**The Goal of the Gospel**

***Obedient Faith instead of Self-Serving Religion***

**Matthew 7:21-27**

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1. **Introduction (Matthew 7:21-23)**
   1. **What we just read are the words of Jesus**
   2. **Shocking words to most people**
      1. Because most people naturally think that being able to sound spiritual, and use religious lingo, and even know some things about God and Jesus is all there is to sneaking into heaven one day at the judgment. Seriously!
      2. They believe the icing on the cake is when some people even have spiritual moments where they have done something amazing, like made a prophecy (I get emails all the time of these kooks), or cast out some demon in someone, or do some wonderful good deed, that they are a shoe-in for heaven!
   3. **Well, Jesus turns all that we are usually trusting in, on its head**
   4. **Jesus plainly, and terrifyingly says, I will say to THOSE people, those wicked people, I don’t know who you are!**
   5. **You had better pay close attention, because this truth separates the curse of Self-Serving Religion, from the power of Obedient Faith**
2. **Message**
   1. **Example of American Baseball…**
      1. Everyone on the team wants to score a “run”
      2. Hit the ball, and then run as fast as they can
      3. But if they miss a base, they have to go back and touch it, or they forfeit all their efforts
      4. Watch this in religion
   2. **Every Persons’ Desire (7:21)**
      1. Deep down, it is in every human heart to hope to enter the kingdom of heaven when they die
      2. Not many people want the alternative – which is hell!
      3. Most every wicked man, woman and teenager hopes for heaven!
      4. But everyone will have to pass through “the judgment” one day (Heb 9:27)
         1. There will come a day, a dreadful day when you, I, and everyone who has ever lived will be judged by Jesus Christ
         2. Everyone will get their “day in court” standing before the Lord of heaven and earth
         3. And good thing too
         4. Because so many people believe they can get away with murder, and cruelty, and fornication, and idolatry, and thievery, and selfishness, and oppression
         5. Oh there is coming a day when every sin will be exposed, and every debt will be called out
      5. So, what are you HOPING will get you through that day? Your religion? Hah!
      6. The group Jesus is referring to REALLY BELIEVE they will be first in line to get into heaven – they are so proud of themselves! And so blind!
   3. **Two BIG Problem with Religions (Matthew 7:21,22)**
      1. And when I say “religions” I am talking about people’s best efforts to look, sound, walk, talk, smell and act like they are good enough for heaven.
         1. There is nothing wrong with trying hard to do good, and be good.
         2. But if you think you will ever be good enough to just walk right into God’s presence, then:
            1. You have no idea just how sinful you really are!
            2. Nor how empty all religious efforts are when trying to impress Jesus.
         3. You see, all religions have two fatal flaws…
      2. Take Pride in **Good Words** – “*Lord, Lord*” (7:21)
         1. These words are not evil
         2. They are right, religious, respectful
         3. But they are NOT enough to get you into God’s kingdom
         4. People have no problem learning religious lingo – I was no different when I was lost
            1. “Are you saved?” Sure!
            2. “Are you a Christian?” You bet!
            3. “Do you believe in God?” Yep!
            4. “Do you believe in heaven?” Yessiree!
            5. Most people would then gladly say, “Well, then you are doing just fine!”
         5. But let me show you what Jesus expects
            1. Many say Lord, Lord – and “claim” that Jesus is their Lord
            2. But SAYING Jesus is “Lord” is not the same as OBEYING Jesus as Lord
            3. Jesus has a way of testing our heart (Luke 6:46)
            4. Jesus expects those that claim to believe on Him, **to obey Him** (Heb 5:9)
            5. EX: If someone went around here all day, saying “Praise the Lord!”, “Lord, Lord”, “God is so good…” etc., it may impress all of us
            6. But WORDS are cheap. It’s nice to hear them, but it is better to SEE them lived out in our actions!

Ask any wife – does she only want to hear her husband’s *sweet words*, or his sacrificial efforts for her?

Ask any child who waits for their parents to spend time with them

Ask any job seeker who keeps hearing they are the right person for the job, but are never actually hired yet by anybody!

Words are cheap

Even good words are cheap!

