

Salvation and It's Deadly Deceptions

by Al Whittinghill

The sermon warns against the deadly deceptions surrounding salvation and emphasizes the importance of adhering to biblical truth for eternal security.

Duration: 1:13:19

Scripture: Matthew 7:13, Luke 13:23, Luke 13:25

Topics: "Deception"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker tells a story about a man who walks across a tightrope over a waterfall while pushing a wheelbarrow. The crowd is amazed and applauds him. The speaker then relates this story to the idea of salvation and entering heaven. He emphasizes the importance of striving to enter through the narrow gate and warns that many will seek to enter but will not be able to. The speaker uses this story to illustrate the need for true faith and obedience in order to be saved.

Transcript

Well, I want to tell you a true story to begin, about a young woman and her baby that were traveling by train across Canada one cold winter night across the Canadian prairies. It was bitter cold and snowing, and it was an area where there's very little light, especially between stops there's almost none. And it was driving snow, and very anxious to arrive at her stop.

This person, this woman was new on the train line, so she asked the conductor several times about her stop. She was concerned. And he assured her that he had traveled this line, this trip for many years, and wouldn't let her miss that stop no matter what.

She should wait for him. You wait here, I will come, and I will tell you when to get off. Well, so outside the wind was roaring against the window, and the snow was hitting and bursting, and it was just pitch black, and the train rolled on into the prairies.

Well, a nice-looking, helpful salesman across the aisle, after he heard this conversation with the conductor, said, Lady, I've also traveled this line for years, and I know your stop very well, so rest easy. And if the conductor forgets to tell you, I'll tell you where your stop is. You don't have to worry.

Well, soon the train stopped, and there was a commotion, as some people were getting up, and it was too dark to see, and the salesman said, Don't worry. This stop is not yours. Yours is the next one.

Don't worry. Well, off into the night, the train went again, and as the train slowed down, the salesman said, Well, this is it. He helped the woman with her bags.

He said, That conductor must have forgotten to help you and tell you. So he helped the woman with her bags, and while she was bundling up her child, he helped her down the stairs very courteously into the cold air. Nothing could be seen, for it was so dark, but the woman assured him that someone was going to meet her there, and so she thanked him, and he said goodbye, and so she watched the train chug off into the distance.

Well, not long after that, the conductor came through the coach and alarmed. He said, Where's that woman that was here and her baby? Oh, she got off a while ago. You forgot her stop.

You must have been busy. You fool, that wasn't her stop. It was temporary signals between stops, and we just stopped to take on a little supply.

Well, quickly they backed up the train, and when they got back to the place where they had let the girl out, they had people get off the train, and they searched, and they found the woman and the child frozen to death. You see, she had gotten off in the wilderness. There was nothing there except snow, and she was a victim of wrong information.

See, wrong information can kill you. It's life or death. You know, you come to a gospel meeting, and sometimes people don't come to life in a gospel meeting.

If it's not really a gospel meeting, a lot of people die there, too. Wrong information can kill you, and it's deadly, serious, and even worse than killing you, it might deceive you. And in no matter is true information more important than when it comes to the things of my eternal destiny and truly knowing God.

Now, in our day, there seem to be a thousand voices and a million vices competing for our attention, for our ear, and they all claim to be the truth. I mean, everybody has their own brand to bring us to our final destination, to give meaning to us, and so we tend to be lured away from that one infallible source, the Word of God. This is the it.

This is what you've got to go by, and the only answer to the devil's lie is God's truth. It's not man's reasonings. Scripture must be the final authority, and a person's testimony must be consistent with the Bible or they're dead men.

And so, in our day, when truth and error often travel the same roads, and we don't know the difference, we need to be locked in with what the Bible really says, otherwise you'll find yourself ending up victim of false information. You see, the broad and wide way that promises to get you to the right destination ends in destruction. Now, it's a characteristic of the end times that many false prophets would go out into the world, and that they were deceived, and they would be deceived.

The Bible says that very clearly, and I want to run some references. It's 1 Timothy, chapter 4. If you don't have time, then you jot these down. If you don't have time to get to them by the time I do it, read them, jot them down, and look at them later, because I want this to rivet itself in your conscience.

