

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
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Series: Upside Down Kingdom  
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### Do You Have A Ticket?

Matthew 7:13-23 (NIV)

**<sup>13</sup> “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup>But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. <sup>15</sup> Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. <sup>16</sup>By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup>Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup>A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot 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>Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. <sup>21</sup>Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup>Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’**

Earlier this summer, my wife and I, our two daughters, we went out to Orange Beach, Alabama to spend some time with my wife's family. So, we flew into Pensacola on a Tuesday. We're going to fly out on Sunday. Now on Wednesday, we sat around for dinner as a family, we ate dinner. And then afterwards, we are just sitting around talking. My father-in-law says, “Hey, what time do you guys fly out on Sunday?” So, I pull up my Southwest app and look at our flight, and I'm like, “Hey, we're flying out at 11. A. M.” But, as I was looking at it, I realized there's a ticket for me. Yeah. There's a ticket for my 10-month-old daughter, Callie. There's a ticket for my three-year-old daughter, Jacie, and there's not a ticket for my wife.

Yeah, which is a problem. Don't think of me any differently, but I do have a Companion Pass this year through Southwest which means that she gets to fly free. And there's this button that just says, “Hey, add Companion.” So, I hit the button. And it said, “Error. Unable to do this over the app. You must call this number.” So, I get up from the table where everyone is, and I step outside, and I go, “Hey, there's this error on the app. It says that I can't get a ticket.” And they said, “Oh yeah, we're so sorry about that. That's because the flight's full.” And at that point, my heart just sunk to my toes.

I'm like, “What do you mean the flight's full?” They said, “there's not a ticket available for your wife.” I responded with, “Is there anything you can do?” They said, “There's nothing we can do.” I said, “Okay, I've got an idea. My daughter's three years old. She's just going to sit on my lap the

entire flight. It's going to be fine. My wife will take her seat. My daughter will sit on my lap. It's going to be great." And they're like, "No, sorry. FAA says it has to be two years old and under." And at this point I just started to panic. I ask her question after question again and again and again. She says the same thing again and again and again.

And eventually I hang up and call the same number again, because I'm thinking, "Someone else is going to fix this for me." So, I call, and they tell me the exact same thing. I hang up and open the door, and if you just ever want to feel about this tall [lowers hand a few inches off the ground], go in and tell your in-laws, "I forgot to buy your daughter a flight." [Chuckles] Horrible moment. The only good news of that moment was we weren't at the gate yet. It was Wednesday and we had time. So, what we did in that time is I kept calling, I kept checking, I kept refreshing the app to see, is a ticket going to open up? And eventually we moved our flights from Sunday to Saturday. So, we were all together. And then eventually the tickets did open actually on Sunday. So, we moved from Saturday back to Sunday, and we all got on our original flight, and we all made it back. The only good thing was I found out early.

Because if I wouldn't have checked in advance if I had a ticket, I would have got to the gate and said, "I feel like I bought her a ticket. I think I bought her a ticket." And they would have said, "It doesn't matter what you think you did or what you feel like you did. You don't have a ticket. So, she's not getting on." The only good thing was we found out she didn't have a ticket before we got to the gate.

And this morning I want to start with some bad news. We are going to look at a scripture that is potentially the scariest in all of the Bible. I don't think that's an overstatement. Because what Jesus is about to say is He's going to say, "There are many of you [in His teaching]." He's saying, "There are many of you who think you have a ticket. You're confident that you have a ticket, but in reality, you're not getting on. You don't have a ticket."

It's scary stuff. And if that's you this morning, I want to preach this message with as much, in fact, more urgency than the effort that I worked to get my wife a ticket onto that plane. Because a missed flight can be fixed. A missed eternity cannot be fixed. And I want to do all I possibly can to make sure that you know that you have a true ticket. So that's the bad news. The good news this morning is this: You're not at the gate yet. You're not at the gate yet. We got time. The best time to find out that you don't have a ticket is right now because we got time. I just don't know how much time.

