

“Unexpected Verdict”

Unexpected, part 3 // Matthew 7:13–26

aster report... This past weekend was an incredible weekend here at the Summit. In 12 services we had almost 4500 people... what I was most excited about was the many of you that brought somebody up to me... in some cases 2–3 rows of people, that you had brought. When it was all said and done, 160 people indicated to us that they had received Christ last weekend.

We're in a series called “unexpected,” which is the word that describes what it looks like when people encounter Jesus. The idea is when we approach the topic of God we all have expectations... ideas about what He is supposed to be like, how He's supposed to act, what He is supposed to do... but when people in the Bible actually met Jesus, He was rarely like what they expected... He had this habit of not doing what everybody thought He should do... He shocked the non-religious scandalized the religious. *He left many people in a kind of a dilemma...* they could either hold onto their ideas about what God was like and deny Jesus, or they could accept Jesus for who He was and change their ideas about God.

You and I might be in the same position... What if the Jesus you encounter in the Bible does not behave like you think He should? You are going to hold on to what you believe about God and deny Him, or try to redefine Him, or are you going to accept Him for who He is and redefine how you see God? There's this old myth... **Procrustean bed**. If Jesus is different than how you expect, are you going to redefine Him, deny Him, or are you going to change your ideas about God? Meet somebody who is like... “My Jesus this my Jesus that” ... No offense, but you don't get your own personal Jesus.

Today, I want to talk about an “unexpected verdict.” Over the past few weeks you've heard the stories of a lot of different people, some in the Bible, and some right here in our church, who really met Jesus and what that was like... Today, I want to tell you a little bit about how I met Jesus.

I grew up in a Christian home...my parents were saved the year I was born... never figured out if there was some kind of corollary to that or not... I am grateful to have grown up in that kind of home. I learned about Jesus at a young age and, to the best of my knowledge, put my trust in Him to save me when I was 5 years old.

However, in my teenage years I set out on a different course... I was still in the church... (I don't think I was brave enough to full-on rebel, was too much of a people-pleaser to do that... but I began to subtly chart my own course.) I heard this week that the #1 song played at all funerals in Britain was Frank Sinatra's “I did it my way...” that was me I wasn't anti-God... I went regularly to church, and I even tithed my money—I was even the sword drill champion and at one point had basically memorized the whole book of Genesis for our Bible Quiz team (I was hard core)... I just didn't really want God really telling me what to do. I thought some of His rules were pretty oppressive, and I was scared of where He would send me, or who He'd make me marry and basically I was pretty sure that I'd be happier when I was in charge. But I wasn't worried about my relationship with God, because I had “prayed the sinner's prayer” when I was 5. I'd been baptized. I'd done the rituals... and so that was like a free pass to heaven, my “get out of hell free” card.

Well, one Friday night when I was about 15, my Sunday school teacher had all the boys in our SS class over to his house to watch a football game or something, and I don't remember anything about the night except that he did this 30-minute devotional out of Matthew 7, the passage we are going to look at this morning. And when he read it, it scared me to death. In Matthew 7 Jesus says that a lot of “Christians” would say to Him on that day, “Lord, Lord... we're

eady to go into heaven. We accepted you into our hearts, did the ritual, went to church..." but Jesus would say to them, "Depart from me, I never knew you." I knew, in my heart, that that was me. I had done the ritual, but I couldn't honestly say that I knew Jesus. That started me on a journey that ended a year or so later with me surrendering my life to Jesus Christ. I'm not sure what happened at 5, maybe I really became a Christian then, I don't know... but I know that at 16, I really came to know Jesus.

want us to read this passage together... there's a lot of familiar things in these verses... the wise man builds his house on the rock, the foolish man builds his house on the sand... we're so familiar with it that I think we read it wrongly... we hear foolish man, wise man and we start singing the song, "the wise man built his house upon the rock and..." but this is not supposed to be a sing-songy passage. It is a terrifying passage about some religious people; about the total collapse of some of their lives in eternity. It's about a bunch of religious people hearing the most "unexpected," surprising, terrifying verdict anyone has ever heard. *You read it yourself...*

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, **and those who find it are few.**

¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

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 'Depart from Me, for I never knew you, you workers of lawlessness.**

²⁴ "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And 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. ²⁶ And 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. ²⁷ And 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.**"

Jesus concludes the sermon on the mount by giving you 4 shocking word pictures, they come in sets of two... **two roads**—a wide and a narrow; **two kinds of prophets**—sheep and wolves dressed like sheep; **two trees**—one with bad fruit, one with good; **two houses**—one built on sand and one built on a rock... all showing you the same thing... the difference in false and true Christians. It's a warning... and the warning is that there's a lot of people who look like they are on the right path, look religious on the outside, but are going to hear the most terrifying, unexpected verdict at the end of their lives when Jesus says, "Depart from Me; I never knew you."

I think people usually read this passage wrongly... they hear Jesus' illustration of the two roads, for example, and they assume that the people on the wide road are all the atheists and the partiers and all the Christians are the ones on the narrow road. But I don't think that's right for two reasons: **For one, it doesn't fit the context.** This whole Sermon on the Mount has been to *religious* people, for him to take a **hard left turn** at the end and start talking to a whole new audience is unlikely... **Second, all the pairs Jesus puts together are very similar:** (vv 13–14) both sets of people are on a **road** they think is headed to heaven; (v. 15) both the **sheep** and the wolves look like

heep... in other words, when Jesus says wolves He's not talking about people who hiss at the name of Jesus, or have their eyes rolled back in their head during worship while they softly pray to Lord 'oldemort. It's only inwardly, not outwardly, they are ravenous wolves. (v. 22) The people Jesus turns away on Judgment Day call Him Lord and talk about their ministries. (v 24) Both **houses** look exactly the same on the outside. It's the foundation that is different.

So you're not supposed to read this and think, "Oh, the wide road... that's all the people this morning up at Duke Gardens laying out of church... doing the easy thing. But us in here... we all cared enough about God to get out of bed and come to church, we're narrow road people." No. Both the wide and narrow roads are within the church. If you go down to Daytona Beach on spring break... there you see one group of college students getting plastered every night and another group there on a mission trip. You say, "oh... the partiers: wide road... but look at these students who gave up their spring break to be on mission trip: narrow road." The wide and narrow road is within the ranks of those who went on the mission trip.

There is a wide, easy religious road that heads to hell... and it consists of praying a prayer, going through some rituals... and then you don't really have to take Lordship of Christ seriously, you get a free pass to heaven. I'm not trying to frighten you this morning, but *it's many of you who are here*, who think you're on the narrow road, because you prayed the sinner's prayer, and you went through some kind of religious rituals, and you do Christian things now, who are going to hear Jesus say "Depart from Me! I never knew you."

Let me make 4 observations to you from this passage:

1) There is a huge amount of "falsely assured" Christians...

...¹³ the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ ...the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few...

²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not...²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me...

- According to Jesus, this will happen for **millions** of Christians in churches like ours all across the world...

(2) On the outside, false Christians look very similar to real Christians.

- (v. 23) Those condemned on the judgment had many of the outward signs of sincere Christianity...
 - *((v. 23) 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?')*
 - When these people call Jesus, "Lord," the Greek word the use is "kyrios," which is the word used for God... these people recognize Jesus as God! These are not random religious people... these are orthodox Christians!
 - Here's something else, "Lord" is repeated twice... In Semitic language, when you repeat a name it is a sign of affection, emotional connection. When David wept over his dead son, he said, "Oh, Absalom, Absalom." (Jesus to Mary, "Mary, Mary" ...Not just that they believed what was right... they had a connection to Jesus. They respect Him!
 - "Many mighty works (preaching, casting out demons) we did in your name."
 - You say, "Well, how could that be?" Many people who didn't know God did Christian works in the Bible...
 - Caiaphas the high priest who had Jesus crucified made a prophecy on behalf of God
 - Simon the sorcerer in the book of Acts
 - Most famous example is Balaam's donkey, who preached a sermon... the Bible doesn't save that's a saved donkey.
 - In other words, these were Christians in ministry. They came to prayer meeting... they saw miracles; they went on mission trips... By their outward behavior, practices, language, and rituals, these false Christians appear indistinguishable from true Christians.

