

## TESTS FOR A GENUINE CHRISTIAN

Matthew 7:21-29

### I. INTRODUCTION

A. The great curse and blight on Christianity today and ever since its inception is and has been profession without reality. Men say they are Christians and they give lip service to Jesus Christ, but they do not really love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. Many of these go through the external acts of Christianity, but these motions are nothing more than empty ritual. Apart from a heart that is in fellowship with Christ, services of devotion become meaningless and useless.

B. God hates profession and the Lord Jesus Christ scorned the hypocrites of His day (Matt. 15:8). In this passage this morning, Christ gives a warning to true disciples and condemns the false disciples. These warnings are given to cause true Christians to examine their own lives and push on for Christ. These warnings are also given to shake false Christians out of their lethargy and cause them to turn to Christ.

NOTE: In this section, our Lord is not concerned how one becomes a Christian but with the evidence of a true Christian. A person becomes a Christian when he acknowledges his sinfulness and turns to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. But once this profession of Christ is made then who must prove, demonstrate or give evidence with his life that Christ has really come into his total personality.

C. Christ has been warning his disciples about false prophets who will come teaching a false gospel. All professors are an abomination to God, but religious leaders who profess to teach and preach Christ are a special stench in the nostrils of God. This nauseates Him.

NOTE: False teachers produce false converts. Converts made by false prophets are big talkers but little doers. Christ's warns all men who profess Christ about the terrible sin of hypocrisy.

### II. CHRIST'S WARNING AGAINST MERE PROFESSION, VERBAL PROFESSION

-- 7:21-23

A. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." -- Entrance into the future kingdom of God in time and in eternity is through Jesus Christ. Salvation is in Christ and all who trust Christ will have a part in the future kingdom. Possession of Christ and not profession is the basis of entrance into the kingdom. Our final destiny will be settled not by what we say to Christ today or what we shall say to Him on Judgment Day, but whether we do what we say, whether our verbal profession is accompanied by moral obedience.

1. These professors acknowledge intellectually that Jesus is Lord (God) and they may even hold this view with some real zeal, for they say, "Lord, Lord." These professors are guilty of self-deception or self-delusion. They are very orthodox, for they believe that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh. Yet their belief is mere intellectual assent, not real possession of Jesus Christ, for there is no desire to do the will of God.

**NOTE:** No one can be saved and enter God's kingdom without acknowledging Christ as Lord (God) but not all who say "Lord, Lord," do enter in. We know that the demons acknowledge Christ as the Son of God (Matt. 8:29) and believe intellectually (James 2:19) but they are not saved. It is a public confession, not private.

**POINT:** Assenting to the great creeds of the Christian Church and accepting the historical truths of Christ are good, but this assent alone cannot make one a Christian. One must accept Christ personally and begin to live for Him as a believer.

A genuine Christian proves or demonstrates that he is a Christian by his willingness to do the will of God. No person is saved by works but every saved person demonstrates his salvation by his works. Real faith in Christ manifests itself. What a person really believes is what he practices. To do the will of God tells us that Christianity is a life to be lived. It is the life of God in the soul of a man, for the Christian is a partaker of the divine nature and must of necessity manifest his new life in Christ.

**NOTE:** Christ is in no way speaking about perfection in the Christian, for no Christian is completely free from the power of sin and every Christian will at times do things that displeases the Lord. Our Lord is speaking about desire for spiritual things - a longing to conform to Christ, a passion to do the will of God and zeal to keep the commands of Christ as they are recorded in scripture. Christ wants a person's heart; He desires the submission of the inner man. In short, He wants us.

**NOTE:** There is such a danger for those who have been raised in a Christian home (which is a wonderful privilege) to accept Christian truth without having any personal relationship with Christ.

- B. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many works?" -- There will be many, probably multitudes, that will plead their apparent good works before Christ at the day of judgment, and he will not accept them. There will be some false teachers who will point back to works of power, miracles and amazing things. Why won't they be accepted? Because they were done in man's own strength and power and were not done for the glory of God but for the glory of man.

**NOTE:** We should also remember that Satan also has the power do miracles and he is constantly seeking counterfeit the true works of God.

**NOTE:** This verse shows how close a person can actually get to salvation and still not be saved. "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." -- Professors will plead their good works, their human efforts, even their miraculous feats but Christ will reject them, for these were done for man's glorification and their was no real desire to do the will of God from the heart. They called Christ "Lord" but never submitted to His Lordship (cf. Luke 6:46).

**NOTE:** Judas cast out demons in the name of Christ; yet he was not saved but was the "son of perdition."

**NOTE:** There are many deceived professors who really think they are saved. They have a false assurance in orthodoxy and human activity. It is possible for a man to say all the right things and yet live such and evil life that it is quite plain that he is not a real Christian. However, it is just as possible for a man to have superficial works, even religious works, and still not be saved, for the basis of all his works was self interest, self glory and self satisfaction.