I don't know if your last breath is going to be this afternoon. I don't know if it's going to be 60 years from now. All I know is we got this morning. We got this time right now. So, what we're going to do in this time is we're going to check and see if you have a ticket to the Kingdom of Heaven, because I want to make sure I do the best I possibly can to make sure that we know what our ticket is, and really, Who our ticket is.

So that's our topic today. How do we ensure that you have a ticket, and we're in this sermon series called Upside Down Kingdom. This is the second to last sermon series on the Sermon on The Mount. The Sermon on The Mount is the greatest sermon ever given. It was given by Jesus

and really, this is the climax of His message. He's concluded with His instructions in His teaching, and this part is Him demanding a response from us. He's really going to say, "Don't just say, 'Hey, I like your teaching.'" But He's going to say, "No, follow My teaching. What are you going to do in response to everything that I've told you?"

And we're going to be in Matthew chapter seven, verses 13 through 23. So, if you have your Bibles open up there, Matthew chapter seven, verses 13 through 23. We're going to look at how to make sure that you have a ticket into God's Kingdom. Jesus says this in verse, "**<sup>13</sup>Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.<sup>14</sup>But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.**"

So, Jesus is teaching the people who are well traveled. These people are used to walking from place to place, and since they didn't have Google maps, they were used to making a decision frequently, because whenever they came to a fork in the road where there was a broad path and a narrow path, this wasn't even a difficult decision. Every single time they would take the broad path, because the broad path would be well traveled by other people. The crowd would be there. And since it was well traveled, it was determined that the broad path was trustworthy.

Now they would never take the narrow road, because if you're going to take a narrow road, that meant that you were traveling by yourself. And in that day, this is where the smugglers and burglars would hang out. They would wait to see someone traveling along a narrow path by themselves, and then they would rob them. So, it was well known in Jesus's day that there was safety in traveling with the crowds. Jesus is saying in this text, "There is no safety in traveling with the crowds, because the crowds are going to most often choose the wrong direction. They're going to choose a direction that leads to destruction." I've heard it said before that direction determines your destination. Direction determines your destination. And Jesus is saying, "Most people will choose the direction that will lead them to the destination of destruction."

And this teaching right here really dismantles the teaching of all roads lead to the same place. They don't. Jesus is saying, "There's a broad path that many people will follow that will lead to destruction. There is a narrow path that leads to life, and few will find it." So, the question is, which path are you on? Do you have a ticket to the narrow road or the broad road? So, if you want to know if you have a ticket in, the first thing you can do is this, point number one, examine your path carefully.

- 1. Examine your path carefully.*

Don't just assume you're on the right one. Because I think we underestimate how influenced we are by the crowd, because you know what animal we are most often compared to in scripture? Anyone? Yeah. Sheep. You want to know what sheep do?

Let me tell you a story about sheep. I shared this a few years ago, but I think it bears repeating. A few years ago, there were a bunch of shepherds in Turkey, and they took their sheep out to the

edge of a cliff. Now this edge of the cliff had luscious grass at the top of it. They saw the edge of the cliff kind of as a guardrail for the sheep. So, these shepherds went and sat down to eat breakfast. And as they sat down to eat their food, they looked out and they saw one of the sheep was looking over the cliff. And we don't know exactly what was going through that sheep's mind, but as he or she looked over the cliff, they probably realized that there's some grass down there. And as they're standing on the edge of the cliff, they go, "I'm going to go see if that grass is better than this grass." So that sheep jumps off the cliff. Their buddy is watching that sheep jump off the cliff, and they think, "If he saw grass down there, there must be grass down there." And then that sheep followed, another sheep followed, another sheep followed until by the time, the shepherds got to protect the rest of the sheep. Four hundred and fifty sheep just jumped to their death. It's really a horrible story. And really, the only reason why that happened is because they followed one sheep who made a poor decision. Now we're not that dumb.

