Different On Purpose: The Day of Surprise Rejection Matthew 7:21-23

Passage

Matthew 7:21-23 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. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Verbal Profession Is Not Saving Possession

Assertion

- Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven…"
- A verbal confession, even a passionate one, is not sufficient for salvation.

Possible Objection

- But wait, doesn't the Bible say if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, we will be saved? Isn't saying 'Lord' exactly what we're supposed to do?

- Romans 10:9-10 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Application

- Regularly examine whether our confession of Jesus as "Lord" is reflected in our daily decisions.
- Why It Matters: It's not enough to talk like Jesus is Lord; we must live like He is Lord.

Impressive Works Are Not a Substitute for Obedience

Assertion

- Jesus continues: "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy… cast out demons… do many mighty works in your name?'
- Religious activity does not equal a right relationship with God.

Possible Objection

- But these aren't fake religious people; these are people doing powerful things! Preaching, casting out demons, performing miracles. Surely that counts for something.

- Matthew 23:27-28 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Application

- Prioritize private obedience over public activity.
- Why It Matters: We can be busy doing things for Jesus and still miss the importance of being with Jesus.

The Core Issue Is Relationship, Not Resume

Assertion
- Jesus delivers the verdict: “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.”
- The issue is not that they lost salvation; it’s that they never had a relationship with Him to begin with.

Possible Objection
- But they clearly knew Him: they used His name, did ministry, and believed in Him. How can Jesus say, ‘I never knew you’?

- John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Application
- Cultivate a daily, personal relationship with Jesus, not just knowledge about Him.
- Why It Matters: Jesus isn't looking for people who simply know His name; He's looking for people who belong to Him.

The Will of the Father Is the Evidence of True Faith

Assertion
- Jesus says the one who enters the kingdom is “the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”
- Obedience is not the basis of salvation, but it is the evidence of it.

Possible Objection
- Isn’t that works-based salvation? Are you saying we earn our way into heaven by doing God’s will?

- Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Application
- Measure our spiritual health by our responsiveness to God’s will, not our religious activity.
- Why It Matters: Obedience doesn't earn our salvation; it demonstrates that our salvation is real.