
Judas Iscariot: Traitor

Mark 3:19

Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher

3/5/24 © 2024

Transcript:

We have just completed our study of the twelve disciples. Our last disciple we looked at last week was Judas Iscariot. And as I was thinking about him and thinking that this is the most hated man in all of human history because of his betrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ, I couldn't help to think how important it would be for us to talk about which gate, which door, which way you have entered, whether it's a narrow gate or whether it's a wide gate, because both of them have a sign that says heaven. And I believe that on Mother's Day or any other holiday or any other time that we meet, in fact, I believe every day that we should be preaching the gospel to ourselves. The only assurance that we're going to have of our salvation is going to come from the gospel.

00:00:54

It's going to come from the word of God. We should most frequently visit that subject. And so, as we do that, this morning I want to invite you to turn to Matthew, chapter seven. Matthew chapter seven. And I just want

to look at two verses, though we will look at many verses, but two verses that are found here in Matthew chapter seven.

00:01:16

And they're in verses 13 and 14.

00:01:22

But I want you to notice as we read these two verses, it talks about only one leading to heaven and the other one leading to hell.

00:01:37

So just to give you a context, I'm going to begin at verse 13, and then I'm going to read down to the end of the chapter. But we'll focus on these two verses. It says, enter the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction. And there are many who enter it.

00:02:01

For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life. And there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?

00:02:25

So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to me, lord, lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven, will enter.

00:02:55

Many will say to me on that day, lord, lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house, and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

00:03:39

The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house, and it fell, and great was its fall. When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

00:04:10

The closing section of the sermon on the mount is a gospel application. Here we find two gates, two ways, two destinations, and two groups of people. Two kinds of trees and two kinds of fruit, two kinds of groups at the judgment, two kinds of builders building on two kinds of foundations.

00:04:37

Christ is drawing the line as clearly as possible between the way that leads to destruction and the way that leads to life. So, as Linsky says, let us judge ourselves according to the gate and the way we enter it.

00:05:00

I've been reading through this chapter a lot. In fact, before we even got here this morning, I'd already been reading through it a number of times, because as I was picking up here at verse 13, I really wanted to understand the context and how this worked out. And the first part of it talks about not judging others. But as it talks about not judging others, it

says, judge yourself. You got to look to see before you can help a brother or sister out.

00:05:31

If you have a two by four log beam in your own eye before you can get the little speck out of your brother or sister's eye. And then it goes into verse seven, talking about asking and seeking and knocking. It talks about the Father who is in heaven, giving what is good to those who ask him. And then it talks about entering the narrow gate. And in verse 15, it talks about, as you do all of this, you need to beware of the false prophets.

00:06:04

And then verse 21, you have those who say, lord, lord. And then you have those who do, the will of my father who is in heaven. And then as he talks about the two types of foundations, there are those who hear God's word and acts on it. And then there are those who do also hear the word of God but do not act on it. And I really believe the chapter is talking about the same thing, talking about how we are to strive to enter the kingdom of God, you have to judge yourself first.

00:06:47

I mean, essentially, that's what we do every time we share in the Lord's supper, right? We're told to examine ourselves. We're told to make sure that we don't take of this in an unworthy manner. Right?

00:07:02

But we're also told to examine ourselves to make sure that we're in the faith. Because you have false prophets who come with a false message, and according to verse 15, they come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. And the sheep's clothing is really, from my understanding, the garb of a shepherd, not that of a sheep. So they come disguised as shepherds, but they're false shepherds. And they come saying, no, this is the way to heaven.

00:07:38

Jesus said, you're going to know them by their fruits.

00:07:43

And then he gives this sobering warning that not everyone who says, lord, lord, just because you say Jesus is your Lord, does that mean he is your Lord? Is it all based upon just what you say? I mean, saying is part of it. Because we're told in romans ten nine that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from

the dead, you will be saved. So there is confession in that, but it's not confession alone.

00:08:14

You have to act upon that confession. That's where you're doing the will of my father, who is in heaven.

00:08:25

And so we have to ask that question, which gate did you enter? And as we talk about these two gates, I want to first talk about in verse 13, the narrow gate, because the first thing he says is to enter it. Now, again, you have to understand the striving that's going on there, the agonizing that's going on there. Some people have ridiculously have said it is easy to become a Christian. I tell you, I so disagree with that.