Let me tell you about something else. There's a study done called The Ash Conformity Experiment. It's become really well known. And then here's what this experiment was. They put eight people in a room, and they put this picture up at the front of the room [points to a graphic that is displayed on the projector screen. Graphic shows a blue, control line on the left and three other blue lines of different heights on the right. The lines are named "A, B, and C"]. And the question was, "What line on the right is most like the target line on the left?" Yeah, a relatively easy answer. The answer is C [C is the line on the right that is the same exact length of the line on the left]. So, they ran this test over and over again with a bunch of different people and less than one percent of the people got it wrong, relatively obvious.

So, they changed up the study, and at this point in the study, they started planting people in the room, and they planted seven people in the room, and they told them all to say, the answer was B. And they would answer first. Then there was this one other person who was in the room, and they weren't in on it. They didn't really know what was going on. So, they got to hear over and over again from the people, "Oh, it's B, it's B, it's B." Do you know what happened? Seventy-five percent of the time, that person said, "It's B."

Here's what's interesting. They talked to them after, and they said, "Oh, I knew it was wrong. I just needed to do what everyone else was doing." We are sheep, and oftentimes, we follow sheep, and we don't follow the Shepherd. This is what they look like, and broad is the road that leads to destruction. Seventy-five percent of the people take the path that leads to destruction, but only a few have the courage to stand up and say, "No, I know what's right. I know what's right." And afterwards, they interviewed all these people and what they heard from them over and over again was, "Hey, why did you answer incorrectly?" And they said frequently, "I just didn't want to be seen as peculiar."

Harris Creek, you better get used to being seen as peculiar. Because we're peculiar people. We believe some peculiar things, like think about what we believe. We believe that there's a God that's just always existed and eternity past, He's always existed. And this God desired to create us. And in love, He created us. And in disobedience, we turned our backs on Him. And rather than just completely wiping us out and starting over, God, in love, chose to enter into this earth that He created by being born of a woman. Then He lived 33 years. And then this God chose to

die the most painful, brutal death He possibly could as He died on a cross. And then this God, man died, was buried in the tomb, and then He rose again. Now we believe that since He did this 2,000 years ago, that a dead man came back to life, we can have life forever. That's what we believe. Now, what do agnostics and atheists believe? They believe that we are just sheer chance. We're just a collection of cells that's going to exist for about 76 years, and then we're going to die and be buried in the dirt and it's over. Those are two very different beliefs.

Why do those two people so often have very different behaviors? That should not be. We should look so much different from that, because we believe so many different things than that. So, in your life, where are you most prone to walk down the broad path, the path that everyone else is walking? You need to have an answer. Where are you prone to fall into what the crowd is doing? And if you don't know, or if you really want to know the answer, I will just recommend this week in Life Group, spend some time and say, "Hey, where in my life am I most prone to walking down the broad path and not the narrow path?" You've got to know, because that's going to lead you down the wrong path to destruction.

I was talking with our team this week, and I was like, "Man what area of our life do you feel like we most often at Harris Creek follow along the path that everyone else takes?" The answer that came up frequently was finances. So often our finances look so similar to an atheist. We give the same, we spend the same, we save the same. And if you compared both of our budgets, it would look very similar, which is weird because we have very different beliefs. So, we should have very different behaviors. We should be peculiar in the way we use our finances.

We should be peculiar in the way that we parent, like you should sit your daughter down and have this conversation with her. And I don't know exactly when your children should have social media, but you should have a conversation, something like this, "Hey, in this house, you're not going to have social media until ninth grade." You know what your son or daughter is going to say? "That's so weird. Nobody else does that." And as their parents, you get to say, "That's right! Nobody else does that because everyone else is down a wide path that's leading to their destruction. And I just want you to know, son or daughter, I love you too much to let you walk down a path that's going to lead to your destruction because our family, we're going to walk a narrow path of a path that no one else is really walking. But it's the path that leads to life."

