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Teaching: Zac Niles
Series: The Sermon on the Mount
Message: It's Not Enough to Call Him Lord

Transcribed Message
August 5, 2018
Matthew 7:21-23

We are going to continue our Sermon on the Mount series. We've been talking about some hard stuff. I don't know if you've been here or if you're a guest, but what we like to do at this church is to walk through the Bible verse by verse. We've been walking through the Sermon on the Mount for a while now. I don't know how long. Carlon could tell us. I've been given a passage out of Matthew 7 today. We've talked about two gates, two roads and two lives. Last week we talked about two types of people who proclaim the gospel, and today we will be talking about two types of people who profess the name of Christ. I just warn you that it is a difficult passage. I pray the Lord be with me through this.

Before this, I want to tell you about a book that I've been reading about Andre Agassi. He's always been like this tennis prodigy and when he was eight or nine, he went to this tennis club with his dad in Las Vegas. A very famous club. One day, Jim Brown, the best of all football players who ever lived, came in and he was looking for someone to play for money. The guy he was supposed to play wasn't there so Andre Agassi's dad walks up to him and says my son who is eight or nine will play you. Jim Brown says I only play for money. And the dad asked how much. He said \$10,000. The dad says ok, I'll go get the money and walked out. Jim Brown looks at the kid and thinks, I've got this kid. I'm a professional athlete. This is the easiest \$10,000 I've ever made. When the dad leaves, the owner of the club said you cannot play this kid. Jim Brown asked why can't I play this kid? I could whip him. The owner says you cannot play this kid. If he beats you, you'll be mad at this club and you'll never come back. I don't want that to happen. Do not play this kid. The dad gets back with the money and he says, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to play you one set, and we'll see how it goes. Then I'll decide how much money we want to bet. So they play the first set. Andre

Agassi at 8 or 9 beats Jim Brown 6-1 the first set. They play again and he beats him 6-1 again. By the third set, he asks how much do you want to bet? Jim Brown says I'll bet you \$500. So, it went from \$10,000 to \$500.

The thing was he looked at something but seeing is not always reality. I had a friend tell me about something. It's like walking over to cookies and picking up what you think is chocolate chip and it ends up being oatmeal raisin. It's not what you expected, right? or the person that you look across the room and you think this person is amazing. She is so beautiful and you walk over and you see she is 30 years older than you. It is just not what you expected. We've all had that experience. Even sometimes with the job. You think the job is going to be one thing and you find out a little bit later it's something else. You start a relationship with someone and think this is going to be the greatest relationship ever. You realize that it's something else. The same is true even in our faith. Sometimes we can look at our faith and we can perceive it one way but the way God sees it might be something completely different. Let me read you this passage. When churches do sermons on the hard sayings of Jesus, this seems to be one that is always there. So I thank Carlon for letting me have this. I appreciate it.

It says this. Matthew 7:21 – “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 I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” I should just turn the mic off and just walk out and see how you guys like that. That's a hard passage.

I'm going to tell you a stupid story and I just apologize ahead of time. But my wife was somewhere else in the house and I was flipping through the channels and I got to “The Ballad of Ricky Bobby”. It's a movie where Will Ferrell plays a race car driver. There's a scene in there where he prays and he starts praying to sweet baby Jesus and his wife was why you praying to baby Jesus? Because that's my favorite Jesus. So he's praying to 8 lb. 6 oz. baby Jesus. And his buddy Cal says that my favorite Jesus is the one with the tuxedo on because he means business but he also likes to party. I only say that story because everybody has these images of Jesus. We like a safe, soft 8 pounds

6 oz. baby Jesus. We like a Jesus that we can fashion into our own image. We like the Jesus of the miracles. I can guarantee you, most people if you ask them what their favorite Jesus story is, this is probably not it. It brings up a lot of questions. If it doesn't it should.

Let's read this again. "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." What does "Lord, Lord" mean? Back in the Roman times, when they were talking about this, they would say that Caesar is Lord. Caesar was the sovereign one over that area. They also thought he was like the son of God or God's appointed. So the people who are making this statement are saying Jesus is Lord. Jesus is sovereign. Jesus is the Son of God. Can we all agree that's good theology? Jesus is Lord. This person had sound theology, yet he is going to be cast out as a lawless person. How do you have sound theology and be cast out? He says Lord, Lord. He's emphatic that I know what I'm talking about. Jesus is Lord.