00:09:05

Yes, there is no work that we have to do because Jesus did all the work. You understand that none of our works are good enough. They're all but just filthy rags. When we come into the kingdom of God, we're coming in on the merit of Christ, not our merits. Again, our merits won't stand.

00:09:28

But if you judge what is here in the context, you start with yourself and you ask and you seek and you knock and you enter.

00:09:43

But you have to understand that that gate that you're entering is narrow.

00:09:48

It is very narrow. I was down at the hospital this week, and one of the doors, they have is a turnstile.

00:10:01

Well, you can't carry much of anything through that, can you? That reminds me of the narrow gate. Now, if you have all kinds of baggage, they have a door on each side, and that's what you go through. It's a wide door. And I can't get away from that imagery of what is here in this text.

00:10:25

So I want to talk about what it means to enter the narrow gate. There are two gates. There are two roads that are marked to heaven. One is the narrow road of divine righteousness. The other one is the broad road of humanity, righteousness.

00:10:45

But let's again notice the narrow gate. And the first thing he says to us in verse 13 is, you must enter it. And I say it this way, too, if you never repent, you never will become a Christian.

00:11:03

If you never repent and place your faith in Jesus Christ, you will never be saved. You will be on the road and stay on the road that's wide, that road that leads to destruction. And by the way, every person coming into this world is on the wide road. You're already on that road. Every person born, every person ever to be born is already on the road to hell.

00:11:34

And it's only the gospel that changes that, because the gospel tells you how you can enter the narrow gate. But again, you got false teachers. They're telling you that the wide gate is the narrow gate, but it's not.

00:11:53

So you must enter it, you must move into it. You must come into it. You must go into it. And there is an urgency here and the use of the imperative. The gospel is a call to enter the right gate.

00:12:13

And if you're never opening up the word of God, you're never going to know what is the right gate. Because the Bible constantly talks about the right gate, and it warns about the wrong gate. It always talks about the right way, the wrong way. And yet there are people out there saying that always lead to heaven. All religions will eventually get to heaven, and that's not true because he's already said in verse 15, beware of false prophets.

00:12:46

So that's telling us those who come with a different message. That's not the message of the gospel. The message that's preaching the narrow way are preaching a different gospel. And you have to be aware of that. Now, the scripture has always called sinners to choose life.

00:13:06

Listen to a few of these passages. Deuteronomy 30:19 says, I call heaven and earth as witness today against you, and I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life. That both you and your descendants may live. Choose it.

00:13:26

Joshua 20 415 says, and if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourself this day who you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve who the Lord.

00:13:47

Jeremiah 21 eight. Now you shall say this to the people. Thus says the Lord, behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.

00:14:01

You have to choose the right gate.

00:14:07

And the scripture has always charged man responsible for which gate he chooses. So if he doesn't choose the narrow gate and he rejects that and rejects the gospel and stays on the wide gate or the wide road, he is responsible for that. He will bear the responsibility. One commentator says, choosing life or death was also emphasized by Jesus. The one who believed in him had the promise of eternal life, while the one who refused to believe faced eternal death.

00:14:46

And that's what we're seeing in the gospel of Mark in our study, as he presents to them the right way to heaven. But what did they do? Many of them rejected Jesus. And then you also had some of them that attracted themselves to Jesus because of the miracles, because of the healings, because of hearing him teach like no one had ever taught. They'd never heard a man speak like this.

00:15:11

And so they attached, some attached themselves just for that.

00:15:16

And over in John 225, it says that there were many that had believed in him, but he did not commit himself to them because he knew what was in the heart of every man. Not everybody comes to Jesus for the right reasons. Some come thinking, well, I'll come for a better life. I'll come because my life is a mess. I've tried, you know, Buddha, I've tried Confucius, I've tried mormonism.

00:15:52

And now I'll give Jesus a try. I'll try Christianity.

00:15:59

Jesus said in John 539, you search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me, but you are not willing to come to me that you may have life. He has the words of life. And every time things get so overwhelming in my life, and if any time a thought enters my head about giving up, I think about something that Peter said. Because there were other disciples that followed Jesus. And when he started talking about eating my flesh and drinking my blood and essentially talking about a commitment to him, many of them stopped walking with him, stopped following him.

