

“True Christianity”

(Luke 6:43-49)

Introduction

➤ In sports, a “trap game” refers to a game that is so lopsided – where one team is heavily favored – that the outcome seems easy (obvious) to predict and it possibly not worth watching. Today’s message may be a “trap sermon.”

At first glance, the passage before us this morning may appear to be simple and easy. For there are really no great interpretive or theological challenges. But we must not let this lure us into thinking there is little to gain from studying these verses. While this passage is relatively straightforward, it is also extremely challenging and potentially very convicting. Its simplicity effectively cuts to the heart of the matter. It has been referred to as “one of the scariest passages in the New Testament” (R.C. Sproul; *Luke: An Expositional Commentary*; p.202).

This final section in Luke’s Gospel is the end of Luke’s account of Jesus’ “Sermon on the Plain” (Lk.6:17-49). In the immediate context, which I preached on last Sunday (Lk.6:37-42), Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of judgmentalism and commanded that we judge ourselves first before we judge someone else.

Luke 6:42 ~ “How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.”

➤ In Luke 6:43-49, Jesus further explained and illustrated the criteria having and making good judgments (Jn.7:24). Again, we are to judge ourselves (first and foremost) – confessing and repenting our own sin – and then we can rightly teach, correct, or rebuke another’s sin (Lk.17:3; Matt.18:15-17; Gal.6:1-2; 2Tim.3:16-17). We must not be duplicitous, hypocritical, or self-righteous – for the standard is the same for every Christian (Lk.6:36; Matt.5:48; 1Pet.1:15). True Christianity is not seen in mere profession or appearance but in Christlikeness.

Luke 6:43-49 ~ “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. ⁴⁶Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

➤ This passage can be outlined with three numerical markers.

A. Two Trees (vs.43-45)

➤ Jesus gave a profoundly simple horticultural analogy. First, we see the analogy (vs.43-44), and second the application of the analogy (vs.45).

Luke 6:43-45 ~ “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

1. The tree and the fruit (vs.43-44)

- The point is readily and easily understood: “one produces what one is.” A truly *“good tree”* will *“bear good fruit”*, and conversely *“bad fruit”* comes from *“a bad tree”* (vs.43). This ought not to be viewed from a microscopic or narrow perspective – every bad decision or action means that you are a bad person – but as a general principle. Generally speaking, *“a tree is known by its own fruit”* (vs.44). If an apple tree bears bananas it’s not an apple tree (nor a tree for that matter). Jesus further made this point by saying, *“For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush”* (vs.44).
- As we will see, Christian *“fruit”* is not the mere appearance or profession of Christianity (or religion). Merely saying or doing Christian (i.e., religious or moral) things can be deceptive.

Matt 7:15-20 ~ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”

John 7:24 ~ “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

2 Tim 3:5 ~ “having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”

1 Sam 16:7 ~ “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.’”

- The *“fruit”* that Jesus is referring to here is particularly the fruit of Christlikeness or what is commonly called “the Fruit of the Spirit.” The truth is, if Christ is truly in you (and you are *“in Christ”*) then Christlikeness will come out of you; if God is truly in you then godliness will come out of you; if the Holy Spirit is truly in you then spiritual holiness will come out of you. If you are truly a Christian, then you will bear Christian fruit.

Gal 5:22-24 ~ “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

- The evidence of true salvation is not merely a “profession of faith”, or a religious “conversion experience”, but a life that has been transformed – a life that faithfully produces the fruit of Christlikeness.

2. The person, the heart, and the mouth (vs.45)

- Jesus was not teaching about horticulture, but about true Christianity. The good or bad tree represents a person’s life, and the good or bad fruit represents what comes from (or out of) that life. *“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks”* (vs.45). This is abundantly clear. Just as trees produce fruit from what’s within, so it is with a person’s life. To put it another way, what a person thinks and says and does reflect the true nature of that person. A life lived in obedience to Christ reflects a love for Christ, while a life lived in disobedience to Christ reflects a hatred of Christ.
- ✓ Illust: About thirty years ago, in a different town (different church), a woman asked me for relationship advice. She professed to be a Christian, and was living with a man who was an unbeliever. She described him as lazy, told me that he was addicted to pornography, and that he had anger issues, among other things. She asked me what I thought she should do. I unexpectedly stunned her when I said that she should break up with him. She, in turn, stunned me when she said, “If you got to know him, you would see that he has a heart of gold.” I said, “Not according to what you just described.” What I should have said is, “Not according to Jesus (or the Bible)”!

