

Have You Understood – Dating Jesus Matthew 7:21-23

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today as a group of people who desire to know You more deeply. As we open Your Word and discuss what it means to truly be in relationship with You, we ask that You soften our hearts and open our minds. Remove any pride or distraction that might keep us from hearing what You want to speak to us today. Let this time together not be about what we can get, but about drawing closer to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Summary

In this sermon from Matthew 7:15-23, the preacher explores what it truly means to be in a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ. Using the analogy of marriage versus casual dating, he challenges the congregation to examine whether they are truly in a covenantal relationship with God or simply "dating" Him by showing up occasionally, using spiritual language, and performing visible acts of service without a surrendered heart.

The sermon is organized around three key themes: shallow speech, showy service, and surrendered submission. The sermon warns that merely saying "Lord, Lord," performing impressive spiritual acts, or doing visible church work means nothing if the heart is not fully aligned with God. True relationship with Christ requires complete surrender, as described in Galatians 2:20, where Paul says it is no longer he who lives but Christ who lives in him. The sermon calls the congregation to move beyond casual, self-centered engagement with God and into a full covenantal commitment that transforms every area of life.

Key Verses

Matthew 7:21-23

John 6:26-29

1 Peter 3:21

Matthew 15:7-9

Galatians 2:20

Questions

1. The sermon used the analogy of dating versus marriage to describe our relationship with God. In your own words, what is the difference between "dating" Jesus and being in a covenantal relationship with Him?
2. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 that not everyone who calls Him "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven. What do you think it means to truly call Jesus Lord, beyond just using the word?
3. The sermon described "shallow speech" as honoring God with our lips while our hearts are far from Him. Can you think of ways this might show up in everyday Christian life, including your own?
4. What is the difference between doing visible acts of service for the church and doing those acts from a heart that is genuinely surrendered to God? How can you tell the difference in yourself?
5. In John 6:29, Jesus says the work of God is to believe in the one He has sent. The message explained this as fully surrendering and entrusting yourself to Christ. What does that kind of belief look like in a practical, daily sense?

6. The sermon mentioned that some people keep a mental "account" of good deeds they have done, expecting those deeds to cover for areas where they fall short. Have you ever caught yourself thinking this way? What does Scripture say about that approach?
7. Galatians 2:20 says it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. What areas of your life are the hardest to surrender to Christ, and what makes those areas difficult to let go of?
8. The preacher said that when we prioritize other things over God, the Bible calls it idolatry and adultery. That is strong language. How does understanding it that way change how you think about your daily priorities and choices?

Life Application

This week, take an honest inventory of your relationship with God. Choose one specific area of your life where you have been holding back from full surrender, whether it is your time, your habits, your relationships, or your attitude. Bring that area before God in prayer each day this week, asking Him to help you move from casual engagement to genuine covenantal commitment. Consider sharing this area with a trusted friend or group member who can pray with you and hold you accountable.

Key Takeaways

- Shallow speech is not enough. Saying "Lord, Lord" or using spiritual language does not guarantee a true relationship with God. He looks at the heart, not just the words we speak.
- Showy service without a surrendered heart is meaningless. Performing visible acts of ministry, even miraculous ones, does not equal intimacy with Christ. What matters is whether He truly knows us.
- True relationship with God is covenantal, not casual. Just as marriage requires full commitment rather than a dating arrangement, our relationship with God calls for complete dedication in every area of life, not just during Sunday worship.
- Surrendered submission is the heart of genuine faith. Believing in Jesus, as described in John 6:29, means fully entrusting and surrendering yourself to Him daily, not simply agreeing that He exists.
- God looks at the inward person. Just as He chose David based on the heart rather than outward appearance, He evaluates our relationship with Him based on the sincerity and alignment of our hearts, not our outward performance.

Ending Prayer

Lord, we thank You for this time together and for the truth of Your Word that calls us to something deeper than surface-level religion. Forgive us for the times we have honored You with our lips while our hearts were far from You. Forgive us for the times we have done things to be seen rather than out of genuine love for You. We ask that You draw each one of us into a fuller, more surrendered relationship with You. Help us to live as people who are truly Yours, not just on Sunday mornings but in every moment of every day. May the fruit of our lives reflect hearts that are fully committed to You. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.