

The Sad Surprise

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[0 : 00] To begin this morning, let's turn to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter number 7. We will be in verses 21 through 23 this morning and talking about the sad surprise.

Jesus is continuing his Sermon on the Mount as he begins chapter number 7, and he is warning about the dangers of judgmentalism or being judgmental.

And then he, in verses 7 through the next few verses, extols the virtues of God, and then he lists some of the traits of the false prophets.

And in verses 21 through 23, he talks about their sad surprise. We know that there are many disappointments in our lives, and some have to do with family, some have to do with career failures, some relate to maybe dashed dreams or goals not reached.

But I think for anyone ever, the greatest disappointment would be missing heaven. Because whether a person realizes or understands that there is a heaven or a hell, one day we will all either end up in heaven with God because of our relationship with Jesus Christ, or we'll wake up in torment.

[1 : 25] And so the greatest disappointment would be to miss heaven, miss the opportunity with God forever. As a matter of fact, an old song talks about everybody's talking about going to heaven, but not everyone's going to go there.

And so I think that is so true. People talk about at funerals that people are in a better place. Well, we don't know that for sure. It's up to whether they have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sometimes it's wishful thinking, simply. Sometimes it's because maybe they lived a good life, and it's assumed that they will be in heaven because of their good works.

The thing about that this morning is I want to spend the next few moments for us just simply making sure of our relationship with Jesus Christ, that we don't fall into that boat, or we don't fall into that situation of thinking we're okay because of our religion, because of our church membership, because of our good life, our good works, or the things that we think will get us brownie points with God.

So we're talking about the sad surprise and the saddest surprise of those who expect to be in heaven, but will wind up in hell.

[2 : 40] And so we will look this morning at what went wrong for these laborers in our text. Let's find out. As we look at Matthew chapter 7, beginning with verse number 21, Jesus says, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, or Master, Master, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

So not everyone that ascribes to Jesus his true relationship or his true position as master of the universe is going to belong to the family of God or will be part of God's family.

But he who does the will of my Father in heaven, that hearkens to the book of James where he talks about faith, but you've got to show me your faith by your works.

You say you trust in God. You say you have faith in Jesus Christ. It is going to show up in your works because if we say, I walked an aisle when I was young and I have trusted Jesus as my Savior and I was baptized, but yet their life never shows any fruit, never shows any sign that they have the Holy Spirit, that they are doing the will of God, serving him and engaged in his mission on planet Earth, then James says he's not part of the family of God.

He is not a believer in Jesus Christ because his works don't match up with what he says. We go on to verse 22. Many will say to me in that day, talking about the day of judgment, and Jesus is talking about what it takes or what it's like to be in the kingdom of heaven or those that will be in the kingdom of heaven.

[4 : 28] He says many, many, Jesus says, are going to say to me in that day when they appear before God, when they appear before him, here we see the same thing.

Master, master, Lord, Lord. And they're going to have that. They're going to be amazed. They're going to be frustrated. They're going to be, well, what's the problem?

What's wrong? Have we not prophesied in your name? Have we not cast out demons in your name and done many wonders in your name?

Jesus is talking about some of the prophetic functions that go along with what was being done in the early portion of the New Testament.

And Jesus is talking about these false prophets who've come into the church and said, you need to follow us, but they're really not part of the family of God. And they will be confused one day. Lord, Lord, didn't we cast out demons in your name and it worked?

[5 : 27] Didn't we do many, many signs and wonders? And what's the deal? He says in verse 23, then I will declare to them.

Now, this will be a slap in the face. I never knew you. Who are you? I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers, or you who practice lawlessness, you workers of iniquity.

And so one day, these who think they're right with God, these who think that they're okay, are going to stand before God and they're going to hear, who are you?

Get out of my face. I never knew you. Depart from me, you sinner. I've had some conversations. My guy in the office, at the sheriff's office, is one of the guys that believes that once you've trusted Christ as your Savior, if you sin to a certain degree, there's a possibility that you could lose your salvation.

We have that discussion from time to time. Had it again a couple of weeks ago. Well, the point is, if we are followers of Jesus, and if the Bible is true when it says that we're sealed until the day of redemption, and all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered or shall be saved, and John talks about how if we are in the Father's hand, no one will be able to pluck us from the Father's hand, and that there is security in Jesus Christ, and if salvation is not procured, or we don't achieve salvation by our good works and by not sinning, then if we can therefore lose it by sinning, then the game is rigged.