➤ Jesus focused particularly on the *“heart”* (*kardia*) and *“mouth”* (*stoma*) of a person (vs.45). These are not the only parts of a person’s life, but they do reveal the true nature of a person. Generally, what comes out of the mouth reflects what is in the heart. Or, to put it another way, the mouth speaks what is in the heart.

The *“heart”* figuratively represents a person’s true character – who they truly are. It encompasses a person’s true feelings, attitudes, affections, desires, and motives. It is the internal essence of who a person really is – stripped away from all the external appearances and utterances.

Matt 12:33-37 [to the religious Pharisees] ~ “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. ³⁶I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless [*argos*; inactive, unprofitable] word they speak, ³⁷for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

➤ While the *“mouth”* certainly represents what a person says, but it also figuratively represents all that comes out the *“treasure”* (*thēsauros*) of the *“heart”* (vs.45). This is not describing the truly repentant sinner, but those who refuse to repent and continue in sin (1Jn.3:4, 8-9).

Matt 15:10-20 ~ “And he called the people to him and said to them, ‘Hear and understand: ¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.’ ¹²Then the disciples came and said to him, ‘Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?’ ¹³He answered, ‘Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.’

¹⁵But Peter said to him, ‘Explain the parable to us.’ ¹⁶And he said, ‘Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.’”

➤ Again, if a person is truly a Christian he/she will live a life that reflects Christ – not perfectly, but genuinely. It is relatively easy to say that you a Christian, it is another thing entirely to faithfully live the Christian life (Rom.8:7-8). A person who lives a carnal, sinful, unrepentant life reveals the *“evil”* (*ponēros*) that is truly in his heart. Jesus, of course, is not teaching a salvation by good works but the reality that a person is saved unto good works. He is teaching against antinomianism, “Carnal Christianity”, and “easy believism.” He is condemning false sheep and false shepherds. He is teaching against those who “talk the talk but do not walk the walk.”

Ezek 36:26-27 ~ “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

Eph 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, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

2 Cor 5:17 ~ “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

➤ It is important to remember that we are to examine the treasure of our hearts first and foremost (1Cor.11:28; 2Cor.13:5; Ps.139:23-24). We are to take the *“log”* out of our own eye before we take the *“speck”* that is in another person’s eye (Lk.6:42).

B. One Question (vs.46)

➤ Sandwiched between two parabolic teachings (vs.43-45 and vs.47-49) Jesus asked one question that exposes the hypocrisy and duplicity of all false believers.

Luke 6:46 ~ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

- This is truly one of the most important, most heart-piercing, questions in all of Scripture – from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! – to those who professed to be disciples of Christ. In this context, the word “*Lord*” (*kyrios*) is a title that depicts Jesus as master, owner, or ruler. Their profession was not honest or real. Jesus is in effect saying, “If you are not going to follow my commands, stop calling me Lord.”
- ✓ Illust: “Alexander the Great, one of the greatest military generals who ever lived, conquered almost the entire known world with his vast army. One night during a campaign, he couldn't sleep and left his tent to walk around the campgrounds. As he was walking he came across a soldier asleep on guard duty – a serious offense. The penalty for falling asleep on guard duty was, in some cases, instant death; the commanding officer sometimes poured kerosene on the sleeping soldier and lit it. The soldier began to wake up as Alexander the Great approached him. Recognizing who was standing in front of him, the young man feared for his life. ‘Do you know what the penalty is for falling asleep on guard duty?’ Alexander the Great asked the soldier. ‘Yes, sir,’ the soldier responded in a quivering voice. ‘Soldier, what's your name?’ demanded Alexander the Great. ‘Alexander, sir.’ Alexander the Great repeated the question: ‘What is your name?’ ‘My name is Alexander, sir,’ the soldier repeated. A third time and more loudly Alexander the Great asked, ‘What is your name?’ A third time the soldier meekly said, ‘My name is Alexander, sir.’ Alexander the Great then looked the young soldier straight in the eye. ‘Soldier,’ he said with intensity, ‘either change your name or change your conduct.’”
- False believers are either deceived or self-deceived. Either way, the conduct does not match their confession; their behavior is contrary to what they say they believe; their mouths speak that which is contrary to their hearts. This is nothing new. Ever since the Fall, there have been those who profess to believe in God and yet refuse to worship Him as God (Matt.15:7-9).
- ✓ Illust: “The Son of God Himself had many followers, who pretended to honor Him by calling Him Lord, but yielded no obedience to His commandments [Jn.6:66]. The evil which our Lord exposes here, has always existed in the Church of God. It was found six hundred years before our Lord's time, in the days of Ezekiel – *‘My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain’* (Ezek.33:31). It was found in the primitive Church of Christ, in the days of James. *‘Be doers of the word,’* he says, *‘and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves’* (James 1:22). It is a disease which has never ceased to prevail all over Christendom. It is a soul-ruining plague, which is continually sweeping away crowds of Gospel-hearers down the broad way to destruction. Open sin, and avowed unbelief, no doubt slay their thousands. But profession without practice slays its tens of thousands” (J.C. Ryle; *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel: Luke: 6:46*).

