

FALSE ASSURANCE
(Matthew 7:21-23)

FALSE PEACE /SELF-DECEPTION

Introduction:

Matthew 7:21-23 In many ways, the most solemn words ever uttered in this world, not only by any man but by the Son of God Himself

How often, if ever, have we considered them or heard a message on them?

Perhaps the reason we avoid such texts in the Bible is because they are so hard to accept in the flesh; but if we really believe that this is the Word of God, we must consider it all

Mt.7 – In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has been dealing with false prophets. Now He is applying it. He begins by exhorting about the narrow gate and the narrow way (vv.13,14; cf. Mk.13:22)

THEN:

Special Note: **Never** separate verse 21 from verses 22,23. When v.21 is separated, some teachers use this verse to teach faith and works as opposites – “In the last analysis what really matters is not so much what one believes as what he does.” They ask, ‘Did not He say,’ “Not every one who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven?”” -- Emphasis on the doing, not faith.

These teachers say, ‘Some people are overly concerned about correct doctrine, but it is not one’s doctrine, but what he does, that really matters in the final analysis.’

- I. The Blunt Proposition: (21) -- Certainly one of the most astounding and pitifully sad statements to be found anywhere in the Scriptures (Matt.7:21-23)
 - a. Purpose of assertion: to warn readers of terrible danger of self-deception and self-delusion
 - b. Nothing avails in the presence of God but true righteousness, true holiness, the “holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb.12:14)
 - If our understanding of justification by faith does not include this truth, it is not Scriptural teaching
 - It is a dangerous delusion – this is what true faith really means (1 Pet.1:1-2)
 - c. Self-deception with regard to the soul and its relationship to God is generally due to our relying upon false evidences of salvation
 - d. A person can get so far and still be altogether wrong – how terribly sad

False Evidences:

1. A correct belief: "...Lord, Lord ..." Jesus is referring to people who are right in their doctrine concerning the nature of His Person
 - They say the right things to Him; they believe the right things about Him
 - Not everyone who does say "Lord, Lord" shall enter the Kingdom of heaven (contrast 1 Cor.12:3)
 - Negative – the one who does not say "Lord, Lord" shall never enter the Kingdom of heaven either – Jesus is our "Lord and Savior" (cf. Tit.1:4; 2 Pet.1:11; 2:20; 3:2,18)
 - Orthodoxy, in other words, is absolutely essential – Unless we believe the truth of Phil.2:5-11, we are not truly believers (cf. Lk.6:46-49; Tit.1:4; 2 Pet.1:11; 2:20; 3:2,18)

2. Fervent and zealous: repetition of "Lord" and prophesy in His name (21,23)
 - Nothing is more dangerous than to rely **only** upon a correct belief
 - Dangerous to have a correct belief and to be fervent in spirit, and to assume that, as long as you believe the right things and are zealous, therefore, you are of necessity a Christian
 - Remember, it is the Lord, Himself, who has made this pronouncement
 - Remember Balaam (Numbers 22-24), a hireling prophet – he delivered the right message, and yet he was a reprobate
 - Remember king Saul – spirit of prophesy came upon him from time to time, yet he too was rejected (1 Sam.10:6; 13:9-14)
 - Remember 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
 - Remember Philippians 1:15 Possible for a preacher to be preaching correct doctrine and yet be outside of the Kingdom of heaven

3. They even cast out demons in His name (22)
 - Remember Judas -- our Lord sent out His disciples to preach the Kingdom and to cast out demons (cf. Lk.10:17)
 - On one occasion people charged Jesus with casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, and Jesus responded (Mt.12:27)
 - Sons of Sceva had this same power (Acts 19:13-15)

4. In His name they have "performed many miracles" (22b)
 - Remember the magicians of Egypt (Ex.7,8)
 - Remember the false Christs & false prophets (Matthew 24:24)
 - Remember the Antichrist (2 Thess.2:8)
 - Remember the devil can transform himself into an angel of light – even persuading people to believe they are children of God when they are not (2 Cor.11:14; cf. 2 Cor.4:3-4))
 - Give heed to yourselves, test and examine to make sure "your names are written in heaven" (Lk.10:20)
 - The way to test yourselves: look below the surface – in your heart!
 - May God grant us insight and honesty as we look into our hearts and inner selves as we face this terrifying truth from the lips of our Lord

Unconscious Hypocrisy

One great lesson to be learned from this passage is the danger of self-deception

A danger to “**Many**”

- a. Parable of “ten virgins” (Mt.25:1-13) – Self-deception
- b. “Narrow way” (Mt.7:13,14) – Self-deception
- c. “Goats” on the left (Mt.25:31-46) – Self-deception
- d. Last word of the Lord to these: “I never knew you, you have been fooling yourselves the whole time” (cf. Lk.16:15)

Causes of Self-Deception:

1. False doctrine of assurance
 - Assurance based only on certain statements which we ourselves make (cf. James 2:19)
 - A man is really placing his final trust in his own faith and not in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - “Formula” faith only is no faith at all
 - It is possible for a person to say all the right things, and yet live a life of sin, and it is plain that there is no genuine faith (cf. 1 Cor.15:9)
 - “Do not deceive yourselves” (cf. 1 Jn.1:8; Rom.3:10ff)
2. Refusal to examine oneself
 - Argument: “Christians should look only to the Lord, not inward
 - Unscriptural (cf. 2 Cor.13:5,6; Gal.6:3-4)
 - Cf. 2 Peter 1:4
 - Cf. 1 John 1:6; 2:4
3. Danger of basing one’s salvation on his works (Rom.3:19-21;Gal.2:16; 3:11)
4. Tendency to balance our lives by putting up one thing against another
 - Case of king Saul (1 Samuel 15:1-23)
 - Perfect illustration of balancing
5. Failure to heed the plain teaching of the Scripture
 - We accept teaching of Scripture on doctrine
 - Problem comes at point of practice – we often fail to take the Scriptures as our only guide
 - “Since the Scriptures were written, times have changed” Etc.
 - Example: “Women preaching” (cf. 1 Tim.2:11-15)
 - The methodology issue on preaching (cf. 1 Cor.2:1-5)
 - “The end justifies the means” argument is wrong

6. Failure to realize that the most important thing for the believer is his relationship to Christ

- “Know” in our passage = to know by experience; being in a very particular relationship with
- Cf. Amos 3:2

Conclusion:

What God wants above all else is ourselves! – our hearts! He wants **us!**
The Lord does not want our offerings, our sacrifices; He wants our obedience (cf. 1 Samuel 15:22)

“The greatest insult to the Lord is a will that is not completely and entirely surrendered; and whatever else we may do – however great our offerings and sacrifices, however wonderful our works in His name – it will avail us nothing!”

“Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” Those who practice lawlessness. Who are they? The people who said, “Lord, Lord,” the people who prophesied in His name, did many wonderful works. He calls them those “who **practice** lawlessness” because in the last analysis, they were doing these mighty works in the power of the flesh to please themselves and not in order to please Him.

MATTHEW 22:37 To love Him with all our being, that is life everlasting!

(see: Martyn Lloyd-Jones, on Studies in the Sermon on the Mount Vol.II)