Or, to go to one of Jesus' other analogies... (16–18) When he talks about the two trees, both have fruits. It's not that one tree has no fruit... one's all dead and dry and rotting and the other with huge luscious watermelons hanging off of it... it says that one tree has good and the other bad... and by "bad" fruit, it means poisonous, not shriveled. See, it says the tree is "diseased" which means the fruit is poisonous. The fruit does not look bad, all shriveled up, it is something on the inside that makes it bad. The 2 houses look the same. It is the foundation that is different.

Do you get the point? **Jesus is not talking about** one guy who worships Jesus and one who sits at home and smokes dope and plays KISS records backwards... **about one guy who loves his neighbor and another who beats his neighbor...** both have religious fruits, both look like sheep, both call Jesus Lord... it is only by looking on the inside that you see that they are different.

3) For most, that they are false Christians will come as a complete surprise to them.

They will say, ²²*Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?*

They are going to say, "Wait! We scored perfect on our doctrinal exam. We felt like we loved Jesus. We were in ministry. We'd done Christian things. We did all the rituals... "Didn't we pray... get baptized, confirmed... didn't the pastor declare us Christians? Didn't we serve in ministry? Didn't we look just like everyone else?"

4) Jesus gives us the 4 marks of "falsely assured" Christians

As I've showed you, the difference is not in the observance of religious ritual, the fervency of our religious devotion—real Christians go to church every week, go to prayer meeting, know the Roman road... or even in moral behavior... the Pharisees were all Varsity at religion... had 1st 5 books of Bible memorized!

A. **They have no first-hand knowledge of Jesus:** (v. 23) "I never knew you."

- He says to them, "I **never** knew you." There was ritual and religion, but no relationship. They knew of Jesus, knew His name... but they did not know Jesus. They thought they did... But there was never surrender to, and love for Jesus for Jesus sake.
- They served God, but it was never out of love for Him. It was because they wanted something from Him. They had done a ritual they thought satisfied Him. They thought if they'd go through the right rituals God would give them a better life, or as a way to get out of hell.
- God, to them, was a certain code of conduct and a certain set of rituals, that if you did them you could keep God off your back.
- **Think of it like marriage...** if I looked at my wife and said, "Woman... what I really need from you are kids and a clean house." What do you do for me so you'll give me that? "I need you to be home every night by 6, I need \$300/week for clothes, no golf, home every Saturday, and an occasional set of flowers and perfume." And then I did those things. That's not marriage. Serving God because He is a means to a better life or a way to escape hell is not Christianity.

B. **"Lawless": Jesus is not fully in control** (v. 23) "You workers of lawlessness."

- See what he calls them? "Workers of lawlessness." You say, "Wait, didn't you say that these people were moral, law-obeying people...?" Yes, but they had compartmentalized their faith. They made Jesus Lord of some parts of their lives but not all. They may have given God 9/10 of their life, but they are still controlling which 9/10 that is which is another way of saying that they are maintaining full control. If I tell you that you can come in and run my business but then I reserve the right to veto or overturn any decision I feel like then who is, ultimately,

the one still in charge? Me. Again, marriage... if I told my wife, "There are 168 hours in the week. I'm going to let you be my wife for 166 of those, but 2 hours a week I get to be single."

- If Jesus is not Lord of all, He's not Lord at all. If He's not Lord of your relationships, your career, your opinions about morality, or your money, He's not Lord at all. If you can't say that Jesus has final say in every area of your life, you don't really know Him as Lord!
- Some churches even try to make a distinction between accepting Christ as Savior and following Him as Lord. You accept Christ as Savior... pray the sinner's prayer, check the box, get baptized... that's your free pass to heaven, your get out of hell free card. And then... you don't have to take Jesus' commands that seriously... It would be nice one day, Jesus would like it, if you'd get serious about Him, but if not, your sins will be tolerated along the way.
- **No!** Do you see that we... pastors in **large** churches, especially large ones, have put people on the broad road? We tried to make it easy... We've told you that if you would just pray the prayer... you'd be fine. Confess to you why many of us did it... we like big churches and lots of people. So we make it easy. We've just said that Christianity is going through a few rituals, coming to our church, and tithing. And we have filled up the church with people who are still on the broad road.
- The broad road, as Jesus describes it, is a megachurch! It looks blessed! Huge numbers, big offerings... I have mixed feelings about how we grow... I love that we're reaching people, I love that lots of people far from God feel like this is a place where they can ask honest questions and people won't look down on them...but I never want to grow big because we water down the message and softplay that following Jesus means a total surrender of our lives. The last thing I want is a bunch of people looking at me on this day and saying, "But he told me we were ok."