00:16:47

And so he turns to the twelve, and he says, will you go away, too? And Peter said this, where can we go? For we have come to know that you have the words of eternal life. See, once you experience salvation, which is a total transformation of your life, no matter how messed up you think your life is, you have found now that he has the words of eternal life. And listen, if anything, we learned from all of the disciples that they were just as raw as us, right?

00:17:26

They didn't have it all together, and yet many have crystallized them. They make windows, stained glass windows, with the disciples on them. They name cities after them. They named towns after them. They named churches and cathedrals after them.

00:17:44

And I honestly believe that if any of them were here today, they would be crying out and saying, blasphemy. Don't do that. Same way when John the apostle in the Book of Revelation, every time he kept getting overwhelmed by the revelation that was being presented to him. He kept falling down to the angel that was presenting it to him. And the angel kept saying, get up.

00:18:06

Worship God. I'm a creature just like you. It's amazing that we have that in the book of Revelation. And yet the Catholic Church still to this day, endorses angel worship.

00:18:23

You have to choose, and then once you choose, you have to receive him. John 111 and twelve says that he came to his own, and his own did not receive him. So there were some that didn't receive him. And then it says,

but as many as received him, to them, he gave the right to become children of God to those who believe in his name. So receiving him is believing in him.

00:18:55

Believing in him is entering the right gate, so you must enter. And secondly, you must enter the narrow gate. That's, again a command from Jesus. He's demanding action right away, right now. This is the time to enter.

00:19:14

This is what God is calling for. You must do it. It's not an option. It is a command. And, you know, sometimes when you talk to people about the gospel and they say, well, I'm just not ready right now.

00:19:25

And sometimes we foolishly go, okay, I understand. No, this is urgent. Would you say that to someone you were trying to rescue out of a burning building? And they said, you know, I kind of like the heat in here right now. Feels pretty good.

00:19:41

Would you say that's okay? They say, I'm not ready to be rescued. Well, that's all right. No, you would drag them out, wouldn't you? You'd force them out, because you know that if they stayed there, it was a certain death.

00:19:57

And the same is true if you stay in that condition you're in, and you're not entering the right gate, and you're not believing the right things, you're going to perish.

00:20:10

The gate is narrow, and it doesn't leave any room for any other views of salvation. There's only one way to heaven, and it's through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father but through me. Or acts 4:12.

00:20:29

There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved.

00:20:34

Christ is the only way to salvation. The way is narrow. There are no alternatives. You must enter by an act of the will and by an act of faith. And you have to enter on God's terms through God's prescribed gate.

00:20:50

And I've even had people even tell me that I'll come on my own terms. And I said, well, if you're going to come on your own terms, you're not coming. And he's not going to accept you either, because you can't come on your own terms.

00:21:03

Listen, who was it that said that you and I are sinners? God did. He defined what a sinner is. Who was it that gave the consequences of being a sinner? God did.

00:21:17

For the wages of sin is death. Who was it that said, obey me? God did.

00:21:29

There are many people that are on that broad road of destruction, and they're unwilling to come to Christ. But Christ is the only way. Jesus said in John 6:35, I am the bread of life. John ten seven, I am the door of the sheep. He is the way.

00:21:55

Now, I believe that Jesus here is challenging his audience. You had the Jewish people there. Obviously, you had his disciples there. But primarily

the self righteous, because many of them didn't see themselves as self righteous. They saw themselves as righteous, that their righteousness came from God.

00:22:21

But when you examine their life, you find out that the righteousness that they're banking their life on was not God's righteousness. It was their own righteousness. For example, over in Luke 18 nine, it states that the Pharisees had trusted in themselves that they were righteous. That's a problem, isn't it? And people still had that same problem today.

00:22:44

But Jesus told them in Matthew 23 28 that inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. So if you want to define your righteousness, that's how Jesus defined it. And here's what he said to the self righteous. Matthew 912. Those who are well have no need of a physician.

00:23:05

If you're self righteous, you think that you're good. You think everything's okay. You don't need a doctor. Only those who need a physician are those who are sick, those who know that they are sick, he said, I didn't come to

call the righteous or the self righteous. I came to call sinners to repentance.