Have you ever known anybody that has really, really sound theology? They know all the right answers. If you question them, they'll get louder and even yell it. They know all the right answers but there's something going on. I don't want to seem like that person because he's just a jerk. There is no love in their heart. They have all the right theology but I don't want to be around them. If you question, they'll get louder and more aggressive. There's people out there that you don't like. Here's the deal, guys. This is scary. This passage is meant to be scary. I'm not here to give you a pat on the back, although I think I will at the end. Stick with me. This is supposed to scare you a little bit. You can have sound theology and not be there.

There's a verse in Romans 10. I don't have the same version as you so I'm going to read it. Romans 10 verse 9: "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. One believes with the heart resulting in righteousness and one confesses with the mouth resulting in salvation." It says anyone who says Jesus is Lord and believes in their heart. So these people are saying Jesus is Lord, but there's got to be something else going on in their heart, correct? It says the one believes with his heart resulting in righteousness and the one confesses with the mouth resulting in salvation. There's

something about the heart that God cares about. Does He care about sound theology? I am here to say yes and Amen. But is that all He cares about? This passage seems to say there's something else going on in these people who are professing all these things yet something is not right with their heart. That's radical. That's scary.

Let me ask you what's going on in your heart? This is a warning passage for a reason. What is going on in your heart? What do you feel when you hear this? "The one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." What's the will of the Father? The will of the Father is that we would believe, that our hearts would be transformed. Not that we could say all the right answers but that our hearts would radically be transformed.

"On that day many, many will say to me..." He doesn't say a few. In a room this size, not to scare you, not as scare tactics but you have to read the passage just as it says. "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?" It appeared they had great theology. But it wasn't followed by the heart. It was all information up here and didn't transfer down here. I'm sure you've never met anyone in church who has all this up here and nothing down here, but I certainly have. Not only that they had right-thinking which is orthodoxy. They had right practice which is orthopraxy which means they lived the right way. They did some things that were right. To prophesy. What is prophesy? It means to speak God's truth to what God can do, what God has done. They were speaking these things. They were talking about God. They were casting out demons. I've never cast out a demon. That's pretty radical. They did many mighty works. Some versions say they did miracles in your name.

How does someone who doesn't know the Lord do these things? How does that happen? It's a real question. The only thing I can come up with is in that phrase "in my name". There's certain things about Jesus, when His name is exalted, He will do some things that may not even endorse the person who is saying it. I had this person who I worked with at my past church. He was on staff with me. The way he came to faith. If you turn on Christian TV, there's some really interesting characters on there. I don't watch it a lot, but there's some people that have fleeced people for money. They're on TV all the time and some of them have even fallen. The guy on staff with me. He came

to Christ. He flipped on the TV, watched *The 700 Club* and someone was on there who has now fallen and is away from the Lord. He came to the Lord through that *700 Club* and now he's grown to being a pastor. God did something through that person that I don't know where he's at this point, but because Jesus's name was exalted things will happen. Is that crazy to think about? That you can do all this work? That you could even see God move and still not be known by Him? That is wild. Because He will lift up His name. His name is a strong tower where people will come to and be saved. If his name is lifted, people will flock to it, but that does not mean He endorses all the things that go on in His name.

Let me just bring it home. What about all our actions? Why are we doing the actions that we're doing? Why are we doing all the religious activity that we are doing right now? Why are you getting up and coming to church today? What do you want more than anything? Do you want to do some religious activity or do you want to meet with the living God?

There's this guy named Christian Smith. Christian Smith was a sociologist and he studied these young adults who were growing up in our faith communities. He did a study many years ago and a woman named Nancy Percy wrote about it. He said there's this other thing that is coming up alongside of our Christian students and they're picking up an ulterior, almost a parasitic worldview, even though they have been sitting in these churches. There's something that looks a lot like it. He called it this. Religion as moralistic therapeutic deism. He said this is what is actually being picked up by our students and this is a parasite. This is not what the true gospel is.