You should be a peculiar parent. You should be peculiar in the way that you consume alcohol. You should be peculiar in the words that you use. You shouldn't have to cuss or gossip like everyone else. You should be peculiar in the way that you work, how much you work and how hard you work. You should be peculiar in the music that you listen to, and the movies that you watch, and the TV shows that you watch. You should miss out on the discussions of that show that everyone else is watching because you're just walking a different path. You should be peculiar in the way in which you view politics. You should care about it, but you don't need to put your hope in it. Because our President doesn't matter as much as our King does. It matters. It just doesn't matter as much as our King. Be peculiar, walk the path that most people aren't on because we follow the Shepherd. We don't follow the sheep.

But if you look around and your life looks essentially the same as everyone else. maybe you don't have a ticket to eternity. It's a scary thought. And yet, it may be true. So, if you want to know that you have a ticket to eternity, point number one, first thing you need to do is, point one, examine your path carefully.

Now Jesus is saying, “Make sure you're not following other sheep,” but He's also going to say, “Make sure that you're not following other wolves”. And He says this next in this teaching, **“<sup>15</sup>Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.<sup>16</sup>By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?<sup>17</sup>Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.<sup>18</sup>A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot 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>Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”**

So not only will walking down the wrong path keep you from Heaven but sitting under the wrong teachers may keep you from Heaven. So don't just assume that you're on the right path, and don't just assume that you're following the right teachers. So, point number two, if you want to know, you have a ticket, examine your teachers carefully.

## *2. Examine your teachers carefully*

Jesus says that, “They will look soft and fluffy. They'll look like sheep, but underneath they will be ferocious wolves.” And a wolf has never been concerned about what he can give to the sheep, but only what he can take from the sheep. A ferocious wolf will not give a teaching that will lead you to life but will give you a teaching that will actually lead to your death. The problem is they're really deceptive. They will teach things that you want to follow. They will teach you things, and you'll want to buy what they're selling.

The only issue is false teachers look a whole lot like Temu. You ever heard of that website? Yeah, there we go. Ever bought anything on that website? I'm new to the game, but I was looking at it for the first time this week. I'd heard about it, and it's really an amazing website because you can buy stuff for extremely cheap. I didn't have to look all that hard, but here's one of the things I found this week. [Photo of shoes shown on the projector screen] Shoes for \$4.97. Yeah. That's amazing! Like shoes for \$5. That's phenomenal. You should buy that. That's a steal.

Except they're trying to steal from you. It isn't a steal! Someone told me this week the Attorney General of Arkansas just sued them. And this is what they had to say about Temu. “Temu is not an online marketplace like Amazon or Walmart. It's a data theft business that sells goods online as a means to an end. It is purposely designed to gain unrestricted access to a user's phone operating system. It can override data privacy settings on a user device, and it can monetize this unauthorized collection of data.” So, what this website does is it lures you in with cheap stuff, but when you buy that stuff, behind your back, they steal your identity, which is far more costly. It lures you in with something good, but the end result is something absolutely you want to avoid.

This is what false teachers will do. They will throw out teachings that are really attractive. They will tell you things that you're going to want to buy. But if you buy what they're selling, it's going to be far more costly to you. And there's a few false teachings that we need to be aware of today in America. And this is not an exhaustive list at all, but here's just two of them. The first is the teaching of the televangelist. And the second is the teaching of tolerance.

Let's start with the first one teaching of the televangelist. This is otherwise known as prosperity gospel. And this teaching goes something like this. Typically, you need to sow a seed of faith financially, and once you sow a seed of faith financially, God will bless you financially or physically here on this earth. And if you just give, God will give more to you here. You'll have health, happiness, wellness and financial peace here. Now that's a false exchange. That's something that you want to follow. If you want to have money here, you want to have health here. Then you want to follow that instruction. If I just give, then I'm going to get, it's just not true. It's a false exchange, because while the exchange that teacher is telling you is, if you give, you're going to get here. It's just not the real exchange, because the exchange that Jesus actually talked about in Matthew chapter six, in this Sermon on The Mount, He said, **“so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”** There is an exchange. It's just not guaranteed that it's here. It's going to be in Heaven. So, the first thing you need to be aware of is the teaching of the televangelist.