00:23:25

See, if you think everything's okay in your life and that you're good enough and you have these certain acts or merits that will earn your way to heaven, then you're failing to see really how sick you are. In fact, scripture paints it this way in Ephesians two and verse one, that you are dead in trespasses and sins. You're dead in your sin. You're dead man walking.

00:23:57

Jesus is teaching here in the sermon on the mount, is to challenge the self righteousness of the Jews. You cannot enter the kingdom unless you come on the terms that he described. You must abandon your self righteousness. You must see yourself like in the beatitudes, as a beggar in spirit, who is mourning over his sin, who is meek before a holy God, who is hungry and thirsting for righteousness. You must enter on his terms.

00:24:28

Listen, hell will be full of people who admired the sermon on the Mount. But you must enter the narrow gate.

00:24:41

So you must enter. You must enter the narrow gate. Third, you must enter the narrow gate alone. That's implied. The word narrow gives the idea that it's very narrow.

00:24:54

Some Bible commentators compare it to the turnstile that I was talking about a moment ago. You have to enter it alone. As I said, you can't go through that thing with a whole bunch of stuff.

00:25:07

In acts 16:31 and 32, some believe Paul there is teaching household salvation, but a clear examination of the passage reveals otherwise, because he tells the Philippian jailer to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and all who were in the house.

00:25:33

See, it's an individual thing. It's something each individual must do. You must enter. You must enter the narrow gate. You must enter alone.

00:25:46

By the way, this implies great difficulty.

00:25:52

Salvation may be by grace alone, but it's not easy. Verse 14. It shows us that difficult is the way which leads to life. And notice this, there are few who find it. Few.

00:26:13

Why? Because it's narrow and you have to come along. So if you find that way, like I said, you're already on the wide road that leads to destruction. You're already entering through the wide gate.

00:26:29

Many go that way.

00:26:33

That's what he says. At the end of verse 13. There are many who enter through it, but Jesus says, it's a difficult way. It's a confined way, it's a constricted way. And the idea of difficult it means to experience trouble or difficulty.

00:26:55

There's nothing easy about coming to Christ and entering the narrow gate. Listen to what scripture says about this and ask yourself, is this easy? Matthew 1038. And he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Is it easy to take up your cross?

00:27:16

I mean, to take up a cross means you're going to die. See, that's what you should be thinking when you see a cross. You should be thinking death. And that's why in different places where accidents have occurred and people have died, they would put crosses there in memory of the person who had died there, because the cross was a symbol of death.

00:27:42

Notice Matthew 16 24 25. Then Jesus said to his disciples, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. So I ask you again, is any of that easy?

00:28:04

Is it easy to deny yourself?

00:28:10

Next time you get into an argument with somebody, see if you can stop it by denying yourself. Folks, that's really the only way you're going to stop it. You have to keep. You got to get away from that whole idea that you deserve better and you deserve more, even if you're right.

00:28:32

But is this easy? You have a desire to become a Christian. Do you have a desire to have Christ in your life? Well, here's where it starts. Deny yourself, take up your cross, follow me.

00:28:53

And it's really sad because there are many pastors in many churches, and they end their services this way. And they'll say, you need to make a decision for Christ. I'm okay with that. Because you need to choose life. And then they say, you need to pray a prayer.

00:29:05

You need to pray this prayer. And then they pray for them. And I'm not against prayer either, because romans ten says, you've got to call upon the name of the Lord, so you've got to talk to him. But then there are other things walking an aisle. And some people equate their salvation with walking an aisle.

00:29:21

And they say, well, you know, I remember when I got saved because I walked down this aisle. I was at this church. I was at this place.

00:29:30

I didn't get saved in a church, by the way. I got saved at a friend's house as another friend came over and shared the gospel with me. After he completed sharing the gospel with me and I was convicted, I went to another room, and I just got on my knees and I prayed, and I asked God to save me. I wanted to follow him. I didn't see any fireworks when I was done.

00:29:53

But I'll tell you one thing I do remember is my desires were different now. I mean, it was incredible. I had a desire now for God. It was like a whole environment now opened up. A whole world had just opened up before me where I had never cared about God, never thought about God, except for when I used his name in a curse word.

