

## The Mind of Christ - Lesson 92

February 5, 2021

Welcome to another edition of The Mind of Christ. We are making our way through the Sermon on the Mount. We've been at this for quite a while and will continue for at least this week and probably next week before we finish the entire Sermon on the Mount. We are basing our study on A. T. Robertson's "*A Harmony of the Gospels*" where we are making our way chronologically through the life of Christ; everything Jesus said and did. We have subtitled The Mind of Christ, "Challenger Deep" because Challenger Deep is the deepest part of the ocean and we are seeking out the mind of Christ which is pretty deep waters for us. We are trying to understand better how Jesus thinks, and by understanding His mind, we may then begin to think that way ourselves; and when we do that we will become more like Him in our daily lives.

Thank you for joining us for this. We're going to jump right into this study. We're in Matthew 7 and we'll read what I think we'll be able to cover today.

### Matthew 7:15-23

<sup>15</sup> "**Beware** of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes*, nor figs from thistles, are they? <sup>17</sup> Even so every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> So then, you will know them by their fruits.

<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. <sup>22</sup> 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?' <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

That's our assignment for today so we better jump in on this. We're going to talk about wolves and sheep. This seems to be the origin of the idea used later *by others*. Some attribute the origins to Aesop, of Aesop's Fables. This was around 620 to 560 B.C. when Aesop's Fables were written, and it is thought that the part about the sheep and the wolves was really added later on, years after Aesop wrote his original 'Fables'. They believe other people added this in.

In the parable attributed to Aesop *the wolf disguises himself as a sheep* to get food but gets locked up by the shepherd in the sheep pen. The shepherd comes back at night to butcher a sheep for his supper and grabs the wolf and kills him! So it's an interesting story in Aesop's fable but there is obviously some difference involved in the story.

A similar story is found in what we know of as "Little Red Riding Hood" or as it was originally said, "Little Red Cap". It was published in 1697, it was a French fairy tale, and was part of what is called "The Grimm's Fairy Tales". Here the wolf disguises himself, not as a sheep, but as grandma and you will probably remember the rest of the story.

For Jesus, it was about *false prophets*. These were those who were not what they appeared to be. They had an outwardly pleasing appearance but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. He says to *beware* of them. The word He uses here would be transliterated into English as prosecho (προσεχω). It means to have an ‘addiction to’, ‘to hold to’, to bring near’. That’s what the word “**beware**” means. It is applied to the mind; *to put your mind to a thing; to give heed to it; to attend to it, to observe or to consider*. So when you are *being aware of* something, you are observing it, you’re paying attention to it. You’re giving it attention. It is used in **Matthew 6:1** as “*Take care*” not to practice your righteousness in the sight of people, to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.” It was concerning practicing righteousness before men; so “beware of those who practice their righteousness before men”.

The word is used in **Matthew 10:17** where Jesus says to “*Beware of*”, “*Be on your guard against*” men who will hand you over to the courts and in **Matthew 16:6** He says, “*Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.*” In **Matthew 16:11-12** it’s repeated in the same context. In **Luke 17:3** it says, “Be on your guard” or “Beware”. If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. In **Luke 20:46** he says, “*Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes*” ... who do it to get attention for themselves. Then, in **Luke 21:34** it says, “*But be on your guard, so that your hearts will not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life*”. There are many, many things in Scripture that we are to “*beware of*”; we are to pay close attention to and most of the time it has to do with something *negative*, something that can hurt us.

There is something instructive about how Jesus and the Apostles say “*beware*” and what they warn us against because there are things that are harmful to us that we can become addicted to. It is what one pays close attention to, to either avoid, or to be drawn to. It is used in **Hebrews 2:1** “For this reason, we must *pay closer attention* to what we have heard so that we do not drift away from it”, that is the word “*beware*” as well. It means to pay close attention to.

Peter says, “So we have the prophetic word made more sure to which you would do well to “*pay attention*” as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. This is in **2 Peter 1:19**. So there are **good** things *to pay attention* to or to *be aware* of as well.

Jesus is seeking our focus here on a danger. We have to *pay careful attention* because they are disguised. The false prophets are disguised, so we have to *pay close attention* to them. They are not what they seem ... they are called *false* prophets, not just because of a false message but because they are false people. They are false, they are fake; they are not genuine. Not only are they fake but they are people who would also ensnare or entrap other people.