And the second is the teaching of tolerance. Now this teaching is more frequently found on TikTok than it is on TV. And it's more frequently found in churches that display flags more than they do the cross. And here's what that teaching typically sounds like. Jesus welcomed everybody. So, who am I to tell you to change? Jesus welcomed anyone, so you can believe whatever you want. You can be whoever you want. You can do whatever you want. You can sleep with whoever you want whenever you want. Now, there is some truth to what they're saying. Jesus absolutely welcomed everybody, which is why at Harris Creek, we welcome everybody, whoever you are, wherever you've been, whatever you believe, whatever you've done, you are welcome here. The only difference to that teaching is not a single person left a genuine encounter with Jesus the same. They always left changed because Jesus would say, “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

A false teacher is one that sounds a whole lot like this, Jeremiah said this in chapter six, verses thirteen through fourteen. **“<sup>13</sup>From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. <sup>14</sup>They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. ‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace.”** The false teacher will tell you your bone is not broken when it's broken. And they do that to try to be nice. But a nice teaching is not always a true teaching, and teaching something that is untrue is downright mean. It is unkind to tell someone that they do not have a soul-eating bacteria called sin in them, because it's going to lead them to death. It's a false teaching because while we absolutely have a gospel of grace, we do not have a gospel of tolerance. Jesus did not come to tolerate sin. He came to kill sin.

So, we need to be aware of these two things, the teaching of the televangelist and the teaching of tolerance. And there's more, but those are the two main ones. And here, Jesus says, “We need to

be aware of the teaching of the teacher, but we also need to be aware of the living of the teacher.” Because Jesus says that a “bad tree cannot bear forth good fruit.” So, it would not be helpful to listen to a thorn bush teach you how to grow grapes, because it cannot do that very thing it's telling you about. For instance, if you wanted to do a double back hamstring and your options for learning that were Simone Biles or me, yeah. [Laughs come from the congregation] Why? Why are you laughing? The decision is obvious because she can do it and I can't. In fact, I don't even know if a double back handspring is a real thing. It's just some gymnastic thing. The reason why you would choose her over me is I can't do it. It would be crazy for me to get up here and to tell you how to do that because I can't do it. And if I can't do it in private, I'm not going to be able to teach you how to do it in public.

The only reason that she can tell you how to do it is because she knows how and because she is doing it, which is why every single person you sit underneath their teaching, they need to be able to say what Paul said in first Corinthians 11 chapter one, “Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.” “Hey, I'm doing it. I'm living it. I'm being it so I can teach you.”

So, if the teacher is not following Christ, it's going to be tremendously difficult for them to teach others how to follow Christ. So, to apply this message and apply this teaching from Jesus is you should absolutely watch how I live. You should absolutely watch how JP lives. You should absolutely watch how everyone else on this stage lives. You should as best as you possibly can. But here's some good news that should give you some relief is all of us are in a Life Group. All of us are meeting weekly with other believers who are confessing sin. We're having other people hold us accountable. We're having other people encourage us and not just Life Group, but to take it a step further, our elders do an amazing job overseeing our staff and being attentive to what's going on in the life of our staff. So, there are absolutely people watching the way that we live, and you should too. You absolutely have an invitation to it because this is what Jesus called of you to do.

Now I know you can't necessarily get, or you aren't necessarily as close to, let's say JP, as I am, so I want to just want to share with you what I see. As I get closer to him, the more encouraged I am. Because the closer to him I am, the more of his fruit I get to see. And here's just an example from this past week. He and I got to go to Colorado because he was filming a Bible study with RightNow Media on spiritual warfare that's going to be out soon. I know it was going to be a blessing. And as we were there, they had rented this small SUV, and there were like six of us in the car at the same time, which meant someone had to sit in the back third row. And it was one of those SUVs that kind of had a pretend third row, like it's not a third row at all, especially with our luggage. And after JP got done filming, everyone is packed up and we started going to the car, he starts running to the car. Now he's 6'7”. He needs to sit in the front seat. The guy's massive. Instead, as he ran to the car, he ran to the middle door, opened up that door, lowered down the middle seat, and then jumped into the back. And as he's sitting in the back, like this. [Crouches down. Congregation laughs.] Truly, this is what he looked like. I go, “JP, that's ridiculous. You can't sit back there.” He just goes. “Treasures in Heaven, baby treasures in Heaven.”



