

What it Means to Know Jesus

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Text: Matthew 7:21-29

Introduction:

In our world today, when someone is asked the question if he or she is a Christian their answer is usually based upon their church activity or doctrine of belief more than their relationship with Christ. The only way a person will ever truly know Jesus is if he opens his heart and allows Him to come into his life and take over. You are only a Christian if “Christ-is-in” you.

In our text today, Jesus reveals the truth about this question and how we can solve it, and also how we can know if we are a Christian. Toward the end of His “Sermon on the Mount,” He deals with the professors of Christianity and the possessors of Christianity. Many in the church world today have a form of Godliness but there is no power. The Bible teaches us to turn away from such.

Here is a story that emphasizes what I am trying to say.

g There is a story of a man who came down from the North Carolina mountains. He was all dressed up and carrying his Bible. A friend saw him and asked, “Elias, what’s happening? Where are you going all dressed up like that?” Elias said, “I’ve been hearing about New Orleans. I hear that there is a lot of free-running liquor and a lot of gamblin’ and a lot of real good naughty shows.” The friend looked him over and said, “But Elias, why are you carrying your Bible under your arm?” And Elias replied, “Well, if it’s as good as they say it is, I might stay over until Sunday.”

Hewitt (433)

People say they love God but where is the proof? It is like Titus said, “1:16- They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

Here are a few “truths” about those who profess to know Him. For many, they don’t have a clue “What it Means to Know Jesus.”

- I. They profess to know Him without ever allowing Him to be Lord.
(21)
 - A. They have learned the church moves. They know how to talk churchy, walk churchy, and act churchy, but they have never learned what it means to open your heart and allow Jesus to come in and change your life.
 - B. They profess they know Him but they haven't changed. Salvation will radically change your life. You will be transformed from an old creature to a new one. You will receive a new nature that hates sin and loves righteousness.
 - C. Their love is not for God but for the church scene. They love going to church and singing in the choir or working in the church and singing the gospel songs, but there is no commitment or love for God.

g A little girl stayed for dinner at the home of her first-grade friend. The vegetable was buttered broccoli, and the mother asked if she liked it. The child replied very politely, "Oh, yes, I love it." But when the bowl of broccoli was passed she declined to take any. The hostess said, "I thought you said you loved broccoli." The girl replied sweetly, "Oh, yes, ma'am, I do, but not enough to eat it."

Hewitt (434)

That's the way many are with Christ; they love Him but not enough to live for Him.

II. They profess to know Him because the power of God has worked through their life. (22)

A. It is possible for a self-deluded person to exercise a spectacular ministry, by using the authority of the scriptures and the name of Jesus, without walking with Jesus.

B. We must realize that a person can come up for prayer to be healed or in need of a miracle and receive it. However, it may have nothing to do with the man who laid hands on them; their faith may have made them whole. Like in the movie The Leap of Faith, the actor Steve Martin plays a con man who impersonates a faith healer. However, among his actors who he has planted in his congregation to fake a healing, a true miracle takes place. It was the faith of the little boy that brought about his miracle.

Pretenders will get caught up in their own deception:

g A new lawyer, in his brand new office, on his first day in practice sees a prospective client walk in the door. He decides he should look busy, so he picks up the phone and starts talking: "Look, Harry, about that amalgamation deal. I think I better run down to the factory and handle it personally. Yes. No. I don't think three million will swing it. We better have Rogers from Seattle meet us there. OK. Call you back latter." He looks up at the visitor and says, "Good morning, how may I help you?" And the prospective client says, "You can't help me at all. I'm just here to hook up your phone."
Hewitt (436)

The Bible teaches us to be sure that we understand that our sins will find us out.

C. We get too caught up in the appearance of Holiness rather than the actions of Holiness. Holiness is the cleansing of all filthiness of flesh and of the spirit. It is the cleansing by ourselves, which cannot happen until we get saved, until we have that personal relationship with Him.

III. They profess they know Him without obedience to Him.(23-29)

- A. Though they had worked in ministry, they never had obeyed Christ in living the life free from the bondage of sin. Jesus called them “lawless.” He wanted them to understand that they were living by their own will and not His.
- B. Jesus gave them an illustration of a man who really knows God. He told them of one that heard the word and didn’t obey it. He said, “will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.” He went on to illustrate that when the rains, wind, and floods came the house was left in ruins because it was not built upon the rock, the firm foundation of Christ.
- C. Then Jesus cleared it up for them by establishing the overcomer is one who hears Him and obeys Him. When the wind, rain, and floods of life come it won’t destroy that man for he built upon the solid rock, which is Christ.

Conclusion:

Jesus said, “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” (21). Only possessors shall be able to truly say, “I know Him.” The possessors shall be known by the fruit in their lives. The love, peace, joy, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, temperance (self-control), faith are indications that Christ dwells in that heart.

Today forms may have become more important than the faith they are meant to convey. These “truths” that we have talked about make it clear that many are walking in a form without ever knowing Him.

g A devout Christian who had a cat used to spend several minutes each day at prayer and meditation in his bedroom. He read a portion of Scripture and a devotional book, followed by a period of silent meditation and prayer. As time went on his prayers became longer and more intense.

He came to cherish this quiet time in his bedroom, but his cat came to like it, too. She would cozy up to him, purr loudly, and rub her furry body against him. This interrupted the man's prayer time, so he put a collar around the cat's neck and tied her to the bedpost whenever he wanted to be undisturbed while at prayer. This didn't seem to upset the undisturbed while at prayer. This didn't seem to upset the cat and it meant that the man could meditate without interruption.

Over the years, the daughter of this devout Christian had noted how much his devotional time had meant to him. When she began to establish some routines and patterns with her own family, she decided she should do as her father had done. Dutifully she, too, tied her cat to the bedpost and then proceeded to her devotions. But time moved faster in her generation and she couldn't spend as much time at prayer as did her father.

The day came when her son grew up and wanted to make sure that he preserved some of the family traditions, which had meant so much to his mother and his grandfather, but the pace of life had quickened all the more and there simply was no time for such elaborate devotional proceedings. So, he eliminated the time for meditation, Bible reading, and prayer. But in order to carry on the religious tradition, each day while he was dressing he tied the family cat to the bedpost.

Hewitt (438)

Today, are we just merely making profession of faith? Or are we possessors of the gift of salvation and the relationship with Christ.

References

Hewitt, James S. (1988) Illustrations Unlimited. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.