In **Acts 8:6** the crowds were showing *great attention* to Philip because of the signs and the wonders that he was doing. But this same crowd was showing *great attention* to Simon the Sorcerer if you read in **Acts 8:10-11**. Simon, did, of course, magic arts so they were paying close attention to him. Those magic arts were the sheep’s clothing worn by the wolf. Magic is made to look like miracles.

Paul warns of this in **2 Thessalonians 2:9** regarding the man of lawlessness. He says about him that is “the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan with all power and signs and false wonders.” **2 Thessalonians 2:10** he mentions the deception of wickedness. These *false* prophets are not merely people who may be mistaken on some point of doctrine. These are false by intention to deceive others, often for personal gain! These are pseudo prophets. Pseudo-prophetes (ψευδοπροφητων) is the word in the Greek, a religious impostor, a spurious prophet. I would recommend a book called “*Who Is My Brother?*” by Lagard Smith. In it, he has a whole chapter on the idea of what is a false prophet. I believe he does a great job in pointing out that everyone who teaches something that may be false, not intentionally but just because we don’t know everything and sometimes we get things wrong; he says that those are not necessarily false prophets. They may be someone you disagree with; they may need to be corrected like Apollos did in Acts 18, but not necessarily false prophets. James Bell says there are two kinds of people in this world: those who have problems and those who are problems. The false prophets are problems.

The warnings against false prophets are longstanding in Scripture. Many **pretend** to be sent by God. Jeremiah 23 says a lot about them. I am going to give you a lot of different references right now. I mean a lot of references, but I want you to see the extent to which false prophets are talked about in the Bible. This is where if you really want to get into the study, you might want to write down these references so you can go back and look at the context later on.

**Jeremiah 23** is one of them. God did make use of them to prove or test Israel in **Deut. 13:3**. They are described as *reckless* and *treacherous* men in **Zephaniah 3:4**. They are described as *covetous* in **Micah 3:11**. They are described as *crafty* in **Matthew 7:15**. They are associated with *drunkenness* in **Isaiah 28:7**. They are called *immoral* and *profane* in **Jeremiah 23:11** and **14**. There are even some women who were involved, most of them who are described as false prophets were men, but women were also involved in this according to **Nehemiah 6:14** and **Revelation 2:20**. False prophets are also called *foolish* in **Ezekiel 13:2**. They are compared to *foxes in the desert* in **Ezekiel 13:4**. They are compared to *wind* in **Jeremiah 5:13**. They are *influenced by evil spirits* according to **1 Kings 22:21-22**. These people *prophesied falsely* according to **Jeremiah 5:31**. They even *lie in the name of the Lord* according to **Jeremiah 14:14**. They even *lie out of their own heart* according to **Jeremiah 23:16** and **26** and **Ezekiel 13:2**.

They will also speak in the name of *false gods* in **Jeremiah 2:8**. They will *say things like peace, peace*, when there is no peace according to **Jeremiah 6:14, 23:17, Ezekiel 13:10, Micah 3:5**, and they often practice *divination and witchcraft* according to **Jeremiah 14:14, Ezekiel 22:28** and in **Acts 13:6**. They often *pretend they have certain dreams* which are where they get their prophecy in **Jeremiah 23:28** and **32**. It says *they are deceived by God as a judgment*, so a false prophet can also be deceived by God and brought into judgment in **Ezekiel 14:9**. They are people who are *led into error* according to **Jeremiah 23:13** and **Micah 3:5**. They are made to *forget God’s name* according to **Jeremiah 23:27**. They are *deprived of God’s Word* according to **Jeremiah 23:30**. They teach *profaneness* and *sin* according to **Jeremiah 34:14-15**. People can be *oppressed* and *defrauded* by these false prophets according to **Ezekiel 22:25**. People are *warned not to listen* to them according to **Deuteronomy 13:3** and **Jeremiah 23:16**.

*We are told* to put *prophets to the test* to see if they are from God in **Deuteronomy 13:1-2**, **Deuteronomy 18:21-22** and **1 John 4:1-3**. *They were predicted* to arise before the destruction of Jerusalem according to **Matthew 24:11, 24**. They *would also arise* in the latter times according to **2 Peter 2:1**.