Yeah. [Laughs] And the reason why I tell you that is to steal those treasures in Heaven, so he gets his reward here and not there. So right back at you, buddy! Yeah, but here's what I want you to know. JP is not perfect at all. I could tell you ways in which he's failed, and he's told you that as well. But here's what I do know about him. He's following Jesus, and he's bearing fruit, and I get to see that all the time. So, if you want to know that you have a ticket to get into Heaven, the first thing you need to do is you need to examine your path carefully. And point number two is you need to examine your teachers carefully.

And Jesus concluded with this. He said this verse 21, **“<sup>21</sup>Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.<sup>22</sup>Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’<sup>23</sup>Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’** This is probably the scariest passage in the Bible. “Many will say to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ And I will say, ‘Depart from Me, I never knew you.’”

All of us have to ask this morning, every single one of us, “Is that me?” See, Jesus is saying here, “It's a different thing to declare that I'm Lord than it is to live like I'm Lord.” Do you have a ticket? Are you believing the right things? This week I happened to see that Elon Musk tweeted this, thought it was applicable. He said this, “I believe in the principles of Christianity like, ‘love thy neighbor as thyself,’ ‘have empathy for all,’ and ‘turn the other cheek,’ and the cycle of retribution.” I thought that was interesting because both of those teachings can be found in the Sermon on The Mount. Here's what makes me so sad about this tweet. The Point of The Sermon on the Mount is not to believe in the principles of the Sermon on The Mount. The point of the Sermon on The Mount is to believe in the Person who taught the Sermon on The Mount. And if your thought is, “No, I believe the teaching, like I love the teaching of Jesus. I believe in the principles.” If you believe in the principles, but you don't believe in the Person, you don't have a ticket in. Jesus says, “The only people who get in are those who know Me.” So, my question is, do you know Him? Do you know Him?

If you want to make sure that you have a ticket, the third thing that you need to do is you need to examine your relationship carefully.

### *3. Examine your relationship*

One of the parts of this passage that's really always troubled me prior to this week is the fact that these people were able to do big things for Jesus. It's interesting. They said that they prophesied in His name. They drove out demons in His name. They even performed many miracles in His name. Didn't this prove that they knew God? When you're in ministry, sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes you get to hear people say things like this. People will come up and say, “Hey, you changed my life.” Or elsewhere. We get emails literally every single day from people all over the world who listen to a podcast that we do here at Harris Creek called Becoming Something, and sometimes the emails will start basically exactly like this. “Hey, dear JP, Nate, and Kathy, you guys changed my life.” And the more you hear that it's, it can be easy to think we changed their life. But let me tell you what's actually going on there.

Let me take you back to 2021. I got the opportunity to go to the Baylor National Championship game as we stomped Gonzaga. Here's a picture of it to prove it [Shows a selfie picture on the projector screen from the basketball game]. Yeah. Let's go, baby! Yeah. Amazing. And it was so much fun. We were basically winning the entire time and just had an absolute blast. At the end of the game, when we had a higher score than Gonzaga did, you know what I turned around and told everyone around me? "We won! We did it! We won the National Championship!"

That's just not true though. They won. Jared Butler won. Coach Drew won. Jackson Moffitt won. Davion Mitchell won. They won. I just happened to be there. This is what happens in the ministry. God will work. He'll do an amazing thing. And it can be easy to think, "Oh, we did it." Oh no, you just happened to be there. He did it. He did the prophesying. He did the driving out of demons. He did the miracles. You just happen to be there. And these people got to see God move powerfully because they spoke the name of Jesus, and the name of Jesus has power, whether you believe in Him or not. So, they got to see God work powerfully. It wasn't themselves that worked powerfully because doing those things doesn't mean you know Him.