Rev 3:15-17 [to the church in Laodicea] ~ “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.”

➤ Jesus' question reveals two important elements regarding a person's false profession of faith.

1. The emphatic profession of faith (vs.46a)

➤ First, notice the earnestness of their profession: “*Lord, Lord*” (Lk.6:46). This repetition suggests high emotion or strong emphasis. It is meant to convey deep affection and devotion. The person making such a profession is trying to portray himself as a true follower of Christ, but it is merely a (false) profession of faith with no (true) possession of faith.

Matt 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. ²²On 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?’ ²³And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

Matt 25:11-12 [the parable of the ten virgins] ~ “Afterward the [foolish] virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’”

- This can be a bit confusing because it seems as though these professing Christians are doing “Christian” things. The point is that their religious words and religious works were not truly according “*the will of [the] Father*” (Matt.7:21). In fact, far from being righteous they were “*workers of lawlessness*” (Matt.7:23) – or in today’s vernacular, “Carnal Christians.”

Clearly, Christ knows those who truly belong to Him and those who do not belong to Him.

John 10:14 ~ “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me”

John 10:27 ~ “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

2 Tim 2:19 ~ “But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are his,’ and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.’”

- The picture Jesus used to illustrate this point is horrific: those standing before the gates of heaven expecting Jesus to let them in, only to hear Him say: “I do not know you. I never knew you. You do not belong here, you cannot enter, you must leave now. You are an evildoer.”

Now, we need to understand this to be anthropomorphic language (using human terms to describe that which is non-human). As God, the Son of God, Jesus is omniscient. He knows absolutely everything about everything. He is never ignorant, absentminded, or deceived. In saying, “*I never knew you*” Jesus is condemning them as false believers, as unrepentant sinners. He is saying, “You are not saved. You are not in Christ. You do not possess the Holy Spirit. You are not a child of God. Your name is not written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

- Here, the false disciple feigns sincerity and passion. But God is not fooled by any false profession of faith – no matter how sincere-sounding.

2. The empty profession of faith (vs.46b)

- First, notice the emptiness of their profession: “*not do what I tell you*” (Lk.6:46). Their profession is mere lip service because it does not result in true obedience. These are those who call themselves Christians – when it is easy, convenient, or beneficial – but do not actually seek to follow the commands of Christ. They are attempting to use their profession as a “get out of hell free card.” While they may be very religious, they are utterly unsaved.

John 14:15 ~ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

John 14:21 ~ “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

John 15:14 ~ “You are my friends if you do what I command you.”

1 John 3:4, 8-10 ~ “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ... ⁸Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ¹⁰By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”

- While no one is perfect (Jms.3:2), the true Christian is quick to confess sin and sincere in their repentance (Lk.3:8; Acts 2:37-38). The true Christian does not (willingly, knowingly) continue to in sin (1Jn.3:4, 8-9). It is important to underscore, again, that a person is not saved by good works but unto good works. Obedience does not merit anyone salvation, but everyone who is truly saved will seek to be obedient to Christ. Their emphatic but empty profession is tantamount to Judas' kiss.

C. Two Houses (vs.47-49)

- Jesus illustrated this truth with a simple yet profound analogy:

Luke 6:47-49 ~ “Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

1. The threefold principle (vs.47)

- The comparison is between two types of people (and everyone is one of these two types): between the true Christian and the false Christian. The distinction between the two is subtle but crucial. Jesus said, the Christian is one “*who comes to me and hears my words and does them*” (vs.47). Notice all three aspects of true salvation:

- a. **Coming** ~ The true and false Christian both come to Christ: “*comes to me*” (vs.47 [implied in vs.49]). This simply involves responding to an invitation to encounter or hear Jesus. Both know who Jesus is, both know things about Jesus.
- b. **Hearing** ~ Likewise, both true and false Christian hear the teachings of Christ: “*hears my words*” (vs.47) and “*the one who hears*” (vs.49).
- c. **Doing** ~ The difference is the true Christian obeys Christ's commands (“*and does them*”; vs.47), and the false Christian does not obey Christ's commands (“*and does not do them*”; vs.49).
✓ **Illust**: “In the Greek language, there is a distinction between the verb “to hear”, *akouō*, and the verb “to obey”, *hypakouō*, which we might say is “hyper hearing.” The difference between hearing and obeying is hearing and really hearing. The one who really hears Jesus will obey Him” (R.C. Sproul; *Luke: An Expositional Commentary*; p.202).

