



**Sharing Christ – Part 2**  
**Matthew 7:13-27**  
**GCSP – 05/30/2009**

In one of his best-selling books, author Steven Covey relates the following account he experienced, which was later put into the lyrics of a country & western song. Mr. Covey was on a city bus when a father and three young children boarded the bus. It was during the morning rush and the kids were in essence bouncing off the walls, yelling and screaming, and causing all kinds of commotion. The father of the children was simply sitting in his seat and staring out the window, seemingly not caring about how much of a disturbance his children were causing.

Finally one passenger had had enough of the ruckus and yelled across the bus to the father, "Hey, can't you control your kids!" The father was suddenly brought back to the moment and quickly apologized. He then explained that his wife just lost her battle with cancer a few hours ago and the children weren't sure how to process this yet.

Mr. Covey then goes on to explain how his own feelings toward the man and his children drastically changed in that very instant. Prior to knowing about his personal tragedy, Covey had all kinds of hateful thoughts toward this seemingly uncaring man. After Covey heard the explanation his thoughts toward the man immediately went to compassion and empathy. Covey even approached the man and asked how he could help.

Covey called this a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift happens when a previously missing piece of information causes your thinking about a topic or situation to drastically shift. Your entire viewpoint and assessment of the situation radically changes once you have been supplied with all the information.

Beginning with last week's sermon, many of you have related to me that you are undergoing a paradigm shift in regards to how you view salvation. Unfortunately the church in America has been preaching and teaching a less than complete view of the gospel message; which according to **Galatians 1:8-9** is no gospel at all.

This perversion of the gospel message, which some call easy-believism, can probably be traced back to 1918 when a gifted teacher by the name of Lewis Sperry Chafer published a book called, "He That is Spiritual." In that book, Chafer misinterprets a passage of Scripture in **1 Corinthians 2:15-3:3** by saying there are two classes of Christians; one class he labeled as carnal Christians and one he labeled as spiritual Christians. And while there are obviously times in every Christian's life where he or she will act in carnal ways, or walk according to the flesh, there truly is no such thing as a carnal Christian – meaning a Christian who habitually lives like the world with no remorse or conviction of the Holy Spirit present in their lives.

At times we hear about people who supposedly were Christians but there is not any evidence of a changed life. There was an account of a notorious pornographer who publicly spoke of his Christianity while continuing to produce the filthy magazines and X-rated movies. A star athlete proclaimed his love for Jesus Christ and a few weeks later

was arrested and convicted of rape. Celebrities from Hollywood and the music industry at times speak of their faith in Jesus Christ yet live lifestyles that would make most people blush.

According to Chafer, and many church leaders today, this worldly and carnal behavior has no effect or bearing on whether or not the person is a genuine believer. Many insist these folks are truly born again and should be embraced by the church. They say people like this, have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior but haven't reached the point of making Jesus Lord yet.

Beloved, nobody makes Jesus Lord – He is Lord! And as I hopefully expressed clearly enough last week, you cannot Biblically support the premise of separating Jesus as Savior and Jesus as Lord. The exact opposite is true; you cannot have Jesus as Savior if He is not also the Lord and Master of your life.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **Matthew**. We briefly looked at a few verses in this passage last week but I think we need to camp here a little longer to ensure we grasp this important principle from the lips of Jesus.

### **Matthew 7:13-27**

Let's pray.

Jesus is Lord and Jesus is Savior. And while these are indeed two different and separate offices or attributes of who Jesus is, we have absolutely no right or ability to pick and choose who Jesus is to each of us individually. You can no more say Jesus is my Savior but not my Lord as you could say Jesus is my Lord but not my Savior.

Having a "faith" in Jesus Christ as your Savior without submission to His sovereign authority is actually unbelief; it's not faith at all. Complete surrender to Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life is an integral part of divinely produced saving faith; it is not merely something you add to your faith at some later date in the future.

*A.W. Tozer said, "The Lord will not save those whom He cannot command. He will not divide His offices. You cannot believe on a half Christ. We take Him for what He is – the anointed Savior and Lord who is King of kings and Lord of lords! He would not be who He is if He saved us and called us and chose us without the understanding that He can also guide us and control our lives."*

*John MacArthur said, "No one who comes for salvation with genuine faith, sincerely believing that Jesus is the eternal, almighty, sovereign God, will willfully reject His authority. True faith is not lip service. Our Lord Himself pronounced condemnation on those who worshipped Him with their lips but not with their lives. He does not become anyone's Savior until that person receives Him for who He is – Lord of all."*

*James Montgomery Boice said, "This is a common defect in times of prosperity. In days of hardship, particularly persecution, those who are in the process of becoming Christians count the cost of discipleship carefully before taking up the cross of Jesus. Preachers do not beguile them with false promises of an easy life or indulgence of sins."*

*But in good times, the cost does not seem so high, and people take the name of Christ without undergoing the radical transformation of life that true conversion implies."*

The two clearest statements on the way of salvation in the Bible both emphasize the lordship of Jesus Christ. **Acts 16:31**, says, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.**" **Romans 10:9**, says, "**If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**" At the conclusion of his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed, "**Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified**" (**Acts 2:36**). No place in Scripture will you find a promise of salvation ever extended to those who refuse to accept His lordship; you simply cannot come to Christ on your own terms.