Now what's interesting also about all these examples they give is that they are all public examples. They're saying, "Hey, all these other people saw what we did in front of them. We taught them. We drove out demons in front of them. We did miracles in front of them. All these people saw what we did, and they saw that we're Christians." But one of the lessons of the Sermon on The Mount is that God cares far less about public displays of affection than He does private displays of affection. Because while they're going, "Everyone saw what we did in front of them," God is going, "I saw what you did in front of Me."

Think about the chapter before. What does Jesus teach in Matthew chapter six? Let's read those verses three, **"<sup>3</sup>But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,<sup>4</sup>so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."** Verse six, **"<sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."** Verse 17, **"<sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,<sup>18</sup>so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."**

While they're saying, "Everyone saw what we did in front of them." God is going, "I saw what you did in front of Me and your public life said one thing and your private life said another. Depart from Me. I never knew you." Now, the last thing I want to point out about their answer is this. God said, "You don't have a ticket to enter into the gates of Heaven." And they responded by saying, "But look at what we did. We prophesied, we drove out dealing demons, we did miracles," and I noticed this for the first time this week, that's the telltale sign that they don't know Jesus because the follower of Jesus, when they stand before Jesus, they're not going to say to Him, "Look at what we did." They're going to say, "Look at what He did. Look at the enemy that He defeated. Look at the lost person whom He found. Look at the sins that He forgave. Look at the heart that He redeemed. Look at the family that He reconciled. Look at the wretch that He saved. Don't look at what I did but look at what He did. Look at the slain Savior. Look at the risen Jesus. I'm not going to spend any ounce of my time looking at what I've done,

but I'm going to look at what He's done. And since He lived, died, and rose again, that's my hope. It's not in what I've done, but what He's done." Yeah. [Congregation claps]

Here's why this is so important. Every single Membership Class, we ask everyone who's going to become a member, on a scale of 1-10, how confident are you that you'd if you died today, you'd go to Heaven? There's all sorts of answers. And then we say, "If God was at the gates of Heaven, what would you say?" Oftentimes the answers are, in fact, I'd say most of the time the answers are, "I've been baptized. I've been a member at a church. I gave financially to a church. I try to do good things. I serve my neighbors." And every single time my heart breaks because it's like, those aren't your ticket in, the blood of Jesus is your ticket in. When you stand before Him, you're not going to want to say, "Hey, I'm in because of this list of good works that I've done." When you stand before Him, you want to say, "Look at this good work that You did. You lived, You died, and You rose again." That's why we're saved, and that's why these people in this passage are not because their confidence is in themselves and not in their Savior.

My question is that you? What's your ticket into the Kingdom of Heaven? What do you think is going to get you in? Now I also want to be clear that the text does say that the one who enters Heaven is the one who does the will of the Father. But it's not the doing of the will of the Father that gets you in. It's knowing the Father and knowing His will because you are knowing Him always precedes your following of Him. So do you know it? Do you know?

So, in summary, if you want to know you have a ticket, do three things: examine your path, examine your teachers, and examine your relationship. And to close this message, I want to tell you another thing that happened as my wife and I were traveling. This was a year ago last summer, and we were at Austin airport. And it was a really long line entering in. So, once we finally got through security, we didn't have a whole lot of time, but before we got to our gate and we're actually going to take off and it was around lunchtime, so we hadn't eaten yet. So, we needed to get something to eat, and the lines were all long for food. So, I was like, "Man, what are we going to do? How are we going to take care of this?" And then, I saw, in bright shining lights, there's this billboard in the Austin airport and it says, "The Chase Sapphire Lounge." And I'm like, "Adelie, this is amazing. We're going to get to go in one of these things for the first time ever because I got the card. Like I got the Chase Sapphire card and we're going to go get to eat some free food!" Which if you know me, free food is my love language. "This is awesome. I'm going to get to eat a meat and cheese plate. This is awesome!"