In the New Testament, there are references to false prophets and we've mentioned some of them already but here are some additional references. **Matthew 24:11** and **24**, **Mark 13:22**, **Luke 6:26**, **1 John 4:1** in the NASB, **1 Timothy 1:3** and **1 Timothy 6:3**.

*These are not merely mistaken prophets or teachers*...they are **unreal**, they are **false**, they are not genuine, they are **not what they seem**. *They will lead you astray*. They are people with **ulterior motives**. Being misled is inevitable; all of us are subject to being misled, but *to be tricked to follow a path to our own destruction* for the sake of some corrupt person's short-term gain **must be warned against!** **We have been warned!**

Jesus has been either directly or indirectly focusing on these false teachers from the beginning of the Sermon actually. Do we totally underestimate the influence of some among us? *Society and culture is shaped by influences*. Many are bold in their injection into society because of the **money** or the **power** that they can have. Jesus wanted to show the common man that he could have an influence too. In other words, **we could be salt and light; one that will permeate the culture and transform it**. This influence is not political and it is *not merely an alternative moral influence*. *It is a relational influence* based in **loving God** and **loving man**. It is not soft, it is bold.

The Book of Acts is a record of how Jesus' sermon was *lived out in Jewish and Greek society*. The Gospel confronted all the powers from the emperor to the beggar at the Temple. Jesus wants to show that people do not have to fear the "control freaks" of the world. He is leading a **truth revolution**. God is tired of seeing people getting consumed by the wolves in sheep's clothing.

**Let's talk about the fruit.**

Jesus says that you shall know them by their fruits. This is found in **Matthew 7:16-20** and then in **Luke 6:43-44**.

**Matthew 7:16-20**

<sup>16</sup> You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes*, nor figs from thistles, are they? <sup>17</sup> So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> So then, you will know them by their fruits.

**Luke 6:43-44**

"For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. <sup>44</sup> For each tree is known by its own fruit."

Hypocrisy of false prophecy demands that we look for objective ways to determine *who someone is*. *Jesus says to look for fruit, actions, words, use of funds*, etc.

Where do we get proof of **who a person is**? The message illustration is so simple. It is “*within their daily experience.*” He talks about *thorns* and *thistles* in this context, and He says that they do not produce grapes and figs. So, we have to deal with *thorns*, *thistles*, *grapes* and *figs*. Well, what are the thorns?

A *thorn*, “*akantha*” (ακανθων) is a bramble bush or a briar. It is used in **Matthew 13:7** and **Matthew 13:22** say that “*some feed fell among the thorns*”. **Matthew 27:29** is a reference to the crown of thorns that was on the head of Jesus. In **Hebrews 6:8** the person who does not respond to God’s Word will become ground where only *thorns* and *thistles* grow. It is worthless and close to being cursed and ends up being burned. It reminds me of the “fig tree” that Jesus chose to curse because it merely took up the ground, it was useless.

The word ‘*thistles*’ is the word “*tribolos*” (τριβολως), a prickly wild plant hurtful to other plants. It is used here, and also in **Hebrews 6:8**, and the grapes and the figs are staples in Jesus’ word. This is another example of how *nature’s* design correlates to our *spiritual* design. Producing after one’s kind was established in the Garden. Who one ‘is’, is rooted in the heart. In other words, if we are going to judge ‘who’ someone is, we do that based on the fruit that they produce. So you can tell ‘what is in the heart’ by ‘what is produced in a person’s life’. We’ve already kind of dealt with some of this in some previous recordings so I’m not going to go into any more detail about this now.

Let’s talk about ‘saying’ and ‘doing’.

### **Matthew 7:21-22.**

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter.* <sup>22</sup> 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?’

They are the ones who say me to “Lord, Lord” but they don’t do what God says. The ‘wedding of saying and doing’ is the essence of true lordship. The idea of lord used over 700 times in the New American Standard Bible is “he to whom a person or a thing belongs” about which he has power, or deciding he’s a master, he’s a lord.