- Now, let me explain something really important... I'm not saying that it's only people who have it all together that are all Christians... that would rule out all of us, including me. My life is still all screwed up... I still struggle with sins I've had for years... What I am saying is that you have to acknowledge that Jesus' claim over your life is total. That there is no portion of your life is off limits. Sure, you are screwed up and you need lots of work... but you recognize that His Lordship is total and you're looking to Him to bring all areas of your life under His control. You have submitted all of your life to His laws.
- Now, some of you are like...
 - It sounds like you're saying that if we don't have obedient lives where we obey His commands we won't go to heaven. I'm not saying that. **Jesus is.**
 - "But I thought we were saved by faith alone, not by good works." You are saved by faith alone. Salvation is trusting what Christ has done for you, not in doing something for God. But faith that doesn't produce good works is not real faith. In other words, you are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.
 - "I was taught being saved was like coming to Christ like a little child... you're making it sound hard?" Coming to Christ is like coming as a little child, in the sense that as a child you jump into your father's arms in surrender. Kids at lake: jump to mom in total abandon...
- Here's the thing... I think many of us want the love and comfort of Christ... the joy of church, the security of knowing that you'll go to heaven, you even want to be good people... you don't want the experience of laying down total control at Jesus' feet, giving up self-will. (You ever been around someone who is generous on their own terms)? Some people want to be like that with God... They

still want to be able to decide what they'll do with their money, their jobs, or who they will sleep with. They don't want to give up control because you'd feel helpless if you gave up control. Listen... You must abandon your self-will or abandon your hope.

Though outwardly religious, they are inwardly "ravenous": (v. 15):

- "Ravenous" is an interesting Greek word... it means that you are empty and trying to fill yourself up. These are people who are doing religious things, but it is for the purpose of gaining something...
 - For some, it's the praise of others—other people will respect you, you'll be accepted, thought well of. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks about a lot of religion that is done "for the praise of men!" Obviously, that is worthless.
 - But you can also do good works to try and gain something from God, not because you want to know God... Drama/Classical music... I hated the idea of studying guys prancing around in tights on stage... WE grow up and change... I now have all women in my house... Here's the irony, that which I used to use to get money, I now use my money to get.
- Some people don't want to know God at all... they want something from God, so they become religious to try and get something out of Him... the Greek word can even mean extort... "I've done this God, now you have to bless me!" I do this... I prayed... They don't care about, desire, or love God... they don't seek Him, they're not trying to grow closer to Him...

Though outwardly religious, they are inwardly "ravenous": they serve God to get something from Him (v. 15)

- 1). **Because they have no foundation, their commitment to Christ falters in the 'storms' of life: (vs. 27)** ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell.

- Life goes wrong, storms come... and you feel like, "God, how could you do this to me?" And you think, "Well, if God's not going to take better care of me then why would I serve Him?"
- It's like you have a contract with God. I'm going to do certain things, God, and this is what you will do in return. You're going to make my life easier and bless me all the time. And when you're in a storm, you get mad at God for not keeping up His end of the bargain and you assume, "Well, God, what good is it that I am with you...?" And you leave Him. What's the advantage of being religious if it's not going to give me all this stuff I want?
- People who really know God say, "In the midst of the storm, even if I lose everything, I still have you. I'd rather have you than anything."
- A real Christian has a foundation that carries him through any storm, and that is his grasp, understanding of, and belief in the Gospel:
 - when the storm comes, you don't worry that the storm is a sign of His anger. The Gospel teaches you that God has taken away all your sin at the cross... You are His child and He is your Father. Like my daughters feel about me.... As I grow older, I am amazed how much differently I feel about daughters than everyone else... So, in the storm, you are secure.
 - Furthermore, when the storms are threatening to sweep away everything else... you feel like you have your one, great possession, that is better than anything life can give and more secure than anything death can take away. So, when the storm comes, you don't crumble.
- One of the biggest signs that you're not really a Christian is that your commitment to Christ goes up and down, depending on the circumstances. Your religious foundation

is not built upon the knowledge of God you get in the Gospel.