00:30:15

But now I had a desire for him. Now I had a desire to please him, to honor him, to worship him, to follow him, to obey him. And then I had a desire for his word. And my buddy took me and we went to old Gateway mall. Y'all remember Gateway mall?

00:30:33

Grew up out here, and there was a bookstore in there and went in there and got a little bible and took it home. We got some gospel tracts, too. Didn't know what gospel tracts were, but we left there, and then we went and stood outside of Jack's liquors. That was on Dunn Avenue. That was a place they used to frequent a lot.

00:30:53

And we stood outside passing out those gospel tracts to everybody that was going in and coming out. Well, see, since I went there a lot, I knew a lot of people, and they knew me. And so when they were coming by and I'm handing them these things and I'm trying to share with them about Jesus, and they're kind of scratching their head and they're going, wait a minute. What happened to you? Come on in here with us and party with us like you used to do.

00:31:16

And they kept trying to get me to come in there. You know, at that time, I had a heavy metal rock band, too, and I played those bars and. But all that ended in that very moment because I knew I couldn't do the same things anymore, and I didn't even want to do them anymore. And that's what I said about the desire part. I had no desire for any of that anymore.

00:31:38

I walked away from it. Now I had a desire to go back to my friends and share with them what happened. And after a while, my friends kind of turned their back on me because they didn't want to hear that I was now a party pooper instead of a party goer or a participant in the parties.

00:31:59

Acts 14:22 says, we must, through many tribulations, enter the kingdom of God. That, again, is identifying the difficulty of it. Was it difficult for you to give up your life? Was it difficult to give up your sin? Because we love our sin.

00:32:21

That's why we sin. We love it. But you got to give it up. You got to turn from it. You've got to repent.

00:32:31

You got to change the way you think about Jesus now. And the only way that's going to change is by hearing about Jesus from a preacher or a believer that knows Jesus and then being pointed to the word of God.

00:32:49

Notice in verse 14 about the narrow gate. He says at the end of verse 14, few who find it. Few find it. Oh, wow. There's so many people trying to find it, and they think they found it.

00:33:06

But he says, few find it. And that's because they were listening to verse 15, the false prophets telling them that, no, they didn't have to repent, they didn't have to do all this, or they could do that and still hold on to other things that were sinful, still hold on to your life. But that's not what we just heard in Matthew 1038 or Matthew 1624 and 25. Right? It said that you have to deny yourself, you have to take up your cross, you have to follow him.

00:33:42

So Jesus says, you have to search for it.

00:33:48

The parallel passage to this is Luke 13. Listen to this. In Luke 1322. And following it says, and he went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. And then one said to him, Lord, are there few who are saved?

00:34:06

And he said to them, strive to enter through the narrow gate for many. I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Word strive again Nizumai is where we get the word agonize. You have to agonize to enter. And this is really echoing what was said in the Old Testament.

00:34:32

Jeremiah 20 913. And you will seek me and find me. When you search for me with all your heart, you've got to search for him. See, before I got saved, I wasn't searching for him, but the Lord put me in the right place at the right time and the right individual. Because this person who came sharing the gospel was a person who I used to party with.

00:35:00

He used to come when we would play in the bars and he would help us set things up and take things down. And so in exchange for that, we'd get him drunk, we buy him beer. That's how we paid him. He didn't mind. But then he disappeared for some time.

00:35:16

You're like, what happened to cuz that was his nickname Cuz? Actually, he was related to someone in the group. And we just all called him cuz. And

the next thing, he. He comes back around and he's sharing the gospel, and we're going, what happened to you?

00:35:35

But you know what? I sat there in that chair because I felt I was respectful enough to what he had to say because I'd heard the gospel growing up. And you know where I heard it? Right here. This church.

00:35:50

This is the church my family was at back in the seventies. So I heard the gospel over and over many, many, many times. And even at one point, I was nine years old, and I had another buddy that was sitting there with me in the pew. And it was about the third, 4th pew right here. And Jack Connell is standing right there doing the invitation.

00:36:09

And he told me what to say to come tell Jack I wanted to get saved. I didn't know what that meant. I had no clue. I was nine years old.

00:36:19

Next thing I know it, I'm getting baptized right there. But you know what?