In **Matthew 5:33** Jesus tells of fulfilling your vow to the Lord. Do not say you will do something and fail to do it. The Lord expects follow-through. Along with this current context, the Lord is found only in three verses in the Sermon on the Mount. In the rest of Matthew, Jesus is often called Lord. It’s found of the leper in **Matthew 8:2**; a centurion in **Matthew 8:6, 8**; and a disciple calls Him Lord in **Matthew 8:21**. Peter calls Him Lord in **Matthew 14:28** and **30**, a Canaanite woman in **Matthew 15:22, 25** and **27**. A man with a lunatic son calls Him Lord in **Matthew 17:15**, and two blind men call Him Lord in **Matthew 20:30-31**, however, this was a common phrase of respect and not often used in the ultimate sense of authority except when referring to God or to Jesus. Jesus will often take common cultural phrases and raise them to a new and exclusive level. Be careful **who** is Lord. Lordship is *primacy of influence*. The false prophets thought they could replace the Lord in influence. That’s one of the reasons I think He’s putting this in this context ... because we don’t want false prophets to become lords within our lives.

“To do what they say” displaces the *true Lordship of Jesus*. Look closely. “Not everyone who says to me...” Did they catch it? Did they catch what He said? “Not everyone who says to me...” Jesus is putting Himself in a **high level** with this statement! But then, when it comes to the *application of Lordship*, it is the **doing of the will of Jesus, as Father in Heaven** that is under consideration.

To make **Jesus Lord** *is to obey His Father*. Now that is important to be seen in these verses because Jesus is Lord; but if Jesus is Lord, you’re going to do what His Father in Heaven says for you to do. The word ‘Lord’ is said twice, ‘Lord, Lord’ for emphasis; to try to *prove* an increased verbiage. *Sometimes people will say a word twice to prove what they are saying is true*. The focus here in this verse is *entering the Kingdom*.

Remember in the story of Nicodemus, it was all about “entering into the Kingdom of God”. Here, Kingdom of Heaven seems to be our ultimate destination, but clearly, residence in the Kingdom is dependent on more than lip service. Doing the will of the Father, obedience – the word here is “thelema” (θελημα) Jesus discussed this in **Matthew 6:10** in the prayer where it says, “**Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven**”. So what Jesus said in His prayer in **Matthew 6:10** is exactly what He is saying here in Matthew 7:21-22.

In **Matthew 7:22** Jesus mentions, “**that day**”. He says, “Many will say to me *on that day*”. Let’s investigate this phrase “that day”. This will be a day of defense, a day of judgment, a day of attempted justification, or perhaps there will be real justification on “that day”!

In **Matthew 12:36** Jesus says, “**But I tell you, that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an account in the Day of Judgment**”. In **Matthew 24:36** as Jesus turns from a discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem to the final judgment, He said, “**But about that Day an hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father alone.**” So when Jesus talks about the final coming of Jesus day *on that day*, we don’t know exactly when that day will be.

In **Matthew 26:29** Jesus speaks of *that day* when he will again drink the fruit of the vine anew in the Kingdom of God. Then in **Mark 2:20** it says that when the Bridegroom is taken away, *in that day* His disciples will fast. In **Luke 6:23** it says *on that day* when those rewarded with Heaven will leap for joy. Then **Luke 10:12** says it will be more tolerable *in that day* for Sodom than for the city that rejects Jesus. In **Luke 21:34** Jesus warns them not to be surprised *that day*. Then in **John 14:20** Jesus says that *in that day* we will know 1) Jesus is in the Father, 2) the disciples are in Jesus, and 3) that Jesus is in his disciples. In **John 16:23**, *in that day* we will not question Jesus about anything; it will be given by the Father. In **2 Thessalonians 1:10**, Paul speaks of when Jesus will be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed it will happen *in that day*. In **2 Timothy 1:12** Paul speaks of entrusting himself to Jesus until *that day*. In **2 Timothy 1:18**, Paul appeals for mercy ‘*on that day*’. In **2 Timothy 4:8** Paul anticipates a crown of righteousness ‘*on that day*’. Other references simply refer to “a day”, or “a special day” that is in mind.

To do something *in the name of* someone is to do it by their authority. Here Jesus mentions three actions carried out ‘under the authority of Christ’. The three actions are *prophecy*, *casting out demons*, and *performing miracles*.

Could those, simply using Jesus' name, without personally submitting to His authority actually *do these things*? In other words, could someone prophecy, cast out demons or perform miracles using Jesus' name in order to do them ... but not actually coming under His authority to do them? Now, I don't know the answer to that question, but it is a question that needs to be raised.