here's your 4 things: (1) No first-hand knowledge of Jesus (v. 23); (2) 'lawless': Jesus is not fully in control (v. 23); (3) Outwardly religious but inwardly 'ravenous': Serving Jesus not to know Him but to get something from Him (v. 15), and (4) No foundation: commitment to Christ falters in the storms of life (v. 27) ...

... If so, you have a false commitment to Christ, and though you may be very outwardly religious, though you may have prayed the sinner's prayer 10,000 times, Billy Graham signed your Bible... and been baptized 10 times... you do not know Jesus, you are not His child, and one day He will tell you to "depart from Him, because I never knew you."

I'm not trying to frighten or confuse you... I'm trying to WARN you, to awaken you, as Jesus did. We naturally gravitate toward that which is easy and popular. We naturally gravitate toward the wide road that says, "All salvation requires is a one-time decision for Jesus and then you don't have to take Christ's commands seriously... you have got your 'pass' into heaven, your sinful life will be tolerated. That is popular in our Christian culture but it is **WRONG**. We have millions of people of people in churches, and even a number in this church, who are going to hear the most terrible, unexpected verdict on Judgment Day... DEPART from Me, religious man, seminary student. I never knew you." **Don't look around and say**, "Well, I'm at least as good as all these other people..." That's the wide road that leads to hell.

Can you imagine what it will be like to hear those terrible words? "I never knew you." It's personal. He doesn't lump everyone together and say, "Y'all are all the unsaved." **He looks right in your eyes, and for the first time there will be total honesty between you and Him, and He will say, "I never knew you."** I am afraid for some of you.

I don't want to give you a quick fix... a little prayer or ritual that will make you feel better... pray it one more time and this time it will

work... check the box one more time... That is still the broad road that leads to destruction.

Salvation is, as Jesus said, coming to Him like a child. "Jesus, You're what I need. I want to be with *You*. I give up control to you." Jesus could never say to me, "I never knew you." I'd say, "Never knew me, Jesus? At 16 I gave up all hope of salvation but you. You have since then been my constant strength and my comfort in the storm. I followed you. You were the one thing I held onto for the future."

If you **will accept His invitation to come to Him, to let Him be your Savior, your God, and your King, you will never hear Him say "Depart from Me." Because you will KNOW Him.**

Today, I don't want to have you stand... I want you to think about whether or not you know Jesus... you serve Him with all your heart, have let Him be Lord of every area; that you love Him, that you are wanting to know Him more... if not, you can surrender and believe.

It's not complex, it is like a child comes...

Prayer counselors...

ullpen:

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. ¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, or can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. 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 our 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.' ²⁴ "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And 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. ²⁶ And 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.

How do I know I'm married?... You prayed a rote prayer and checked a box that you think will get you to heaven? No...

There is a common, worldly kind of Christianity in this day, which many have, and think they have enough- a cheap Christianity which offends nobody, and requires no sacrifice-which costs nothing, and is worth nothing." **Holiness**-JC Ryle

- When Jesus turns people away, look at what He says... "I never knew you...depart from Me." These false Christians never wanted to know God anyway. God was a means to

an end. A way to get to heaven and avoid hell, a way to a better life.

- Christianity is valuing God as the highest possession, wanting to know Him above everything!

I am bothered because I see how our church culture has created this whole scene. We have preached a Gospel that says... just make this one-time decision, pray this prayer, you'll go to heaven and your sins will be tolerated. You will not have to worry about hell.... You get a free pass. We have put so many people on the wide road... clothed so many wolves in sheep's clothing. Wide roads... that's more people coming to our church. Jesus talked about in a field having a lot of wheat and tares... a lot of church growth theory ought to be called "How to fill your church with tares."