* + 1. The Religious Take Pride in their **Good Works** (7:22)
       1. And THESE are fantastic works – works anyone would die to actually be able to perform
       2. They had actually Prophesied the future in Christ’s name – could tell the future
          1. Say when the next mass murderer will strike, and warn people
          2. Point out what stock is next to skyrocket in value
          3. Predict the next earthquake and spare thousands of lives
       3. They had Cast out devils - exorcism
          1. Have you ever known someone who completely lost their mind? Cutting themselves, attempting suicide, out of control?
          2. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if someone could enter the room, and pray over them, and remove the unclean spirit out of them and free them from whatever bondage the devil has them in?
          3. Well, many people one day will stand before God, with great pride in their proven abilities to even wrestle Satan!
          4. Hmmmm.
       4. And in this crowd were many who were good at doing MANY wonderful works / miracles
          1. They were well known NOT for robbing banks, or taking another man’s wife, or lying
          2. But for doing great humanitarian things – good things
       5. The names of these men and women were well known by audiences world-wide
       6. Like being praised by Hollywood; by Taoiseachs, Presidents, Popes, and the media
       7. Have you noticed how many wicked movie stars and musicians are working so hard to DO GOOD things with all their money and “talents”?
    2. But Jesus will respond, they did NOT get HIS attention at all!
    3. What a shocker! How can that be? Surely GOD would be as impressed as the massive crowds
    4. Ephesians 2:8,9 “Not of works” includes even amazingly good works!
  1. **The ONLY Way to Get In**
     1. Good **Words** and Good **Works** will not ever be enough! Get this!
        1. If you got baptized every day, at sunrise, in the holiest of water imaginable for the rest of your life…
        2. If you gave away all your money… constantly, until the day you died…
        3. If you prayed 100 million decades of the rosary…
        4. If you memorised the entire New Testament word for word…
        5. Jesus says you will have wasted all that effort
        6. Because NONE of your efforts can wash away the stains of your sins
        7. Remember, God’s laws were not given to make us good people – they were given to us to show what GOOD is, and to show us we never can live up to it! We will always fall short!
     2. So, what is the way to get into God’s heaven?
     3. Simple! **Jesus is the only way!** See John 14:1-6; then 1st John 5:12
        1. It is that simple
        2. Not Mary, not your church, not your very best efforts
        3. Just get the Son of God for yourself!
     4. How do you get the Son of God?
        1. Starts with repentance! Repent of your sin (Matt 3:2; 4:17)
           1. Decide you are fed up with your sin, and where it is taking you
           2. Let go of anything you may be trusting in (your nationality, your smartness, your religious efforts, your prayers, or your money) – dump them ALL!
           3. Break your stupid self-righteous pride into tiny little pieces – humble yourself!
           4. THAT is repentance
           5. It is not salvation yet, but only then will you be ready to be saved!
        2. Ask Jesus to Convert you – through and through (Matt 18:3,4). Ask Him to save your soul
           1. Salvation is a free gift, paid for at His own expense!
           2. Just ACCEPT it
        3. And then start living life as a Life of Obedience to God (Romans 6:17,18) – not a “live any way you want” now!
           1. EX: A wicked man plays the field so to speak, falls in love; gets married, and then decides that serving just one woman, and loving just one woman, and “obeying” just one woman (DID I JUST SAY THAT?)… he decides that that is not for him. Well, he is not worthy of a marriage!
           2. EX: A man needs a job, and so applies at a warehouse, and gets hired. He is told when to show up for work, what to do, and when he can take his lunch, and when he can clock out. And then the man decides that those rules and obligations are not for him and he comes in late, and takes too long for his lunches, and leaves early… WHAT IS HE THINKING?
           3. The same is true in Christianity folks!!!

Christian words are cheap

Only those who have a heart to obey Christ will be going through death’s door into the presence of God

* + 1. The question is, do you even CARE to live in obedience to Jesus Christ?
       1. If you DON’T *then you are LOST* – without hope and without God – it’s that simple!
       2. If you DO care, then make sure you are actually obeying His Words - not just *saying* them
       3. You see, the work of the Gospel is not to get people to be able to SAY some wonderful sounding words, or even to do some wonderful deeds
       4. It is to change your will, and then your life!