**ILLUSTRATION:** This phenomenon of casting out demons and miraculous works without the reality of Christ is not only a first century thing but has happened in our own time. Recently the paper carried an article on Asa A. Allen, evangelist and faith healer. He did many apparent wonderful works but he died a hopeless alcoholic.

**ARTICLE:** Alcoholism Is Blamed in Death of Evangelist --

An autopsy shows acute alcoholism caused the death of Asa A. Allen an evangelist and faith healer who was found dead in his hotel room here June 11, reports Coroner Dr. Henry Turkel.

Initially blamed on a possible heart attack. Allen's death came as the result of "acute alcoholism and fatty infiltration of the liver." Turkel reported Wednesday after pathological tests.

The 59-year-old evangelist's blood alcohol content was .36 per cent enough to insure a deep coma, Turkel said. Allen was buried June 15<sup>th</sup> at his 2,400 acre headquarters in Miracle Valley, AZ where he planned many of his television and radio shows and directed his \$2 million a year Miracle Revival Fellowship.

**III. CHRIST'S ILLUSTRATION OF PROFESSION -- 7: 24-27 :**

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." -- In order to drive home the idea that outward appearance is not sufficient for salvation, the Lord tells the famous parable of the two houses. This parable is introduced by the word therefore. It shows this parable must be connected with the preceding. In other words, this story illustrates the truth that not every one who says, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom. There is something that is more basic and foundational that determines a man's eternal destiny.

- A. **Two Houses:** **The two houses are a picture of profession.** The wise man's house is genuine Christianity. The foolish man's house is false Christianity. The Lord draws no distinction between the appearances of the two houses. They apparently looked exactly the same. Outwardly they were very similar.

**NOTE:** The lives of two people may appear to be very similar. The difference between a true Christian and a false one is not always immediately obvious. Yet, whatever the outward appearance, one will be destined to eternal life and the other for

eternal condemnation.

**NOTE:** The true and the false, the wheat and the tares, may well be in the same church. They sit and listen to precisely the same gospel and both seem to like it. They sing the same songs, go to the same functions and have generally the same kind of church activity. The false professor is not on the outside of the church but on the inside. He likes being connected with the church and he may be an active member of it. On the surface, the false and the true look very much alike.

- B. **Two Foundations:** The key to this parable is found in the two foundations. The one thing that distinguishes the two houses in their foundation, and the other was resting on sand. When the storm came, the one house stood firm and the house on the sand crashed disastrously. The rock foundation is obviously the Lord Jesus Christ for he is called the rock (Matt. 16:18), living stone (I Pet. 2: 6, 7) and the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20). Christ is saying it is not enough to profess to know Him; your life must rest on Him. A foundation holds the house; the house is set on it. So the Lord Jesus is saying it is not enough to profess to know him you must entrust yourself to Him. It is abandonment to Christ; a commitment to Him alone. The sand foundation represents all of man's human works in the flesh. When the storms of life, which involve trials, tribulations, testings, failures, crisis and so on, come, the mere professor of Christ will flag his true colors and go away from the truth of Christ, proving himself to be an unbeliever. But when the storm comes to the true Christian, his foundation is Jesus Christ. While the trials may be rough, he will stand true for Jesus Christ.
- C. **Two Men:** The two men are said to be wise and foolish. The foolish man is the person who failed to come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He may have had intellectual assent, some religious activity, even some lofty emotional moments of so-called worship but he never really committed himself to Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. Therefore, he had a false foundation that could not take him to heaven. This foolish man was self-deceived and had a false assurance about heaven. The wise man, of course, is the person who sees that he is lost, turns to Christ to save him, and determines by the grace of God to live for Christ in his daily life. He built on a sound foundation. The wise man trusts Christ, for Christ alone is able to save.

#### IV. **CHRIST'S AUTHORITY** -- 7:28, 29:

“And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” -- Jesus Christ speaks with authority because he is the Son of God, truly God and perfect man. His words are sure and certain. He cannot lie and will never deceive us. Therefore, we can trust him implicitly.

#### V. **CONCLUSION**

- A. There are only two logical conclusions a person can make concerning Jesus Christ. He is either the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, or He is a lunatic. Some illogically say He is only a good man, a moral teacher or the best man that ever lived. To call him this will only bring eternal judgment. But if you conclude He is the Son of God, and he is, this will give you entrance into God's kingdom.

If you refuse Christ in this life, you will meet Him as your judge in eternity. But Christ came to

save men from the judgment to come. He came to give eternal life and forgiveness of sins to all who will trust Him. Christ came to give meaning and purpose to life in a world that seems to be going in circles. Since Christ is the Saviour, I invite you and encourage you to receive Him as your personal Saviour now.