00:36:26

I still continued in my mischievous ways as a little nine year old. And as I continued to grow, I continued to develop those sinful habits. And it wasn't until I was 19 years old when I actually got saved. As I was describing a moment ago, you have to search for him with all your heart.

00:36:52

Deuteronomy 4:29. It says that from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. So by being in the right place and hearing the gospel shared with me and hearing what he had to say in the gospel, that seeking started right at that very moment. But the good thing about it is my search was immediately over, because he told me about Jesus.

00:37:24

And it was really more that Jesus found me, more than I found him.

00:37:33

But he has my heart. He has my soul. He has all my life. Now, I don't always do what is right, but, you know, I'm in the same company. Neither do you.

00:37:48

I don't always say the right things. In fact, I stumble over my words many times and relationships, and I walk away from there going, why did you say that? That was just dumb, stupid, sinful, wicked. Why did I say that or why did I do that? And I've always believed that if you sinned against somebody, you need to go to that somebody you sinned against, and you need to confess that to them and seek for their forgiveness and restore that relationship.

00:38:18

And I've done that the whole 40 years that I've been a believer. And I've even had at one time where I did that. And someone's like, what are you talking about? I don't even know what you're talking about. I don't remember you doing that.

00:38:30

They didn't care, but my conscience did. I cared. We have to seek the lord. Isaiah 55 six. Seek the Lord while he may be found.

00:38:47

Call upon him while he is near.

00:38:54

You have to enter. You have to enter the narrow gate. You have to enter the narrow gate alone.

00:39:04

Now, I would test your spirituality on Mother's Day, but I'm not going to do that because I have a lot more to say. Doesn't end right here.

00:39:15

So we're going to have to reserve it for next week. That's okay. You've heard enough today to examine yourself, right? You've heard enough right now to really discern whether you're in the faith. You've heard enough today to where you could call upon him and be saved if you're not saved.

00:39:36

But I just want to leave you with this. Verse 21.

00:39:42

These are the most haunting words. Not everyone who says to me, lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father, who is in heaven, will enter. Many will say to me on that day, lord, lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles? And then I will declare

to them, I never knew you depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

Lawlessness is living as if there is no law.

00:40:23

The law that you're living by is the law that you've created in your heart.

Your own standard of righteousness, not God's standard of righteousness.

00:40:33

You see, you have someone who is saying they know the Lord. And just

because you say that, does that mean you know the Lord? Where's the

proof? I mean, even James, in the book of James, chapter two, he says,

show me your faith. Show it to me.

00:40:51

Let me see it. How can you see faith? Well, you see it in deeds. You see it

in action. That's why he says, doing the will of my father.

00:41:01

That's why he says, when he compares the two foundations, you got one

who hears and one who does.

00:41:09

It's the doers. How about James 122? Be doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves. If you just hear only and you never do, you're self deceived. You're on the wide road that leads to destruction.

00:41:28

Look at verse 22. Those that are saying, lord, lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles. These were religious people.

00:41:45

And the idea of lord, Lord, they're in shock because they have been in hell, and now they're at the judgment.

00:41:58

They're shocked. They thought that they knew Jesus. They thought that they were saved and they were not saved.

00:42:07

They just had words. They had a profession. They didn't have a possession of Christ.

00:42:14

See, here's a question to ask yourself. Do I know Christ? And here's another question. Does he know me? Because look at what he says here, verse 23.

00:42:25

I will declare to them, I never knew you. I mean, you're in verse 22. You're saying you're prophesying in my name. That's preaching. You're saying you've cast out demons.

00:42:39

You say that you performed many miracles.

00:42:43

I never knew you. What you really were doing is what the end of verse 23 says. You were practicing lawlessness. That's what characterized your life. That was the God of your life, not Jesus.

00:43:02

So if you want to know if you're saved, consider what I've just shared. Does he dominate your life? Is he your life?

00:43:17

Do you live every day for him? Is the deepest desire of your heart to obey him? Over in one John, Chapter two, I think one John is an entire epistle

on examining our hearts and really understanding what assurance is. But listen to what he says right here first. John two, three.

00:43:41

By this we know that we have come to know him if we obey his commandments. The one who says, I have come to know him and does not obey his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps or obeys his word in him. The love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know we are in him.