In **Mark 9:37** and following, is a discussion that parallels this. In verse 37 Jesus says that to receive a child "*in His name*" is to receive "Jesus and His Father". In verse 38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons *in your name* and we tried to hinder him because he wasn't following us." John did not seem to dispute the man's ability to cast out demons, but only that he was not following "us". In verse 39 Jesus responds, "**Do not hinder him for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name and be able, soon afterwards, to speak evil of Me.**" Then in verse 40, "For he who is not against us is for us". Now **how do we reconcile Matthew 7 with Mark 9?**

They are two different stories. He says that some who say to him, "Lord, Lord ... we cast out demons, we did miracles and all these things in your name," and He says, "I don't know you." Then in **this** verse He says 'even those who are not with us, are casting out demons' and He says 'leave them alone because if they will eventually come to understand what they are doing.' How do we reconcile these two?

First, in Matthew 7, Jesus is not condemning the performing of miracles in His name, but only *claiming 'Jesus as Lord' yet not doing the will of the Father*. Second, in Mark 9 there is no indication that those doing the miracles in His name were insincere or at least not tending towards Jesus. There seems to be a difference between the opportunists like Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8 who wanted to *buy* the gift of God for *personal gain*, and those who may not know Jesus well, but see a power by which they could *do 'good' for others*. Note in Luke's account in **Luke 9:49-50** Jesus says, "Do not hinder him for he who is not *against* you is *for* you." In **Luke 10:17** records the response of the *Seventy* to demons submitting to them in the name of Jesus and *Jesus puts this in perspective*...that they should have been much more excited about their names being *written in heaven*. In other words, *Jesus does not seem to care if people do miracles in His name. He just wants their actions to be consistent with obedience to the Father*.

The almost comical story in **Acts 19** about the seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest who invoked the name of Jesus in attempting to exorcise some evil spirits, they said, "I adjure you by Jesus who Paul preaches" and the evil spirits answered, "I recognize Jesus and I know about Paul, but who are you?" and the man with the evil spirits beats and strips the men and drives them into the streets naked and bleeding. In **Acts 19:17** says, "When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of Jesus was being magnified." The story points out how we should not attempt to use Jesus' name to 'even do good' *that brings glory to us* instead of to Him! It is one thing for evil spirits not to know us, but quite different for *Jesus not to know us*. To know Jesus and to be known by Him *is the most critical part of our lives*. Seeking to do miracles is not proof that we know Jesus. *It might be all about us!* Jesus' mind is not impressed with grandstanders; those who simply 'do good' to call attention to themselves. Remember chapter 6 in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Don't do prayers or fasting or giving to be seen by men.' The idea of the name of Jesus is an important theme.

Okay, we're going to turn to the "name of Jesus" here at this point. But understand that what Jesus is talking about here is not so much the doing of miracles but He is talking about doing the miracles for your own sake and not because of your relationship with Him as Lord.

The idea of "the name of Jesus" is an important theme. In **Matthew 1:21** it says, "His name is Jesus." In **Matthew 1:23** it says, "He shall be called Emmanuel." In **Matthew 6:9** Jesus proclaims God's name to be holy. In **Matthew 10:22** Jesus tells the apostles that they will be hated because of His name. In **Matthew 12:21** it is "*in the name*" that the Gentiles will put their hope. In **Matthew 18:5** the one who receives a child "*in Jesus' name*" receives Jesus. In **Matthew 18:20** when two are three gather "*in His name*", there He is. In **Matthew 21:9** blessed is he who comes "*in the name*" of the Lord. In **Matthew 24:5** many will come "*in Jesus' name*" to mislead many. In **Matthew 24:9** we will be hated because of "*that name*". In **Matthew 28:19** we are to be baptized "*in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit*".

In **Luke 24:47** repentance and forgiveness of sin is to be proclaimed "*in Jesus' name*" to all the nations. In **John 5:43** Jesus came "*in His Father's name*" and many did not receive Him; but if someone comes in his own name, they often receive them.

Well, in my notes, and I have to tell you as I write this, there are many circumstances going on in my life when I'm writing this, and most everything that I'm writing has to do with the text. But sometimes there are some personal notes that I put into my journal. This happened to be a travel day on February 18, 2012 and I was traveling to Haiti when I was going down there to minister. So I think I'll just go ahead and read my notes as they are written in my journal just to give you a sense of what was going on.

