



MATTHEW 7:21-23

At the start of his public ministry, one of Jesus' largest blocks of teaching is found in Matthew 5-7. Known as the Sermon on the Mount, no other short section of the Bible has been more prominent in theological discussion and in the general life of the church. Within the Sermon, Jesus explains the essence of discipleship, highlighting how it fits in the realm of the kingdom of God as well as in everyday life. Ending his teaching, Jesus concludes by giving the disciples, and the people gathered four basic choices: they must choose between two gates and roads, two kinds of prophets, two foundations, and here in v21-23, two kinds of disciples. "Choose wisely," says Jesus, because everything is at stake.

THE SCRIPTURE

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. ²² 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?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

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LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: MATTHEW 7:21-23

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time you made a decision that changed the course of your life in dramatic ways? Did you struggle with the decision?
2. Can you relate to being promised something but never seeing it come about?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Scan the immediate context of these verses. What happens immediately before? What happens after? Do these verses at all relate to what Jesus says here in Matthew 7:21-23?
4. In Matthew 7:22, Jesus illustrates three instances where evidence of saving faith can be misapplied, but these examples do not assure true faith. What are these three instances? Additionally, can you identify other types of behaviors frequently misconstrued as so-called 'proofs' of genuine faith?
5. Read Matthew 7:16-20. How would you more closely press in to question a friend who claims they are a Christian only because they prayed a prayer at camp? What kinds of questions would you ask?
6. Why are we so tempted to believe that words are almost magical in the sense that they are meritorious for our salvation? Why does Jesus say that our words and works are actually powerless to save, regardless of how impressive they may be?
7. What does Jesus mean when he says, "I never knew you" (v23)? What does it mean for Jesus to "know" us in the way he speaks about there?

8. In what ways are you tempted to trust in your works for salvation? What is the difference between seeing our words and works as the roots of our salvation, and as the fruits of our salvation?

9. Why does Jesus describe those who do such great miracles as "workers of lawlessness" (v23)? What is lawlessness? What would it take within us to turn our works into actions that would please the Lord?

10. You friend Tom says to you, "I love the Bible. I love reading it all the time." Would this be enough for you to consider Tom as a Christian? Why, or why not?

CLOSING OUT

11. What do you sense the Lord is teaching you or growing you in at the moment?

12. How can we be praying for you?