[7 : 29] Because God says, you can't get there because you're all sinners. And because you're all sinners, I'm going to provide a perfect sacrifice. It's Jesus Christ. He died in our place while we were still sinners, and it's by grace through faith that we're saved, not of works, lest any man should boast.

And so there's not going to be anyone here at this great white throne judgment who was ever part of the family of God. The Bible tells us that. I believe the Bible is very clear about that.

We are either in the family or we're not. We're born out of the family. We get into the family of God by trusting Christ as our Savior, and through redemption, and through the forgiveness of sin, and all the work that goes along the moment that we follow Christ, the moment that we trust Christ as our Savior.

And so those who show up at this judgment are going to be those that may have professed and said, well, we were religious, we went to church on Sundays, we tithed, but yet never had a relationship with God.

So here's the thing. They professed Christ, but did not possess Him. We see that in verse 21. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, or Master, Master, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

[8 : 58] They said the right words, but they missed the message. They said the right words. They may have done the right things behaviorally, but they missed the entire point that it was a matter of faith and submission and trust in the full payment of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

They called Him Lord, but didn't make Him their Lord. They accepted His title, but they failed to trust in Him. There are many today who talk the talk, but don't walk the walk.

There are many today who talk about religious things, but don't really have the Holy Spirit, don't have new life in Christ. And for many, maybe they're clueless.

You know, they talk about religion, they talk about church, they talk about the things that they do at church, but yet, during the week, or when you talk to them about God or about the things of God, it's like, there's really not, it's like the, there's no lights, there's nobody home.

They don't even, they can't get beyond the very, very simple basics of, I'll say, churchianity, or Christianity.

[10 : 14] So they may not possess, they're not part of the family of God. So these put on a good front, but they faked true faith in Jesus Christ.

They had religion, but they ignored redemption. They ignored what they needed to do when it came to trusting Jesus alone.

There are a lot of people today who are placing their faith and their trust in their religion. They're placing their faith, they're placing all of their eggs into, well, I belong to such and such a church, or I belong to this faith and believe that that's enough.

There are many who are cultural Christians. They're born into Christianity, and they believe because mom and dad, and mom and dad may know Jesus as their Savior. Mom and dad or grandparents may truly be part of the family of God, may be saved by grace through faith, have God's Holy Spirit, and are following Christ, but for one reason or another, that faith never becomes real for their children.

They grow up in church, grow up in Sunday school, walk in aisle, say the right words, pray a prayer, get baptized, and it's never real for them.

[11 : 39] They just said the right things, but never in their heart truly understood and submitted their life to Jesus Christ. And so we have many who are cultural Christians.

They're part of the church, and they might even stay in church. They may not be that part of that crowd that when they get to college or when they get out of high school, they leave and never come back to church.

They may raise their family in church and still be lost and headed to hell. And I always will remember the lady one day, and this was back a few years ago in the church where we were pastoring in Alabama.

She was at that time in her late 70s during a message much like this this morning where it was about make sure of your salvation. She had been a church member for basically her entire life.

She went forward as a young girl, was baptized, and was part of the church her entire life. She came forward in tears saying, Pastor, I really think I've just been a Christian in name only.

[13 : 01] And today, for the first time, I understood that I needed to trust in Jesus alone and not my religion, not the church, not praying a prayer, not my baptism, not all of this stuff, she said, because I don't think it was real.

Now, I don't know whether it was or not. And whether it was or not, the important thing was that even at her age, she wanted to make sure that she was not one of these laborers that get before God at this great white throne judgment and to hear Jesus say, Depart from me.

I never knew you. So she wanted to make sure that she would spend eternity with her heavenly Father and with her Savior, Jesus Christ. And so she was a cultural Christian.

She was one who thought that she was right. And she may have been, but the thing is, the point is, we want you to be sure, to be sure that it's not just trusting a church or trusting a religion or trusting a prayer or trusting your parents when they said, Oh yeah, you prayed a prayer and you were baptized, but you really can't remember.

The matter is, daily, know that you're trusting Jesus Christ. We don't have to trust Him over and over again, but we just have to know for sure that we are trusting Jesus alone for our salvation.

[14 : 29] Salvation requires facing our sin and receiving forgiveness. And doing God's will begins with receiving Christ, as we see in John 6, verses 37-40.

Jesus says, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out. Meaning, if you want to come to Christ and trust Him as your Savior, He won't turn you away.