"It was a very long day. Up at 4:00 A.M. and to bed at 10:30 P.M. This was probably on Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> 2012. I had no opportunity to work on "Challenger Deep". We'll try to catch up today (2/19/12). As I will preach this morning, we must be careful what we do *in the name of Jesus*. To say we speak in His name is to draw Him into our activity or message.

How do we know He approves of what we are saying and doing? How do we know He is pleased and supports us? To say, "Jesus says" or "Jesus told me to tell you" is a serious matter. Not only do we need His authorization, but we need to accurately and faithfully relay His message. But Jesus takes matters even farther. *He says our lives should be in harmony with our message. We should live as if we truly know Jesus and with the assurance that He knows us.*

In **Matthew 23** Jesus says that the Scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses. Now it does not say that God 'put' them there. It says they seated themselves there just as they placed themselves in the best seats at the feast. They were presumptuous. They assumed places not 'given' to them. They "made themselves" important. They are self-appointed leaders just as many earthly leaders find ways to have themselves appointed "appearing to represent the people" but are mere "usurpers snatching the authority for their own gain".

In **Matthew 23** Jesus says we must respect these leaders or spokesmen “doing what they say and observe”, but not in the way they do them, because that would be hypocritically. They do *say* things, but do not *do* them. They speak, in many cases true words but either apply them wrongly or not at all.”

This is what Jesus is teaching in Matthew 7. The prophecy, the exorcisms and the miracle workings were not *for the purposes intended* to benefit others but to call attention to themselves. Merely attaching Jesus’ name to their actions did not change their motives or provide authority for their deeds. God does not play this game. He wants those who serve Him to do so in Spirit and in truth.

Jesus’ *declaration* ... He uses this as a *declaration*. He says in verse 23, “**And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; LEAVE ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’**” Jesus’ *declaration*, the word ‘*declare*’, is “homologeō” (ομολογησῶ). “Homo” means to be “a kin” or “the same”; same place or time, or together. The word “logos” is something that is ‘said’ ... so they ‘say together’ something.

When Jesus is *declaring* something, He is saying it ‘with’. The people He addresses were acting in *Jesus’ name without knowing Jesus*. Jesus says that He will do the same thing. He is going to act against them; telling them to “depart without knowing them”! So, just as they demonstrated by their actions that *they did not know Jesus*, Jesus demonstrated by His actions that *he will not know them!* In other words, He’s agreeing with them ... you don’t really know me, and I don’t really know you. That is what is “loaded” into this word, *declare*.

It is translated “*confess*” in other places: **Acts 24:14; 1 John 1:9**. It’s an agreement with God that our sins are as He says. In **Matthew 10:32** it is used in confessing Christ. Here, if we *confess* Christ before men, He will *confess* us before the Father in Heaven. The opposite of *confession* is *denial* in **Matthew 10:33**. The idea of “shall deny” means to contradict, to disavow, to reject, or to abnegate. In **Matthew 26:70, 72** Peter *denied* knowing Jesus while obviously he **did** know Him. In **John 1:20** both words are used. John the Baptist *confessed* that he was not the Christ, and he *denied* that he was the Christ. It is interesting in **John 17:6, 8** Jesus “declared” that the Apostles knew Him because He gave them what the Father gave Him. But in the next chapter, **John 18:25** Peter *denied* even knowing Jesus as being His disciple. In **Acts 4:16** the miracles done in Jerusalem could not be denied. All of these are *about the judgment* that Jesus is saying here. He says I you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. So this idea of confessing Jesus or denying Jesus is what we’re talking about.

In **Titus 1:10-16** Paul gives a description of the kind of people that Jesus is talking about in Matthew 7. They turn from truths to myths. They are defiled and unbelieving. To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. That’s exactly who He’s talking about here in Matthew 7. *They profess to know God but by their deeds they deny Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. This is a perfect commentary on Matthew Chapter 7. Professing to know God, but proving by their actions they do not, and even denying Him. This is why Jesus *declares* that He does not know them.

Continuing to look at **Titus 1**, it seems that Paul has identified the defect pretty well. Their minds and their consciences are defiled. The word “mind” here is “nous” (νοῦς) meaning *intellect* or *meaning* or *understanding*. This is one’s perspective or world view and how they fit in that world view. He’s talking about *distortion, lie, corruption* and things that defile one’s view of things. It causes us to see things from a skewed perspective. That’s who He’s talking about here in Matthew 7; those who claim that He is Lord but they don’t do the will of the Father in Heaven, and therefore Jesus doesn’t know them.