00:44:12

This is how you can know if you're a Christian. Do you obey Jesus? Jesus even had to say to the crowd, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things that I say?

00:44:26

Doesn't make sense, does it? You say that Jesus is your lord, but you don't follow him. You don't obey him. No time in his word. Only time you pray is when you're in trouble or you need something.

00:44:46

So, as we conclude this this morning, examine yourself in light of Matthew seven. Judge yourself. Are you in the faith? Did you come through the right gate? Did you come through the narrow gate?

00:45:03

Did you enter it? Did you enter it alone?

00:45:07

Did you ask God to save you? Did you seek Jesus for salvation? Are you banging on his door. Let me in.

00:45:22

Because if you didn't, you're still lost and you need to be saved.

00:45:33

Earlier, I was quoting from Romans ten.

00:45:37

And in Romans ten, it tells us that if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness. In the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the scripture says, whoever believes in him will not be disappointed. For

there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on him.

00:46:07

For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then, will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in him in whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

00:46:24

See, I was in the right place at the right time. I was there for other reasons. I was there to get high. I was there to get drunk, because that's what I did. I did that every day.

00:46:35

I was telling something about my mom right here, the night of Mother's Day. She told my neighbor two things that I remember when they were discussing what happened to me, because I remember when I came home that night after getting saved and after being at Happy Jack's, came in there, my mom and dad were sitting there in the living room, and I told them what happened, looked at my dad and said, quitting the band. Not going to do that anymore. Now, my dad had a lot invested in me in that

band, and so there was a little bit of reluctance for me to say something to him about that because of all the investment he had. And I was afraid I was going to lose him, because that was really one of the times he was really involved in my life because he worked all the time.

00:47:21

But I remember that was one thing, and I remember Miss Batten. Many of you all know Miss batten, right? She's in glory now. But they were talking at the fence. Miss Batten told me this, and my mom said, we're talking about what happened to me.

00:47:37

And this is a right on statement. I'm not just saying this because this is my mom, and she's right here, but she said, time will tell.

00:47:49

What do you think it's been? 40 years? I was thinking, am I that old? 40 years since that day? Sounds like it was yesterday, doesn't it?

00:48:06

40 years. And out of that 40 years, about 36 of them I've been preaching.

00:48:15

So that was one thing. Time will tell. That's a right on statement. I believe that, too. Time will tell.

00:48:26

And now I can't think of what the second statement was. That's okay.

00:48:34

But time has told.

00:48:38

I think I'm more different today than I was 40 years ago. God's given me a wonderful wife who is a wonderful mother, seven wonderful kids. It's provided for every one of my needs. We have two miscarriages. Those babies are in heaven.

00:48:58

So I'd had nine kids about that.

00:49:05

Every time we announced that she was pregnant, another one, Lord just kept opening the womb. But I'm thankful for my kids. I love my kids very much. So will you examine yourself this morning? I mean, this would be the awesome gift of for Mother's Day, wouldn't it?

00:49:30

To come to know Jesus and to know that you now have entered the right gate. But if you've come to that realization this morning and you realize that you have never repented and turned your life over to Jesus, you can do that right now. Right now. Call on him right now. Confess him as Lord right now.

00:49:50

Believe in your heart. God raised him from the dead. Right now. Do that. Don't wait.

00:49:56

Do it now. You're hearing it. You're in the right place at the right time, just like I was. I'm in the right place at the right time. I wasn't at church.

00:50:03

I was at a friend's house. But hey, we're in church right now. You're hearing the gospel. It's the right thing.

00:50:11

And don't feel ashamed thinking, well, I thought I was saved all this time.

00:50:18

Nothing to be ashamed about. Proclaim him Jesus. We thank you for your salvation. We thank you for this text. We thank you for what you've said here that warns us to make sure that we have entered the right gate.

00:50:37

Thank you. And I just pray, Lord, that you would cause everyone in here today to examine themselves, to strive to enter the right gate, to make sure that they have entered the right gate, make sure that they are on the road that only few have found and not on the road that many are on that leads to destruction. Thank you for this time we've had together worshipping you. We pray for everyone that they will just reflect on these words throughout the day and especially act upon them. And we pray all this in your precious name.

00:51:24

Amen.