- (We have taken threads of the word and pieced them together and highlighted certain parts and constructed our own religion that we have to conform to the externals of.)
- That is sand... accept Jesus into your life and learn to obey Him later!

Jesus gives you several sets of two...

Two roads: narrow and wide;

Two kinds of prophets: sheep and wolves

Two kinds of trees: good fruit and bad fruit

Two houses: sand, rock

- (You believe He is the greatest, most undeserved treasure anyone could ever have so you in the midst of storms you persevere in the midst of the storms.)

*****You know that God has given Himself you entirely in Christ. It's not because you deserved it... He gave Himself to you as a gift. You don't worry that the storm is a sign of His anger... and you believe that in giving yourself to Him you have more than you'll ever deserve

- **Build your house on a rock (24–25)**
 - Hear and do
 - Believe on Jesus

- Treasure Him... not use Him, but treasure Him
- Follow Him
- How to tell... your faith remains... not using Jesus for something, but Jesus is the end game!

¹³ *“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

- **Image of the road: the wide road is the popular, easy road... the road to heaven is difficult and few are on it (13–14)**
- “Easy, wide” vs “narrow, hard”
- Many are falsely assured.
- # saved is less than we think

⁵ *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ No, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*

- **Image of the sheep and wolves: In the church, wolves and sheep often look just alike on the outside (15–16)**
- Comes from bad heart... but you can see it. What does this look like? Not just religious rituals... the Pharisees had these!

¹ *“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, never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’*

- **Judgment day: For many, that they don’t get into heaven will come as a complete surprise (21–23)**
- Very religious...
- Didn’t know Jesus... inwardly they were lawless. Used God for other things... souls were starving!

²⁴ *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And 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. ²⁶ And 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.*

- The two houses look the same, but the foundation is different. The difference is in the foundation.
- **The unstable house: the fall of the falsely assured is total! (24–25)**
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Sets of two... hard to discern.

- Two trees with fruit... (Not one tree with no fruit...) Bad fruit... not shriveled, but poisonous.
- Not sheep and wolves, but wolves in sheep’s clothing.
- Two houses look alike... the foundation is different.
- Jesus is not talking about one guy who loves his neighbor and another who beats... one who worships Jesus and one who sits at home and smokes dope... both have fruits, it is only upon inspection that you see that they are different.

The popularity of the wide gate... many people who go down... surprised at the end

The similarity of the two gates... both have fruits. Both look alike. Description... lawlessness. Religiosity.

That’s why he gives you these 4 complementary pictures: wolves who are dressed like sheep, trees with bad fruit (not no fruit... one tree with fruit and one dead one... both trees have religious fruit, it’s just that one is bad... the word “bad” really means “poisonous”... looks good on the outside but on the inside it is bad, poisonous); people

Who are surprised on judgment day; houses that look good but ultimately fall. That's not to say that those people are not on the road, just understand Jesus' context.

- I know lots of girls. But I'm only married to one. I've known her unlike any other girl. In some ways, she's the only girl I've ever really known. I am all hers.

These people thought they served God, but there was never a love for Him. He says, "Depart from Me; I never knew you."

- Many of you are religious... but you're still "lawless." What it really means to be saved is that you have brought your whole heart under Christ... you are committed to obeying all His command... not just the ones you agree with or you find convenient... you obey whatever He says simply because He said it.

The wide road, the easy road is the road where you pray a prayer, go through a ritual, don't have to take Lordship of Christ seriously, and then get a free pass to heaven. I'm not trying to frighten you, but it's many of you who are here this morning, who think you're on the narrow road... it's you that are going to hear Jesus say "Depart from Me! I never knew you."

SO many religious people are going to, on judgment day, will find a different verdict than the one they expected. They are going to hear, (vs. 23) "Depart from Me, I never knew you;" their religious tree (v. 19) is going to be cut down and thrown into the fire; the road

of life they have chosen (v. 13) will end in hell; the house they have spent their lives building will fall with a great fall (v. 27).

I love this church... but I wonder how many people here, at one of our campuses, are going to hear that...