

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Series: The Sermon on the Mount

Message: Known By Christ (Matthew 7:21-23)

MAIN SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 7:21-23

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

FRAMING VERSE FOR REFLECTION

"Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" — 2 Corinthians 13:5

SERMON OVERVIEW

In this study, we confront what is arguably one of the most searching and sobering passages in the entire New Testament. Jesus warns that on judgment day, many passionate, high-performing religious people who called Him "Lord" and performed miracles in His name will be turned away with the terrifying words, *"I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness."* The core truth of this text is that neither a verbal profession without personal obedience nor an impressive religious performance without an actual relationship can secure a home in heaven. True assurance does not come from looking inward at our spiritual resumes, our church heritage, or our ministry success; it comes entirely from looking to the cross and being personally, covenantally known by Jesus Christ.

PREPARATION & REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Use the spaces below to read through the text, meditate on the questions, and jot down your thoughts before your small group gathers.

Question 1: Why do you think it is so easy for us to mistake religious proximity—like growing up in a Christian home, attending church regularly, or knowing the right language—for an actual, transformed relationship with Jesus? Which area of "religious proximity" are you most tempted to lean on as a false sign that you are spiritually safe?

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Question 2: In verse 21, the people call Jesus “*Lord, Lord,*” demonstrating correct theology and intense sincerity, yet they are turned away. How does this challenge the common idea that as long as someone is "sincere and passionate" about their faith, that is all that really matters to God? Read James 2:19—how does this verse sharpen our understanding of the difference between intellectual belief and saving faith?

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Question 3: The second group of people points directly to their impressive ministry track record: prophesying, casting out demons, and doing mighty works. Why is it dangerously easy to mistake visible ministry fruitfulness for personal spiritual faithfulness? How can we actively guard our hearts from using our service or volunteer work at church as a shield to hide unaddressed sin in our private lives?

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Question 4: Jesus refers to these high-achieving religious individuals as “*workers of lawlessness,*” which refers to a settled disposition of rebellion or a lifestyle of disobedience. What is the difference between a believer who occasionally falls into sin and a “worker of lawlessness”? If someone looked at the unedited pattern of your typical week, would they see a life striving for submission to Christ or a life characterized by self-rule?

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Question 5: Jesus uses the definitive phrase, *"I never knew you."* How does shifting our primary question from "Do I know Christ?" to "Does Christ know me?" change the way we think about our standing before God? Read John 10:27-28—what comfort does Jesus' ownership bring to a believer who is wrestling with doubt or fear?

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Question 6: The sermon noted a crucial balance: *"The ground of our salvation is Christ for us; the evidence of our salvation is Christ in us."* How do we accidentally mix these two things up, and what happens to our spiritual life when we do? When you feel spiritually dry, do you tend to look inward at your weak faith or outward at a strong Savior?

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Question 7: The manuscript unpacks the "will of the Father" in two lanes: first, turning and believing in the Son (John 6:40), and second, our sanctification and holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Why is it dangerous to separate these two lanes into a false choice? Looking at your own walk, do you tend to swerve more toward the lane of passive belief without active obedience, or legalistic behavior without relational faith?

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Question 8: In the manuscript, we read that it is incredibly frightening to find out *too late* that you are going to hell when you thought you were going to heaven. How does a passage like this function as an act of mercy and kindness from Jesus, rather than just an empty scare tactic? Is there an area of your life right now where you have been dangerously complacent, and how can you respond to Jesus' warning with honest repentance tonight?

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Carry-It-Forward Question: What's one thing God impressed on you tonight that you want to carry into this week? *(How exactly will this shift your daily routines? For example, does this mean changing how you pray, re-evaluating why you serve, or repenting of a specific area of hidden disobedience?)*

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PERSONAL PRAYER FOCUS

- **Confession:** Spend time bringing your hidden, compartmentalized areas of self-rule to the Lord. Confess where you have offered mere lip service, or prioritized religious busyness over true intimacy and transformation.
- **Dependence:** Ask the Holy Spirit to build a deep, authentic love for holiness inside you, so that doing the Father's will becomes a joyful response of a new heart rather than a legalistic burden.
- **Gratitude:** Rest your soul entirely in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Thank Him that your eternal security is built on *His* blood and righteousness, not your performance.