Out of this “mind” of these people comes doctrines or teachings, and those teachings are the things that are corrupt. That’s where the false teachers, their ‘very being’ is corrupted and out of their ‘very being’ comes these corrupted teachings. The conscience here, “suneidesis” (συνειδησις) is our moral consciousness; the seat of right and wrong within us. When this is corrupted by giving into temptations, thereby defiling the conscience by acting contrary to it, we lose our ability to check ourselves and stray into immoral places and actions and thoughts. Both mind and conscience must be kept pure and focused lest we lose our ability to follow Christ sincerely.

Back in Matthew 7 the logical and mental outcome of a profession of faith, not coupled with the practice of faith is the separation it brings. Relationships can only exist in an atmosphere of consistency. This consistency leads us to know and be known. ***This is eternal life***. So, what Jesus is talking about in Matthew 7 is this consistency of life, of where we know God and we know Christ, and He knows us. ***That’s the essence of eternal life. (John 17:3)***

Then he says, in this verse, “***Depart from Me***”. Could there be any more terrible words than these? For Jesus to pronounce the separation as ‘official’ is sobering. Jesus can no longer walk with one whose profession does not match their practice. It is like a writ of divorce. Compare this with other similar pronouncements. In **Matthew 25:12** in the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus says, “Truly I say to you I do not know you.” How sad for Jesus to say to His creation, to His children, to His wife, “I do not know you” ... to become a stranger, a hostile one, an enemy.

In the parable of the talents the master says to the one talent man who did not use what he had been given, “Cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness in the place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Here, it is not “depart” but it is “cast out”. In the story of the sheep and the goats in **Matthew 25**, we are simply told, “and these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”. So, whether it is “go away”, “depart” or “cast out” all of these are just chilling pronouncements.

It seems to me when we, or I read these words, often without emotion, that is a horrible thing within me. How can I read these words without emotion? The emotion of those He is addressing is hard to measure. Is the shock of hearing these words just too hard to bear? This is final! This is over! Is this what finally shocks them into reality ... but too late? The utter terror must settle deep inside the soul. I recently listened to someone read Jonathan Edwards’s sermon called, “***Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God***”. It is chilling, the descriptions he brought out concerning the fate of the wicked.

But what must go through Jesus' mind as He says these words? These are people He created and gave life. These are people He *died* for, those He *bled* for, those He *took the beating* for, those He *endured the nails* for, those for whom the *spit ran down His face*. These are those He loved; His friends, enough to *die for*. These are His own whom He came to and who rejected Him. These are sheep He would have gathered into His sheepfold. These were chicks that He would have gathered under His wings...but *they would not!* They would have rather played a game and found pleasure in playing a part of their own creation than to have matched their life with a heart purely devoted to Jesus.

*They practice*, He says, *lawlessness*. The word 'practice' here is "ergazomai" (εργαζομαι), a trade or a work that one is committed to doing. So one has "committed" to "practicing" lawlessness according to what Jesus says in **Matthew 7:23**. A very common word, this practice of lawlessness, is not a passive endeavor, but active. It is an occupation, occupying one's time and energy! It is giving one's life to it.

In **John 3:21** Jesus teaches what is opposite to the practice of lawlessness; and that is the practice of truth. This is *our* choice ... lawlessness or truth.

In **John 6:28** Jesus was asked, what must we do to work or to practice the works of God? and Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent". *To work truth depends on believing in Jesus. This is knowing Jesus.*

Those in Matthew 7 were attempting to work the works of God without believing in Jesus. What is the point of that? Could they possibly think that this is a trade God will accept when God loves His son so much?

Well, that's what we can get to today. We still have at least one more section about the wise and the foolish man and that's in **Matthew 7:24-29**. We will tackle that the next time.

I know we have covered a lot of material and I always encourage you to take this slowly, eat it slowly, you may have to eat it in small bites, you may have to pause it to think about it. I know that this is in depth. This is "meat", the meat of the word. This is not for little babies in Christ.

Thank you for joining me and thank you for being a part of "The Mind of Christ" study.

You can find all of our materials on our website –<https://www.centernalsarasota.org/>. I hope you will go there and avail yourself to other studies and sermons we have done and archived there.

Until next time, God bless.