Moralistic means this. God wants us to be good. Religion's purpose is to help people be good, but you can be good without being religious, therefore religion is an optional tool for those who find it useful. This is what students are picking up on. This is what's been transferred to them. That Christianity is all about being good and being kind. Why do we bring our kids to church so that they can learn to be good and kind and moralistic? I just want to tell you. That's not the gospel, although it looks a lot like the gospel.

The next is therapeutic. It means God and religions are valuable because they help us feel better about our problems. A lot of people think that religion, Christianity,

revolves around you and God's highest aim is your happiness. I just want to tell you lovingly God's highest aim is His name and His glory. It doesn't revolve around us. He doesn't have to make us feel completely happy about ourselves. that's why this message is hard. Jesus is saying if you want to feel good about yourself, don't read this passage, right? It doesn't feel very therapeutic. Does anyone in here feel like this is good therapy? It might because it could help you, but does it feel good? Is your religion right now about you doing good things? Honestly, in your heart of hearts, is it about you doing the right things? Is it all oughts and shoulds? I ought to do this. I should do this. Are you motivated by guilt and shame when you do or don't do the things you should and ought to do? Is that you? Because you may be stuck in this moralistic way, this therapeutic life.

The last one is deism, but you've heard that before. God is always in the background watching and ready to help, but He is not the center of our lives. I don't know how many people I've talked to in my short time doing ministry who believe that God is watching and He's ready to help, but they don't any sense of His nearness, of His closeness. They think He's out there and He may love us. We talk about the Holy Spirit alive in us, but we don't sense that. We feel like He's out there watching but that's not the gospel either. He's not a watchmaker who sets it to let it run. He wants to be involved in our lives. How active is God in your life? This is hard.

Let's go on to the next part. Well, let me do this first. Jesus has a parable that kind of tells this to. It's called the parable of the wheat and the tares. Do you remember that parable? The owner goes out and he scatters seeds of wheat. It's in Matthew 13 if you want to look it up. Then it says the enemy came at night and scattered tares into the field. These tares were this stuff called darnel which basically mimics. In the younger stages, it looks a lot like wheat. Then when it gets to a certain point, you can tell it is separate. Well, when it started to show, the workers in that field went to the owner and said someone sowed tares in your field. Who did that? He said the enemy did it. And they said what should we do? Should we tear it up? He said no, let it grow together and at harvest time I'll take these tares out and they'll be burned up. I'll keep the wheat. It's like this stuff has the appearance, but then it's revealed.

I learned this. My mother-in-law brought us a bunch of plants that I thought were flowers. I don't know anything about flowers. I thought they were daffodils. I started planting all these things in my front yard. Sure enough, some of them were probably daffodils. I don't actually know, but they were some sort flower. Then there was something else that kept growing and it had wide leaves. I thought this was interesting. Everybody who would walk into our house would ask what we were growing and I'd answer I didn't know. It eventually kept growing and I realized that I actually had planted corn in our front yard. So there was this corn growing up. I just let it grow until eventually it got to the point where it had taken over my flower bed and I ripped it up. Because at the bottom stage I couldn't tell what it was. It looked like all the other stuff but it wasn't.

Right now in this time we can operate in that moralistic therapeutic deism. It can mimic the real thing. It can look like it, but there's one person you'll never fool. You can fool me. You can trick me into thinking you're the greatest Christian alive. I'm gullible enough and I'll fall for it. But you will never trick the Father. He knows what's going on. But then there's also the statement here that says this in verse 23. They had right-thinking. They had some right practice but then he said to them: "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" Let me just blow your mind for a second. How does the God who knows everything not know something? He is all-knowing but He doesn't know these people? It's the great unknowing, some people say. He chooses not to know certain people. The word "know" has this connotation of intimacy, physical intimacy like Adam knew Eve and they had a son. It's this relational intimacy, where all the barriers are down, the know no shame type of knowing. He said I never knew you. I never had a relationship with you, an intimate relationship where I know who you are.

To be honest, there are a lot of people who don't know God at all. They know a lot about God just like I can know a lot about LeBron James. I don't actually know that much, but I could if I wanted to. But I could never actually know him unless I stalked him and I'm not going to do that. There is a big difference in knowing about and knowing. There are a lot of people in here who know a lot about but they don't actually know. You don't know God. Because in any relationship you like or you want to get to know

somebody you spend time with them, don't you? You spend quality time in order to get to know that person.