That was far away from our gate. It was like at the very end of the Austin airport in that terminal. And so, I just walked as fast as I can with all of our stuff. And then you have to walk up these stairs, and then it's really official looking, it looks amazing on the inside, but there's like someone sitting at the counter. And with all the confidence in the world, I pulled out my wallet, pulled out my Chase Sapphire card, and she just goes, "Oh honey." I'm like, "What?" She said, "That's not the card." I said, "What do you mean? This is the Chase Sapphire Lounge. I have the Chase Sapphire card." She said, "You need to have the Chase Sapphire Reserve card." I said, "Are you kidding me?" She said, "I'm not kidding you." So, I turn around and then the guy behind me, he's this really official looking guy with a suit and tie and they just let him in. I don't even know if they asked him. And yeah, [laughs] it's like this guy, Nate, clearly does not belong here. It's just

so humiliating to go down all those stairs thinking that I was going to get in, had no doubt in my mind. Only to be told no.

And I tell that story because some of you have all the confidence in the world right now. You're looking ahead towards Heaven going, "I can't wait. It's going to be amazing because I got the good works. Because you should see how much I gave to Harris Creek in 2024. That's getting me in. I was baptized when I was 13. I was a member at this church. My parents were believers, and I can't wait to get to the gates of Heaven and say, "God, look at what I've done." And He's going to say, "Son, daughter, that's not the ticket. You can't get Him. Depart from Me. I never knew you." And you're not just going to miss out on a meat and cheese plate. You're going to miss out on the wedding feast of the Lamb. And I want you to be there at the table.

So, I end with that for two reasons. One, I want to break your belief in a false ticket. Or phrase that a different way, I pray the Holy Spirit breaks your belief in a false ticket. If you're holding something that's not going to get you into Heaven, I pray that you'd lose it right now. You'd lose it. You'd toss aside anything that's a false ticket in and you'd get rid of it. I pray that you'd break your belief in that false ticket. And then secondly, I want to build your belief in the true ticket. If you came in this morning questioning whether or not you're saved, or if you read this text and your takeaway is that you're terrified, I want you to know you don't have to be. Because God has made it abundantly clear. What's the ticket into the Kingdom of God? The shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, and if His blood has covered you, then you're not going to hear "depart from Me, I never knew you," but you're going to hear, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Come and share in your Father's happiness."

I want that for you, I want that for me, I can't wait to see you there. Let me pray you'd be there.

Father, my prayer more than anything else is that you'd bring salvation to this house this morning. You'd bring salvation to this room and God, I also pray for the people that are watching online, wherever they're from, I pray that you'll bring salvation to their house. The people who tuned in this morning and don't really know why, people showed up this morning because a friend invited them and they've never really known whether or not they're saved, Father, I pray that you'd save them. God, I pray for everyone who came in this morning with a belief in a false ticket. I pray that they'll toss that ticket aside, and You'll give them the true ticket. And I pray that You will save them. And I pray that right now, people would go from death to life, and the loss would be found, and the children would be welcomed home, and that you and your angels will be throwing a party in Heaven.

And so, what I want to do now is praying is I just want to give all of us an opportunity. If you do not know Him, get to know Him, follow Him for the very first time and to receive a gift, a free ticket that you didn't work for, but that was given to you. So, we're going to have time right now, just an opportunity to receive it and respond. So, if you want to follow Jesus, if you want to know Him, just pray this prayer in your head alongside me.

Father, I admit that I am a sinner, that in Your love, You desired to create me. But in my foolishness, I desired to run from You. But God, as I ran away from You, You ran after me. And

since You so loved me, You sent your one and only Son to live for me, to die for me, and to rise again for me. And I believe for the first time in my life, that's my ticket in. That knowing Jesus is my ticket in. And God, I want to follow You all the days of my life. I forsake the things in my past and I want to run towards You.

Father, I'm so grateful for the salvation that I believe that You have brought. I just pray that You would hold these friends, that You'd protect these friends, that You'd keep these friends and that they would follow You all the days of their life until they hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." God, I pray that every single person in this room, every single person watching online would hear those words. Father, would You do it? Would You do it in our life? And we believe that You can because of one reason and one reason only. It's because of the fact that Jesus is alive and He's with us and He's for us, and it's in His name we pray. Amen.