* 1. **Facts About Doing the Will of God**
     1. A person is saved to DO the will of God (Ephesians 2:8-10)
     2. Proves you are in the family of God (Matt 12:46-50)
     3. Makes you blessed (Luke 11:27,28)
     4. Brings great peace (Philp 4:8,9) – IF you will DO the will of God
     5. Is usually opposite of what YOU would do (Lk 22:42)
     6. Must be from the heart (Ephesians 6:6) – not just empty, mechanical, unthinking acts
     7. So, DON’T just SAY you believe God (the devil’s believe) – instead, DO the will of God!
        1. It is not that hard!
        2. Who can do the will of God? Harlots, publicans, sinners (Matt 21:28-32). Broken people! People whose hearts have been drawn to the forgiveness that is in Jesus Christ
  2. **What is the Seven-Fold Will of God for All People?**
     1. Salvation (2Peter 3:9) – believe on Jesus Christ (John 6:38-40)
     2. Sanctification (1Thes 4:3-7) – living godly lives
     3. Satisfaction (1Thes 5:18) – thanking God in and for everything
     4. Submission to authorities (1Pet 2:13-16) – we don’t riot; we pray for them, and reason with them and preach to them when they are doing wrong
     5. Suffering (1Pet 3:14-17) – putting up with it
     6. Saturation / Filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:17,18) and not drink, or drugs or sinful habits
     7. Soul-Winning (Matt 28:19,20) “*I have commanded you*…” to make a difference in the world
     8. Altogether, THAT is a great way to live!

1. **Jesus Makes His Appeal (Matthew 7:24-27)**
   1. **A simple story about two builders**
      1. One chose a rock to build his house on
      2. The other chose the beach – wouldn’t YOU prefer the beach?
      3. They both built the best house they could
      4. Then a hurricane blasted both houses – rocked them to the core
      5. Only one stayed standing after the storm
      6. The other one collapsed – great was the fall of it!
      7. What made the difference? Not the builder, not the materials…
      8. One was built upon a ROCK instead of SAND!
      9. And that Rock is the sayings of Jesus alone!
   2. **So, how should we build OUR lives?**
      1. **Build your life, your thoughts, your actions on DOING what JESUS said to do**
         1. Yes, believe on Him to save your soul
         2. But Jesus has a lot to say about HOW TO LIVE, how to love, how to forgive, how to plan, how to give, how to spend, how to save, how to rest, how to fight, and how to trust!
         3. The whole goal of the Gospel is to get you and I to be living according to this Bible!
      2. **Obey whatever Jesus Christ says in this Book to do**
         1. Be born again – today! Not baptized, or pray a long prayer, or give away all your money… just cry out to God to forgive you all your sins and to make you His child because of Jesus
         2. Then get baptized as a sign that you are obeying Christ!
         3. Then learn everything you can from the Bible so that you can start doing things the way Jesus wants you to - until the day you die!
      3. **Expect storms, troubles, disasters that will shake you to the core. You will be okay as long as Jesus is your Rock!**
      4. **Rest on the perfection and strength of Jesus Christ and what he said do**
         1. Not married? Stay pure! Be patient. Couples are breaking up faster than ever
         2. Married? Do things BY THE BOOK! God can hold you all together, if YOU will start doing what THIS Book says
         3. Sitting at home with nothing to do? Jesus says get a job! Pay your way!
         4. Having a hard time? Learn to pray, and wait on God!
      5. **Just trust the Rock that’s holding you**
      6. **And you will NOT fall!**
2. **Conclusion**
   1. **Two BIG Problem with Religious Efforts (Matthew 7:21,22)**
      1. People have Pride in their Good Words – “Lord, Lord” (7:21)
      2. Become so proud of their Good Works (7:22)
      3. Most people think that being religious and being able to sound spiritual, and use religious lingo, and even know some things about God and Jesus is all there is to sneaking into heaven one day at the judgment.
      4. They believe the icing on the cake is when some people even have spiritual moments where they have done something amazing, like made a prophecy (I get emails all the time), or cast out some demon in someone, or do some wonderful good deed, that they are a shoe-in!
      5. But NEITHER are noticed by Jesus at all
      6. **Jesus plainly, and terrifyingly says, I will say to THOSE people, those wicked people, I don’t know who you are!**
   2. **Why? Because they missed First Base!**
      1. There is ONLY ONE Way to Get Into Heaven - Jesus made the way for anyone!
      2. After that, is a life of obedient faith
   3. **I have shown you what are the simple commandments of Christ**
   4. **The question is, do you even CARE to live in obedience to Him?**
      1. If you DON’T then you are LOST – it’s that simple!
      2. If you DO, then make sure you are actually OBEYING His words, and not just saying them!
   5. **Don’t end up like the foolish builder… under a life of rubble, unknown to God, and cursed from His presence forever!**
   6. **You CAN be born again today! You just need to take it serious!**