What I think is really interesting, and I hope this hits heavy because it hits me heavy, is on this great day of judgment, these people are going to be cast out. There will be gnashing and weeping because they're going to say I want to know You. They're going to want to be with Him then. The interesting thing is why would you want to know and be known by God for all of eternity if you don't have any desire right now to get to know Him? You don't spend any time in prayer, Bible study, meditation. Spending loving time with God. Yet, when you get to heaven, you say I want to be with You forever so that I can know You and be known. You don't enjoy it now, so why would you enjoy that for all of eternity?

I talked to a guy who doesn't know the Lord. He's an atheist. He asked why would a loving God send me to hell? My response was why would a loving God force you to be with Him forever when you don't want to be with Him now? The same is true for you. Why would you act like you want to know Him and be known by Him when you don't want that now?

I was watching a show called *Hell on Wheels* about when they were building the railroad across the country in the Wild West. He was going across the country and what happens is that the Native Americans would kidnap someone and take them into their family. They would rip them out and take them. This person would have to be known by this new culture. The same was true with the white Americans who would take the Native Americans out of their culture and take them into their own. They would be known in a way they didn't choose to be known. They would have to know a new way of living. Something about that feels wrong. What about the me-too movement? Or when there's a physical aggression towards someone else? When there is a way of wanting to know someone when they didn't give you the actual right. It's a violation. The interesting thing about God is that He will never force you to be known. He's not going to rip you out of something. He loves and respects you too much. If you want to keep something from Him? You might say God I'll do all the religious activity you want me to do, but please don't talk about my past. You're saying there's something separate. You're saying I'll give You everything here but this. I want to hold this back. I don't want

You to know this. I don't want You to have control over this. Then You don't really want to be known.

Do you trust that He is good and that He knows you? If He knows you, if He is the Lord of your life, if He takes control, do you believe that that thing you're holding on to so tightly if you actually gave it to Him would bring you life? It's killing you right now. He wants to know everything about you but He's not going to force you. If you don't want to deal with your problems or give it up to the Lord, He's too much of a gentleman. He's not going to rip it out of your arms. He's not going to do that. That's not how He operates. If you don't want to be known, then He won't know you that way. But He won't know you on Judgement Day either. So if you don't want it now, why would you want it then? If you don't want Him dealing with your junk now, then why would you for all of eternity. He wants to know you now in a familiar and intimate way, in a family environment.

That's what is interesting about this. When Jesus talks about doing God's will, He says it's my Father. My Father's will. I want to read you a verse out of Romans 8 because this is the big difference here. How can you know that on that day I won't be that person? I won't be one of the many. There is this verse in Romans 8 and I love it. I hope it helps you clarify a little bit. Romans 8:13 and 14 – "If you live according to the flesh you will die." If you live according to the flesh, trying to do all the right practices, all the right beliefs but you do it all in the flesh, it leads to death. "But if you are led by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body and you will live." What are you doing all this religious activity in the power of? In your own power or is in the Holy Spirit in you? "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." To all who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

I don't know what your family looks like. For some of you, your families are pretty crappy. And I'm sorry. Family should be the place where you can let your hair down and you can be known and you feel the most free. It is a place where you can be the most accepted. It is a place where you can be as goofy as you want and no one tells you to get out of the family. That's not true of all families, but it should be. That's what we all long for – a family where we can be known like that. He's saying if you're led by the Spirit, then you're sons of God. You are in the family and there's nothing to fear. Then

he goes on to the next verse and says that you didn't receive the spirit of slavery. Don't fall back into that fear! If you received the Spirit, you received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry Abba Father.

You've received the Spirit of adoption and it says Abba Father. Some people translate Abba as Daddy, but what it really means is father, my dear father. It's a term of honor and endearment. I just love You, Abba Father. I want to be with You. I feel so loved and cared for by You. When you've been adopted into the family, you don't have to cry out all these righteous and holy "thees and thous" type prayers. You can say God, You're my Father. You love me. You care for me.