He will, in no wise, the Bible says, cast you out. For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. This is the will of the Father who sent me, that all, or that of all He has given to me, or given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

And here's another portion of Scripture that I believe talks about the security of the believer. Jesus says, All that God's given to me, all that have come to me will be secure, and I will lose nothing.

Meaning, no one who comes to Christ in full faith, or in saving faith, in saving faith, rather, Jesus says, I will lose none of them.

[15 : 51] Meaning, everyone who comes to me in faith, and trusts me as their Savior, will be with me in heaven. There are multiple places where the Bible talks about the security of those who trust in Christ.

Once we're in the family of God, we are in the family of God. Here's the thing, once you are born into a family, it really doesn't matter what you do, and it doesn't matter how frustrating you might be, it doesn't matter, because at the end of the day, you are still going to be what?

In the family. You know, you might be the part of the family that, you know what, nobody likes being around, you might be part of the family that shames the family. But the issue is, you're still in the family.

And so, people don't understand and realize when they think, oh, well, you know what, I'm always in, somebody might be always in fear of losing their salvation, because they were never taught properly in the beginning that salvation is by grace through faith.

And the Bible says, we live from faith to faith. And so, it's a matter of, works never got us saved, not sinning never got us saved, and not sinning never keeps us saved.

[17 : 05] And so, we're part of the family of God. Well, you say, well, what about those who, they pray a prayer, and they say they're part of the family of God, and they start off with a bang, and then all of a sudden, you know, they go out into the world, and they're just, they live like the devil for the rest of their lives.

I think then you go to the book of James, and James talks about, well, the problem, possibly, they never trusted Christ, it was never true salvation in the first place, because their works never showed off their faith.

Their faith never produced the works that last. And so, I'm not God, and I can't explain it to that point, and I, it's the point of, we have to take Scripture, we have to take God and His Word, and compare Scripture with Scripture.

So what we do is, we look and we say, have I trusted Christ as my Savior? If He is, we're part of the family, and it's God's Holy Spirit, it's His responsibility to convict us when we sin.

If someone says, you know what, I've never been convicted in years, chances are, they don't have the Holy Spirit within them. Or maybe they've grieved to the Holy Spirit to that point, where they don't feel it any longer.

[18 : 15] And then verse 40, and this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who sees His Son and believes in Him, how many will have everlasting life? Everyone, all that believe in Him will have everlasting life, and I will raise Him up at the last day.

And so the question is, have you turned from your sin to the Savior? Are you sure, are we sure this morning that we're trusting Jesus as our Savior? You know, at the end of the day, the whole question of, can we lose our salvation or not, I think is not the big question.

I think the big question is, are you living for Jesus today? Are we living for Jesus tomorrow? Are we living for Jesus whenever? Because that, I believe, is what we need to be looking at.

God, I need to be following you. And allow the Holy Spirit to give that peace to you, that peace of God that comes through trusting Christ as our Savior.

But that secondly, what we see from these workers who will not end up with God in heaven is, they worked to impress, but they earned final distress.

[19 : 34] We see that in verse number 22. Many, many will say to me, and they were working to impress God, they were working to impress others. Have we not prophesied in your name?

Have we not cast out demons in your name? Have we not done many wonders in your name? They were very busy religious people. They were doing good things.

They were doing good works over and over and over again. They knew enough scripture to explain prophecy. They seemed to have the answers about the future and they claimed to have the power over demonic forces and people would call them to cast out demons.

They were bold in their claims of power over Satan and many people honored them. They were honored for their religious works. People looked up to them. They probably got the better seats at the concerts and they probably whenever they went to a feast or they went to a party they were the ones who were honored.

They were the ones who came late and they were announced when they walked in. And so there were many who looked up to them because they thought their works were wonderful and they were proud of all they were doing in the name of God.

[20 : 55] And if works could earn salvation they would have made it. If doing good things could have earned heaven these guys would have been first in line at the gate.

But yet we know that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done that gets us right with God. Salvation is by grace through faith and through faith alone.

We see that in Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 and 9 for by grace are we saved. It is by God's unmerited through God's unmerited favor God's grace that we become a part of the family of God.

Not through works not through a prayer not through anything that we do or say but it's simply coming to Christ in faith and it's by God's grace that we've been saved through faith not of ourselves.

Not of ourselves. It is the gift of God. So salvation is a gift. It is a gift unearned and it's a gift we can't lose once we have received it because the Bible says we are sealed until the day of redemption.