- Being confronted with the reality of Christ alone will not save. Merely hearing the words of Christ will not save. Simply attending church, hearing sermons, and calling yourself a Christian does not mean that you are one. Those who truly believe in Jesus as their Savior will earnestly seek to obey Him as their Lord.

✓ **Illust**: “The saddest road to hell is that which runs under the pulpit, past the Bible and through the midst of warnings and invitations” (J.C. Ryle, “Are You Asleep?”).

1 John 2:3-6 ~ “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

James 1:22-25 ~ “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.”

2. The manifold analogy (vs.48-49)

➤ Jesus explained this threefold principle with a manifold analogy. It is important to note both the similarities as well as the differences within this analogy.

a. **The same house** ~ *“a man building a house”* (vs.48), *“a man who built a house”* (vs.49)

Matthew 7:24, 26 ~ “built his house”

b. **The same calamity** ~ *“a flood arose, the stream broke against that house”* (vs.48), *“[when a flood arose] the stream broke against it”* (vs.49)

Matthew 7:25, 27 ~ “the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house”

c. **The different foundations** ~ *“dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock”* (vs.48), *“on the ground without a foundation”* (vs.49)

Matthew 7:24, 26 ~ “who built his house on the rock ... who built his house on the sand”

d. **The different builders [Matt.7:24, 26]** ~ *“a man”* (vs.48), *“a man”* (vs.49)

Matthew 7:24, 26 ~ “a wise man ... a foolish man”

e. **The different outcomes** ~ *“could not shake it, because it had been well built”* (vs.48), *“immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great”* (vs.49)

Matthew 7:25, 27 ~ “it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock ... it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

➤ The similarities are just as important to understand as the differences. For the similarities highlight the differences. It is clear that the destruction of the second house was not because of faulty materials, because of a more severe storm. The houses were exactly the same. The calamity was exactly the same. The main difference was the foundation.

The wise man built his house on the rock: *“dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock”* (vs.48). The foolish man built his house *“on the ground without a foundation”* (vs.49). So, the question is, “What does *‘the rock’* (*petra*) represent?” Oftentimes, Christian will quickly answer, “The rock is Christ!” While Scripture indeed refers to the LORD as *“the rock of our salvation”* (Ps.95:1; 2Sam.22:3, 47; Ps.62:2, 6, 7), and Christ as *“the Rock”* (1Cor.10:1), in this context the rock is true obedience to Christ. The comparison Jesus is making is between the true Christian who obeys His commands and the false “Christian” who disobeys – that is, lives a sinful (non-Christian) life.

Luke 6:47-49 ~ “Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

Matt 7:24-27 ~ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

➤ It is important to note that foolish man’s house is instantly and completely destroyed: *“When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great”* (vs.49). The picture here is of a house swept away in a raging flood. This is a graphic depiction of eternal judgment.

Heb 10:24-27 ~ “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

²⁶For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.”

Heb 3:12-13 ~ “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Conclusion

➤ A person can fake being a Christian, but no one can fool God. To be truly saved, a person must have a sincere faith in and supreme love for Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The result of this salvation is an obedient life – one that produces the fruit that comes from being in Christ. Without a true saving faith in Christ, no amount of “works” can save anyone. Yet, good works are evidence of true saving faith. So, the true Christian – the one who has truly received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – has a supreme love for and sincere faith in Christ, and a life that seeks to obey Him as Lord (which reflects a supreme love for and sincere faith in Christ).

✓ Illust: The following verse is on an old slab in the cathedral of Lübeck, Germany:

“Thus speaketh Christ our Lord unto us, ye call Me Master and obey Me not, ye call Me Light and see Me not, ye call Me Way and walk Me not, ye call Me Life and desire Me not, ye call Me Wise and follow Me not, ye call Me Fair and love Me not, ye call Me Rich and ask Me not, ye call Me Eternal and seek Me not, ye call Me Gracious and trust Me not, ye call Me Noble and serve Me not, ye call Me Mighty and honor Me not, ye call Me Just and fear Me not; if I condemn you, blame Me not.”