so we could have and enjoy a personal relationship with Him.

In real estate the most important thing is *“location – location - location.”*

In Christianity the essential thing is *“relationship – relationship -relationship.”*

True Christianity means a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Greek word translated as ***“knew”*** that Jesus used when He said ***“I never knew you”*** is certainly more than an intelligent knowledge since Jesus is all knowing.

The Greek word for ***“knew”*** in verse 23 of our text literally means physical intimacy.

Jesus’ desire is for an intimate relationship with each of us.

What Jesus is saying here in verse 23 of our text is you listened to my words but you did not let my words transform your attitude and your actions.

You did works in my name but you did not do them out of love for me.

You did not let me be an integral part of your life.

You knew about me, you did things for me, but you do not have a close personal relationship with me.

In John 17:21 Jesus prayed, ***“That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”***

In Philippians 3:8-9 Paul said, ***“What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”***

When two people become intimate the doors of communication are always open.

When two people have a close personal relationship they long to be in each other’s presence.

When two people are in a close personal relationship they have a passion to know what the other is thinking, they know what the other person wants them to do, and they do it.

They never work independently, nor are they ever in competition with each other.

When two people are intimate they are one! Jesus referred to this intimate personal relationship in this way ***“I in them and you in me”***. (John 17:23)

Intimacy with Jesus is a bond so tight that nothing else matters but being in His presence and advancing His kingdom on earth.

And this was Jesus’ prayer for you and me in the garden on the night that he was betrayed.

“I pray also for all those who will believe through their message that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17: 20 – 21)

A close personal relationship with Jesus can only be realized when we totally surrender our will to Jesus, when we obey all of Jesus’ commands, and when we make a commitment to daily pray, Bible study, and advancing His kingdom on earth.

Beliefs are important. But without proper behavior, our beliefs are in vain.

Confession is good. But if confession is not followed by a change in attitude and in action, our confession is futile.

Warnings are important. But if a warning is not followed by corrective action, the warning was useless.

Jesus clearly taught that there is only one proof of love, and that proof is obedience.

There is no point in saying that we love a person, and then do things which break that person’s heart.

So often we confess our belief in God with our lips but we deny Jesus with our actions.

Jesus said; ***“anyone who loves me will obey my teachings.”*** (John 14:23)

We can be a Christian in our confession, but unchristian in our conduct.

We can be a Christian in our beliefs, but unchristian in our behavior.

We can be a Christian in our prayers, but unchristian in our practice.

We can do Christian deeds but have deceit in our hearts.

It is not difficult to recite a creed, but it is difficult to live the Christian life.

Faith without practice is a contradiction in terms, and love without obedience is an impossibility.

In this passage Jesus exposed the people who claimed to be His disciples but their heart was not right with God.

It is not enough to talk the talk – we have to walk the walk.

Jesus exposed those people who sounded religious but they did not love The Lord or did they love their neighbor.

God's word to us this morning is a clear warning.

It is not the outward profession, but the inward close personal relationship with a crucified living Savior that is all-important.

The prophet Isaiah warned us when he said ***“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon his name while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”*** (Isaiah 55:6-7)

In John 5:42 Jesus told the Pharisees ***“I know you do not have the love of God in your hearts”***

In this passage Jesus exposed the people who sounded religious but did not have a personal relationship with Him

In verse 21 Jesus said, ***“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”***

These were good people Jesus is addressing.

These people thought they would get into heaven by doing good deeds.

These people honestly thought they were going to heaven until judgment day actually arrived.

And judgment day will arrive for each one of us one day.

They thought they were going to heaven until The Lord judged them and said: ***“Depart from me; I never knew you.”***(Matthew 7:23)

You see one of Satan's most effective tools is deception.

Satan leads many into a false sense of security by suggesting that “getting saved” is much like getting a vaccination – a once for life kind of thing.

I trust that most of us here today realize that being saved from hell involves more than the decision to ask Jesus to save you.

You see, the decision to ask Jesus as your Savior is only the beginning.

The decision to ask Jesus to save you must be followed by you wanting and by you allowing the Holy Spirit to make changes in your life and your lifestyle.

In verse 22 Jesus said, ***“In that day”***.

This is a clear reference to judgment day and Jesus' role as judge.

Romans 14:12 is crystal clear. ***“Everyone will have to stand before God and give an account.”***

And in Matthew 12:36 Jesus said, ***“But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every empty word they have spoken.”***

Jesus is clear on judgment day many will say: " *Lord, I taught Sunday School,
I sang in the choir,
I was a pastor,
I cleaned the church,
I played the piano at church,
I kept the church books,
I took up the offering,
Lord I did many wonderful things in your name."*

But Jesus sternly warns us unless we do these things out of love for Him and do them so that Jesus receives the glory all of our good works count for nothing.

God's Word to us today challenges each of us to examine our love for The Lord, our obedience to Jesus' commandments, and most importantly our relationship with Jesus Christ.

When Jesus calls you home will Jesus say ***“well done thy good and faithful servant enter into the joy of The Lord”*** (Matthew 25:21) or will Jesus say ***“I never knew you. Away from me you evil doer.”*** (Matthew 7:23)

AMEN