And when you think about it, how ridiculous is that? The slave does not order the Master around. The one being rescued from the pits of hell does not dictate conditions to his deliverer. The one who is blind and being led out of the darkness cannot direct the one who is leading. And nobody can tell Jesus what the requirements for salvation are.

The people who go down this road are guilty of creating their own false god and are deceiving themselves into thinking that they are saved; when the only god of their life is their self-sufficiency and their intellectualism.

Hold your place in **Matthew** and turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Proverbs**.

### **Proverbs 3:5-8**

Most of you could quote at least **verse 5** in this passage, but do you truly understand what it is saying? Do you get it when God says "**do not lean on your own understanding**"? Do you understand that all means all, when God's Word commands, "**In all your ways acknowledge Him**"? Do you see that the only way that "**He will make your paths straight**" is when you stop trying to figure it all out yourself and let God be God?

Jeremiah tells us our hearts are "**deceitful above all things and desperately wicked**" so why do we even desire to lean on our own understanding? Why are we intent on trying to seize control away from God? Why do we think our puny little brains can create a better way than what God has already ordained?

Yes, God has graciously given all of us a mind and a will, and He wants us to make intelligent decisions and plans, but every single one of those decisions and plans had better be based on the principles of God's Word which more often than not require a huge dose of faith to carry out; and self-sufficiency and intellectualism cannot coexist with genuine Biblical faith. If you don't walk in faith you will find yourself guilty of being "**wise in your own eyes**" and when that condition befalls you, you will not "**fear the Lord**" and you will not "**turn away from evil**" as this Proverb says. As a matter of fact, the context here is that when you choose to rely on your own brain power apart from God, you have turned away from God and turned toward evil.

And according to **verse 8**, if you choose your own way you will bring sickness to your body and weariness to your bones. On the other hand, if you desire health and refreshment, stick with God's way; trust in Him with all your heart, acknowledge Him in all your ways, fear Him and turn away from evil.

Beloved, you are on a slippery slope and a dangerous path when you try to do things your own way.

Okay, let's go back to our passage in **Matthew**.

For the rest of time tonight we will look at two gates, which represent the two paths your life could be on; we will see two trees, which represent two teachers or teachings you could choose to listen to; we will then see two claims, or two professions of faith that are made; and finally we will look at two builders, or two foundations that you can lay to build your life upon.

#### **v. 13-14** – Two Gates

Many who preach today are guilty of preaching "a" gospel and not "the" gospel. They make salvation sound so easy: Just come down to the altar and pray this simple prayer. I will even say the proper words for you and you just repeat them after me – as long as you really, really, really mean them when you pray.

First of all, the salvation encounters we see with Jesus in Scripture never involve a prayer; did you ever notice that? Now I'm not saying that the "sinner's prayer" is in and of itself wrong, I'm just pointing out that Jesus never led anyone in a sinner's prayer, and there is no recorded instance of any of the Apostles doing this either. **Romans 10:9** obviously says "**Confess with your mouth**" so that could easily be implied as a prayer of sorts, but I thought it to be interesting that of all the instances of salvation that are given to us in Scripture, none of them involves what we call the "Sinner's Prayer."

Which brings us to the primary point, which we looked at last week: Repentance is the key. And repentance means to turn away from your sin, not just confess it. Salvation without repentance is not salvation – and this is why salvation is not as easy as kneeling at the altar and repeating a few words.

Commentator and Bible teacher, William Hendricksen, said, "*Our Lord does not follow the method that is used by certain self-styled revivalists, who speak as if 'getting saved' is one of the easiest things in the world. Jesus, on the contrary, pictures entrance into the kingdom as being, on the one hand, most desirable; yet, on the other, not at all easy. The entrance gate is narrow and it must be found.*"

Jesus never said it would be easy to become a Christian, or easy to be a Christian; He instead says time and time again that both are difficult; as we see when He tells His disciples that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And this difficulty doesn't just apply to rich men.

No half-hearted or apathetic attempt at being a disciple of Jesus Christ will accomplish what is necessary to obtain so great a salvation. In one sense, God's salvation is indeed

a free gift, but this gift is not obtained on a whim or because of a purely emotional response to the spur of the moment. A true disciple will have counted the cost and thus will have found the narrow way **that leads to life**.

