

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

Part LCV

“The Scariest Words Ever Heard”

Part 2

I. Review:

We are coming to the end of our year long, verse-by-verse study of Jesus’ famous Sermon on the Mount, His 3 chapter presentation of “the normal Christian life” in Matthew 5-7.

Many Bible scholars believe the formal part of the Sermon actually ends with the “Golden Rule” in Matthew 7:12.

Everything we need to know about what the true Christian life has been presented.

The rest of the message is a series of *warnings*:

“It would be well for the Church if the warnings of the Gospel were studied as much as the promises of the Gospel.”

Bishop J.C. Ryle

So the Lord closes this great Sermon with a series of warnings; like a parent’s last words to their children as they leave them...

3 Warnings

- Beware of a false Gospel: the true Gospel offers a “strait gate” and a “narrow way” on the road to heaven; the real Christian life isn’t easy!
- Beware of false Prophets: these wolves look like sheep; they teach a false Gospel; their preaching offers a wide gate and a broad way to heaven. It all sounds so good; but it leads to death
- And here we have the 3rd warning, the most serious of all: Beware of a “false peace”; to think you’re saved when you’re not.

"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."

Matthew 7:21

Not everyone who calls Jesus "Lord" will make it to heaven! Indeed, many professing Christians will be rejected on Judgment Day!

"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'."

Matthew 7:21-23 NASB

Surely these are the scariest words ever heard;

"What a terrible word! What a dreadful separation! Depart from ME! from the very Jesus whom you have proclaimed, in union with whom alone eternal life is to be found. For, united to Christ, all is heaven; separated from him, all is hell."

Adam Clarke

This is a subject so serious that it's worth doing a Part 2 of last week's message and take time to deal with the age old issue of...

II. Counterfeit Christians and Temporary Believers

A. A Brief History

1. The 1st appearance of counterfeit Christianity is among Christ's own disciples in Judas Iscariot.

Judas Iscariot was the 1st "counterfeit Christian"

- a. Judas was chosen by Jesus Himself
- b. He walked with the Lord for 3 ½ years
- c. He performed miracles along with the rest
- d. But he betrayed the Lord in the end.

(We will come back to Judas)

2. Later, after the resurrection, the early church had many such men among them...

a. Paul speaks of “false brethren” in 2 Corinthians 11 and Galatians 2; Peter speaks of false teachers in his 2 epistle; John speaks of false apostles in his 1st epistle; and false Christs (or antichrists) here...

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the* Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

1 John 2:18-19 NKJV

3. Counterfeit Christians have been among us since Judas and the early church; in the 1700’s, the Puritans called them “temporary believers”. Dr. David Martyn Lloyd Jones says...

”The Puritans dealt at great length with what they called ‘temporary believers’. They meant by that, people who seemed to come under the influence of the gospel, and who gave the appearance of being truly and soundly converted and regenerate.

“Such people said the right things and there was a change in their lives; they appeared to be Christian...

“But the Puritans called them ‘temporary believers’ because those people gave clear, unmistakable evidence afterwards that they had never truly become Christian at all. This kind of thing often happens during revivals.”

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

4. This is a most important point! Counterfeit Christians and temporary believers are NOT people who have been born again and fall away. They are people who have never been born again in the 1st place! Which raises another question about the “security” of the true believer.

B. Eternal Security or Eternal Insecurity?

1. People have asked me countless times if I believe in “eternal security”; I sometimes answer that “I certainly don’t believe in eternal *insecurity!*”

2. Just go back to our text in the Sermon on the Mount...

**"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'
Matthew 7:23 NASB**

a. Notice that Jesus does not say, "I once knew you" or "I used to know you". He says "depart from Me, I NEVER knew you!"

