

**Date** : 1 Sep 2024

**Theme** : Attaining the Righteousness of God

**Topic** : How will God judge for entry into His Kingdom?

**Passage** : Matthew 7:13-29

**Key Verse** : *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Matthew 7:21 NKJV*

## Introduction

The biggest challenge for every Christian is not believing in Jesus but in staying faithful to Him until the end, finishing well. No one is truly saved until he arrived safely. Meanwhile we are all ‘being saved’. How can we overcome being presumptuous of our salvation, only to be rejected at heaven’s gate? The problem is most church goers presume they will arrive. They seem not to have heard that having ‘going-out’ faith is not the same as ‘going-on’ faith. Mostly they say “my pastor said so”. Few bother to examine God’s word for themselves.

### 1. Why does it matter to establish we qualify for entry to heaven?

It matters much because:

- a) It is too dangerous to enter eternity without establishing the foundation of your faith. We hear bits and pieces of salvation doctrine from messages, like:
  - “Once saved always saved”.
  - “All Christians go to heaven”.
  - “As long as you believe”.
  - “We are saved by grace”.
  - “Jesus loves me, He will not cast me out”.
  - “I am a good Christian, surely my good behaviour counts”.
- b) Misguided thinking abounds when a Christian has never examined the whole counsel of Scriptures regarding his salvation.
  - One common mistake is that Jesus loves me and I love Jesus. Their understanding is that God is love without considering that He is absolutely a just and righteous God.
  - Warnings are given in *Revelation 21:8*, regarding Christians whose conduct clearly proves they are not born again... by their (bad) fruit we can tell.
  - Our (good) fruit must be the fruit of faith in Christ. On the contrary, adulterers, cowards, liars, the unbelieving, etc prove that they have not enough faith to put sinful habits away. Their sinful ways are the fruit of unrighteousness and not faith fruit.
- c) The danger of ending in hell was the message the Lord warned 3 times in this Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5:22,29,30*). So, we have to take this question ‘who will not enter heaven’ seriously.
  - The seriousness is compounded that once there, there is no way out for all eternity.
  - Few Christians really consider the gravity or the severe consequences. No one likes to hear such warnings.
- d) The Lord, in addressing the congregation in this passage, is not speaking about rewards. He is focussing on only one issue – Where will you end up, in heaven or hell?

## 2. Who will or will not make it to heaven?

Jesus says: <sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ (Matthew 7:21-23)

Jesus solemnly stated the following kinds of Christians who will not end up in heaven.

- a) Those who bank only on addressing Jesus as Lord (vs 21)
- b) Those who do not do the will of the Father (vs21)
- c) Those whom He does not recognise as someone He knows, that is one with whom He has a relationship, i.e. a faithful covenant keeper (vs 23)
- d) Those who clearly practice lawlessness (vs 23)

### a) Those who bank only on addressing Jesus as Lord

#### (I) The metaphor on true and false discipleship (vs 7:21-23)

Two claims on Lordship of Christ Jesus – one false and one true, both calling Him “Lord, Lord”!

- Addressing Jesus as Lord is something we all do all the time,  
- in our prayers, worship songs.
- Those who claim the name of Christ may participate in religious activities, like prophesying, demon casting, signs and wonders, all impressive displays of power.  
- Unfortunately, despite all the God-talk and showy displays of religious fervour, Jesus never knew them – He never recognised them as His true disciples or approved of them.  
- There is no proof of continuing covenant relationship.  
- Paul spoke of men such as Demas and Alexander, once his mission team members (1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 4:10). Paul handed them over to the devil.

### b) Those who do not do the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21)

#### (II) The metaphor of the narrow and wide gates (vs 13-14)

Which will you take? The broad way leads to destruction (hell)

Who are those who do the will of the Father?

- The one who walks on the narrow way.

- (i) The apostle Peter wrote that all who walk with God will suffer persecution. There is a high price to pay in doing God’s will. It is a difficult road to travel.  
So the Lord use the metaphor of the narrow and broad way, or the narrow and broad gates.  
- In vs 14, the Lord was speaking about the narrow way as the difficult way.  
- Doing the will of the Father requires me to stay on the narrow way no matter how difficult.  
- This is the cost of discipleship.  
- This choice confirms that I value heaven as priceless.

(ii) How do I confirm that I am doing the will of the Father?

- It's by the fruit I produce.
- As a true disciple, by my fruit I can easily identify whether I am doing His will. Do I have the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22*), and the fruit of evangelism, the fruit of discipleship, etc.

c) Those whom He does not recognise as someone He knows

When Jesus tells a group of religious practitioners "*I never knew you*", they try to justify themselves on the basis of their works (prophesies, exorcisms, miracles, etc) but no one will be justified by his own works. They have failed to do the Father's will and rejected God's eternal purpose and plan for their lives. They did not have faith in the One God sent, and so Jesus, the Righteous Judge, condemns them to eternal separation from Him.

(III) The metaphor of the good tree and the bad tree (vs 15-20)

What kind of fruit will you produce?

How do I know whether I have a covenant relationship with Jesus?

People who have a covenant relationship do three things:

(i) They share common goals. Unless 2 agree how can they work together?

(ii) They communicate often, sharing their hearts.

As covenant people, we are eager to hear His voice, feed on His word on listening time (quiet time). We share our hearts with Him through prayer.

(iii) We talk about Jesus and His word.

d) Those who clearly practice lawlessness

(IV) The metaphor of a solid or a shaky foundation (vs 24-29)

Which one will you build your life upon?

Who are the ones who practice lawlessness?

In the metaphor of the wise builder and the foolish builder:

- The wise builder is the one who builds his house upon the Rock.
- He is the one who hears His word and does them... a doer of His word
- Obedience is the key to making it into heaven.
- This requires the habit of hearing and learning His Word. Jesus describes such a person as one who "*hears these sayings of Mine, and does them*". (*Matthew 7:24*).
- It involves meditating on His Word – the Law and the Prophets included, day and night. *Psalms 19:7* states that "*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul*".
- Conversion of our minds, our values involved change from our carnal nature into a spiritual one. Without this mindset change, we cannot receive His laws and the things of the Spirit.

## Application

1. What kind of mindset change must we undergo to accept His laws?

To help us understand that living for Jesus involves CHOICES (to live Kingdom values in this world), our Lord listed 4 sets of Choices – Narrow & Wide gates; Good & Bad fruits; Wise & Foolish builder; and True & False discipleship; - each pair has two distinct options

2. Which metaphor highlights the choice you need to make?

- The narrow way – the difficult road of discipline and godly living.
- What kind of fruit do I bear so far? If good, what are they?
- I identify the building of my life goals (house) upon Christ the Rock and not on shifting sand.
- I make time (for the Word and in prayer) to know Jesus.