**v. 15-20** – Two Trees

Not only do would-be Christians face apathy they will also encounter false teachers; ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing who desire to steal, kill, and destroy those who would turn to Christ. And do not take this lightly, for here and in many other passages of Scripture it is clear that these wolves, these false prophets, these spiritual terrorists as I prefer to call them, are inside the church not outside. Some are in leadership positions, teaching positions, and some are even the pastors of unsuspecting flocks.

These wolves are not only in the pews and pulpits but they are on denominational boards and they are professors in seminaries. I find it amusing that the diplomas many of these wolves hide behind are called sheepskins.

How do we detect them? – By their fruit. And again, so you do not ever get confused, the Biblical definition of fruit in a believer's life is simply consistent obedience to God's Word. Wolves can play the game to a point but they simply cannot consistently obey God's Word. And genuine sheep may sin on occasion but they cannot consistently stay in a sinful condition. Genuine sheep, like the good tree, will progressively produce the fruit of obedience in their lives.

When evaluating any teacher or preacher you may watch or listen to, ask yourself these questions: Do the things I learn from him strengthen me to bear the burdens of life? Am I encouraged to walk in the way of Christ? Is my desire and passion to know the Lord stirred up? Do I feel compelled to be obedient to God's Word through good works? Is my soul satisfied? Have I been equipped to live for Jesus Christ?

A false teacher will never elicit these kinds of responses in your soul.

We know that salvation is solely by grace alone through faith alone, but we also know that the evidence of salvation is good works.

Again, hold your place in **Matthew** and turn with me in your Bibles to a familiar passage in the Book of **Ephesians**.

**Ephesians 2:8-10**

Genuine Christians have been created in Christ Jesus for what? – Good works. And God prepared them beforehand why? – So we would walk in them. The fruit of obedience is good works that come in response to our great salvation, not to gain salvation.

Now let me go back to the issue of lordship for a moment. Think with me. Is there any reason to be obedient if you do not have a Lord and Master over you? Who would you be being obedient to? Every act of obedience by its very nature requires an authority, or put in another way, a master that you are being obedient to.

So the aspect of doing good works, which we were created in Christ Jesus to do in response to our salvation, again undeniably points us to the truth that you cannot separate Jesus as Savior from Jesus as Lord.

Okay, let's go back again to Matthew and try to finish this up.

#### **v. 21-23** – Two Claims

When you ponder these few verses they have to be the most frightening in all of Scripture. This again shows us that salvation is not something that is easily obtained. Many on that day will point to the fact that they prophesied, they cast out demons, and they experienced miracle power, yet Jesus says they had a false faith because they did not do what was required of them – which is genuine repentance.

Jesus calls them "workers of iniquity" or "**You who practice lawlessness**" depending on your translation. A person who practices, or habitually engages in lawlessness, or disobedience, is not truly born again. It doesn't matter how religious they were or even if they experienced some of the things only designed for Christians, like prophecy, casting out demons, and performing miracles. The issue is where the power came from. Satan is powerful and it is not uncommon for unbelievers to manifest his power as a counterfeit to God's power.

The main point is there are many paths to hell, many of which are religious in nature, but only one path to heaven.

#### **v. 24-27** – Two Builders

How does **verse 24** open up? – "**Everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them.**" Obedience is right in our faces once again. You can confess that Jesus is God, you can affirm that He died on the cross for your sins, you can attend church three times a week, you can read your Bible, you can sing songs of worship, and you can do all manner of other things that may temporarily sooth your conscience, but apart from being consistently obedient to the words of Jesus, there will be no genuine repentance and no genuine salvation.

Instead of having a foundation built on the Rock, the teachings of Christ Jesus, you will discover that you only have a foundation of sand, which is no foundation at all. The point of this illustration, like the three others, is those who have a foundation of sand, truly believe they are on their way to heaven. People with sandy foundations attend church, they probably give their money, and they may even participate in doing good, moral things, but they have never truly repented of their sins and they have never confessed Jesus as Lord by submitting to His authority and accepting their position as the *doulos*, or slave under the Master.

#### **v. 28-29**

What's missing in these verses? – They were amazed at His teaching, but we have nothing here that says they repented of their sinful ways and turned to Jesus as Lord of their life.

How sad is that? As a preacher I must admit I draw some comfort from that fact that people didn't respond properly to Jesus' preaching. It grieves me sometimes when the

Holy Spirit is moving in the service and there appears to be no proper response. I know some of you do respond after the message has had time to sink in – I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about the times when I not only feel the Holy Spirit moving, I also feel some in the congregation resisting.

Beloved, Jesus is Lord! The question for all of us then, is Jesus Lord of me? Am I on the narrow path or do I prefer the wide path where the rest of the world travels? Does the fruit of obedience manifest itself in my life on a consistent basis? Am I the same person outside these walls as I am during the weekly church service? When I call Jesus Lord, does He recognize and acknowledge me as one of His? Have I built the foundation of my life on the teachings of Jesus or on the philosophies of the world?

Let's pray.