**"This proves that, with all their pretensions, they had never been true followers of Christ...they had never been true Christians."
Albert Barnes in "Barnes' Quotes"**

**"I do not know of a more decided proof that Christians do not fall from grace than this text. It settles the question; and proves that whatever else such people had, they never had any true religion."
Albert Barnes**

(Now we go back to Judas)

3. The poster child for counterfeit Christians and temporary believers is Judas Iscariot:

a. Judas was not a born again believer who fell away. He was never born again in the first place. Jesus said so in the middle of His ministry...

**"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.
John 6:63-64 NASB**

b. Remember, this is the Chapter where He fed the 5,000, who followed Him for a while, but finally dropped off, leaving only the 12. Then Jesus asked them, "Do you want to go too?"

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

70 Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" 71 (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

John 6:66-71 ESV

c. And again, at the end of His earthly ministry, in His high priestly prayer in John 17:12, Jesus says to His Father...

"While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

John 17:12

d. What scripture? The prophecy in the Psalm 109, who would be judged at the end and that "another" will "take his office"; and Psalm 41 who would "eat his bread" but the "lift up his heel against Me"; the one Jesus referred to after the foot washing in John 13...

"He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean."

John 13:10-11 NASB

e. New believers ask, "But why did Jesus pick Judas when He knew He would betray Him?"

- First, as He said, to fulfill the scriptures; the fact that there would be a traitor among them was prophesied and had to come to pass
- But I personally believe Judas to be a warning to us all how far one can go in looking like a Christian and still not be one!

4. But God does not want us to live in "eternal insecurity"; He does not want us to live our lives in fear of losing our salvation or in fear of death.

5. The devil is a deceiver; he will try to convince unbelievers they are saved, and he will try to convince believers they are not saved.

a. He will give counterfeit believers a false peace and he will try to rob true believers of their true peace! So what are we to do?

6. Let me close with a few practical things we need to know.

III. Conclusion

A. Self Examination is Critical!

Examine yourselves to be sure you are in the faith.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Don't examine others. Don't let others examine you. Examine yourself!!!

1. Do I have the witness within?

The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself...

1 John 5:10 NASB

a. John Wesley was excommunicated from the Anglican Church because he preached this text; that it is possible for a person to absolutely *know* if their faith is real! This is what some call "know-so" salvation.

2. Where is my trust?

a. Do I recognize that my salvation is of the Lord? Is my faith in Him or is it faith in my faith? The brilliant 17th century French mathematician and Catholic theologian Blaise Pascal said this...

"No man ever believes with a true and saving faith unless God inclines his heart; and no man, when God inclines his heart, can refrain from believing."

Blaise Pascal

b. Do I give God all the glory that my salvation originated with Him, not with me?

Do I know I was not saved by my free will but by God's?

You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you...

John 15:16

Do I know that my coming to Christ did not begin with ME?

No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:44 NKJV

Do I know God the Father gave me to His Son and that His Son will never cast me out or allow me to be lost?

"All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

John 6:37-40 NASB

c. Am I trusting God to finish what He started?

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ...

Philippians 1:6 KJV

d. Do I prove my love for Him by keeping His commandments?

"If you love Me, keep My commandments".

John 14:15; 15:10

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

1 John 5:3

e. Am I truly what I say I am or do I have a "secret life" of sin?

"Secret haunts of sin, kept under the cloak of a visible profession, will be the ruin of the hypocrites. Living in known sin nullifies men's pretensions, though they seem ever so genuine."

Matthew Henry

3. Am I "enduring" in my walk with the Lord?

10 "And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. 11 "And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. 12 "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

Matthew 24:10-14 NASB

4. Most of all, does the Sermon on the Mount describe my life?

The Beatitudes

- Am I poor in spirit?
- Do I truly mourn and grieve over my sins?
- Do I hunger and thirst after righteousness?
- Did I come through the strait gate? Am I on the narrow way?

5. And finally, do I love the House of God? Do I love the brethren?

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.

1 John 3:14 KJV

6. May the Lord deliver the deluded from their false peace; and grant us the witness of our salvation with true peace.

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are His. And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

2 Timothy 2:19

COMMUNION AND PRAYER