The next verse says: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we're children of God." How do I know that I know that I'm not that person? Because I know in my spirit that I've been adopted into the family and His Spirit continually testifies that I'm a son of God. I don't have a spirit of fear. I read this passage and I just don't because I believe that the Spirit is testifying to my spirit that you are a son, you are a child of God. You are loved. There's nothing you can do.

It's interesting about the people in this story that when they get before a holy and righteous God, do you know what they do? They say Father and they start to list off all the things they've done. Look what I've done. Didn't I cast out demons? If you get before a holy and righteous God and you start listing off all the things you did and you're trying to justify yourself before Him, I think you're in the wrong place. You can't justify yourself. All you can do is say you've been adopted by God through Jesus Christ and just lay flat before Him. I'm not putting my deeds on the scale and weighing them. I'm just saying Jesus you're my everything, my Father, and I love you. I hope that makes sense to you.

What is your spirit telling you right now? Just stop for a second. Are you scared out of your wits right now because you know that you're just going through the routine? A lot of people can fool me. But there's some people in here who can't fool me. When we talk about a relationship with whatever video game or whatever you love to do, or whatever movie, your face lights up. I talk with some people about a relationship with God and I see absolutely nothing. What is your spirit saying to you? Are you getting life from this relationship? Is He testifying to you that you're His child? He doesn't want us

to fear but He does want people to be certain that you're in the family, right now, today, that you not try to justify yourself.

Let me share with you one last quote from A.W. Tozer. "We tend by a secret law of the soul to move towards our mental image of God. Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question what comes to your mind when you think about God, we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man." When you think about God, what do you think about? Not 8 lb. 6 oz. baby Jesus. Not Jesus in a tuxedo. But is your picture of God a God up there just waiting to weigh up your deeds? Are you trying to earn His approval, His love? Is He that? Or is He a Father that just wants to be with you?

One of my biggest joys. My kids just came home from being at camp for a week. The greatest joy as a father is when I'm walking out to get my daughter and I see my son. He sees me and runs up to me. It brought such joy to my heart that my son wanted to be with me. He didn't care what anyone thought. He just ran over to me. To see their faces light up. I watched people come in this morning. Mike and Heather Isaac. Their daughter was telling them a great story as they were walking in. She had such joy with her parents. Do you have such joy with the Father that you just want to run to Him? You want to tell Him all that is going on. Is that your mental image? Because that's who He says He is. He is God the Father and He loves you. He wants you to be in His family. He doesn't want you to have to work for it and earn it, to try and trick people into how good you look. He wants to be with you just where you are. He wants to know you.

If you're in here today and you just don't know. I think this is one of those passages that you have to say, you don't have to be one of those many. If you have an inner wrestling in your heart and you don't know what it will be like on that day, there's no reason to fear. You just need to come get help. Too embarrassed? Be encouraged. There are so many people in here who would love to talk with you about a relationship with the Lord. I don't care if you've been in a Christian school your whole life and you said you accepted at 6 and you've just been playing a game forever. There's no judgement here. I just want you to know that you know. If you would find me, it would be the greatest joy of my life to talk with you about Him, that you could find joy in Him. If

you have any questions about a difficult passage like this, email me. I'd love to help you in any way.

Let's pray. Father, we just come to You today and we thank You that You have adopted us into Your family. I thank You for me personally that Your Holy Spirit is testifying with my spirit that I'm a child of God, that I've been adopted. And because I've been adopted, You'll never rip me out of the family. I am so grateful for that. I desire that everyone in this room as they hear this passage, that it would convict them of that need. Convict, but also comfort those who are the sons and daughters, that their spirit would be crying out Abba Father. May they want to spend more time with You now because they know they'll be doing that forever, that they'll be known now because they'll be known for eternity. Let heaven come to earth in our lives. God, if there's someone here that doesn't know that, I pray that You'll give them the prompting by your Holy Spirit to push them out into talking to someone about what a true relationship with You looks like. Not a façade. Not a parasitic folk religion, but the real thing. God, we need Your help every day. Thank you so much. I pray that You'll lift up all things that were truthful that were said and anything that was not would just fall flat, because all I want to do is lift up Your name and let You change people. In Jesus's name, amen.