[22 : 05] And so salvation is a gift from God and it's not of works verse 9 says because if it were we could boast about it. We could say look at how good I am and I made it here verse 5 of Titus chapter 3 verses 5 and 7 says not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

That's how we come to Christ. So there's regeneration there's redemption and then there's regeneration and we take on God provides us the holiness of Jesus Christ.

So when God looks upon us he doesn't see our sinfulness he doesn't see our lame works he sees the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He sees the blood of Jesus Christ applied to our account and that's from the day of salvation and that's throughout the rest of our life here on planet earth.

When he looks at us he sees Jesus. He sees what Jesus Christ has done for us. And when Satan comes calling and says oh look at what they did they're not really saved how they think they are but they're really not and God looks and says Jesus died for them they've trusted Christ and all I see is the blood of Christ.

God said I will remember their sin no more. God says he will separate our sin from us as far as the east is from the west. And so when God looks upon us he sees no sin. What does he see?

[23 : 42] He sees Jesus. Now that's positionally. Now when it comes to relationally yes that's why we need to confess when we disobey. That's why we need to keep those lines of communication open.

Same thing with family. When children disobey their parents when children shame their parents they don't have to come to their parents and say oh please keep me in the family.

No. What they have to do is they have to come and say will you forgive me and so we can get back in a good relationship. But no child ever well I say that that's pretty that's a broad statement but no one ever goes to their parents in fear of losing their place in the family.

No. They go and they want to save that relationship. but nobody's afraid of oh mom dad will you take me back into your family? Oh I lost my last name because I no that doesn't work that doesn't happen that way and neither does it happen that way in scripture.

Bible never teaches that. There are those who say it does but they take one verse of scripture and take it out of context and disregard all of the other scriptures that says we are secure in Christ and salvation is by grace through faith it's not of works.

[25 : 03] and so it's not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

We see in verse 6 whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior that having been justified by his grace being made right with God by the grace of God we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

and that's not a hope so hope that's not oh one day I hope I make it that is our hope is secure in Jesus Christ. And then thirdly they claim to be winners but really they were just sinners.

they claim to be super Christians. We prophesied in your name we cast out demons and we did many wonderful works and they were proud of their works but Jesus but Jesus says he will say depart from me you workers of iniquity I never knew you.

We see in verse 23 and they will declare and then I will declare to them I never knew you. Depart from me you who practice lawlessness. The Lord responded to their false profession he'll say I never knew you he says depart from me.

[26 : 27] These widely honored professors of Christianity and workers were simply workers of iniquity. They were sinners. So this morning as we wind this message down just a very very simple so what so what is make sure that you know Christ as your Savior that you've come to him in full surrender saying Lord Jesus I know I'm a sinner I know I don't deserve to be a part of your family but you are offering me the gift of salvation simply for receiving for the receiving and simply by saying Lord Jesus I know I'm a sinner and I'm trusting what you did on the cross of Calvary to make me a part of your family and Jesus says all those the Father has given me I will in no wise cast out I will in no wise reject I will accept and receive everyone who comes to me in faith so make sure of our salvation today so that we don't end up with a sad surprise let us pray

Father we are so so very thankful that you provide us the privilege of being able to come to you surrender ourselves to you and realize that as sinners we have the opportunity to receive the gift of redemption that we can be regenerated made new given a brand new life that we can receive your Holy Spirit to indwell us to teach us to keep us pure to keep us holy Lord I pray that we might be able to serve you each and every day of our life that as we're told in your word as we've seen this morning that if we are trusting Christ as our Savior we will obey

Father I pray that you help us to obey help us this morning to make sure if there's anyone here this morning that is not sure of their salvation that if not they're not sure of where they stand with you I ask this morning that your Holy Spirit will convict them draw them and help them to put away their pride and to be able to say this morning God I want to be sure and that when we have our time this morning when we stand that they would move out of their seat and come and say I want to be sure we can take the Bible and show them how they can know for sure that they're right with you Father I pray that there will be no one that leaves this auditorium this morning unsure of their salvation and I thank you Father that if we are all everyone here Lord God is a part of your family then Lord may we rejoice and may we share that joy in the good news as we are nearing the season as we're celebrating the birth of our

Savior Jesus Christ Father help us to proclaim the news of gladness and with great joy we may be able to pronounce or to announce to the world Savior has been born his name is Jesus and he is offering salvation offering the forgiveness of sin to all who will come no matter what we thank you Father for this I pray in Jesus name Amen