1 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 1 and 2. Now, the Holy Spirit speaks specifically, expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving or deceiving, and doctrines of devils. See, doctrines of devils are not just mistakes, they're well-thought-out systems of dark theology. And it says

that these who give heed will speak lies in hypocrisy.

What they say won't be the same as who they are. They will have their conscience seared with a hot iron. Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 24.

Again, in that Olivet discourse, talking about the last days in which I happen to believe we live, Matthew 24, verse 24, there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I've told you before, Jesus is warning that there will be very convincing people to come and deceive many, because just because something is supernatural does not mean it's of God if it doesn't match the Bible. And so, truth and error can manage to walk the same streets.

Listen to 2 Timothy, chapter 3. 2 Timothy, chapter 3, and we see again the word about deception and false prophets. 2 Timothy, chapter 3, verse 13. But evil men and seducers shall get, or proceed, or wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

The answer? But you continue in the things that you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them. The answer for the devil's lie is God's truth. Romans also warns us, chapter 16, about certain individuals that would deceive many.

Listen to Romans 16, verse 17 and 18. Now, I beseech you, emphatically, in the Greek it says, Brothers, mark those which cause divisions and offenses that are contrary to the doctrine that you've learned, and avoid them, shun them. For they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.

And then the next verse talks about obedience, what our brother mentioned. Well, all around us it's happening. 2 Thessalonians, it tells us again, chapter 2. 2 Thessalonians, listen to this one.

I'm going to wear you out with Scripture tonight, but you just write them down if you can't turn. 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 9, talking about the antichrist and the latter age men of sin. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those that are perishing.

And it says why people perish. Because they did not receive the love and the truth. Maybe they were casual about their Bible.

They didn't love the truth, and the only alternative to the truth is the devil's lie. If you don't obey Jesus, you're by default destined to serve the devil. So, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

For this cause God gave them what they wanted and sent them a strong delusion so they could believe the lie. What's the lie? The old same lie he's always said. You can be a man without God.

You can run your own business, Adam. You can eat this tree if you feel like it. God loves you.

God knows if you eat this, you'll be on a par with him. Well, the real faith will grow less and less in evidence. Will the Son of Man find faith when he comes upon the earth? Many people have itching ears.

The Bible says there'll be a form of godliness lacking real power. There'll be people always learning but not experiencing truth. There'll be, in James 1.22, it says that there are become hearer, become doers of

the word, not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

You see, a lot of people deceive themselves because they come to a conference like this and they really get into it, but they don't ever let it pervade down to, I'm going to act on it alone. And so, many things seek to lure us away from the bedrock of God's scripture. I want to ask you, have you ever wondered this? How is it possible that the evangelical church in America could appear so popular but yet be so powerless when it comes to the New Testament church? To compare the church of our day to the church in the New Testament is like comparing your best friend to their corpse after they're dead.

They're totally different because the life has gone. The church in our day is like that compared to the first century church. Is it possible that vast numbers of people who sit in our church pews have settled for a challenging counterfeit of biblical truth? Oh, not on purpose, but they sit in the congregation as tares among wheat and it's hard to tell who's who because, you see, the church is worldly and the world is churchy and they travel the same roads.

Desperate days. Well, we've got to recover the biblical base for what real salvation is. And tonight, my goal is to make you doubt your salvation.

You say, that's horrible. Let me tell you what, if God's Word can make you doubt your salvation, you're in trouble. We're going to look at the Word of God clearly and see what the Bible says about what is and what is not salvation and God's going to unravel some that don't really have real salvation that are in this room.

The Bible says, very scriptural, 2 Corinthians 13, 15, it says 13, 5, I'm sorry, examine yourselves whether you are in the faith. Prove your own selves. Look closely at your own life, compare it to the scriptures.

Don't you know that Christ is in you unless you be a reprobate or actually a counterfeit. So there's never been more right talk and never less right living in our day. And the tragedy is that so many that are in that condition don't even see their true state.

Just because they feel right, they think they are right. You know, there's a lot of people looking and identifying groups with the tragedy that's going on in the media. And people are rejecting Christianity.

But they haven't rejected the real Christianity, they've rejected a phony Christianity. And the real Christianity, if it's rejected, hasn't been weighed in the balances and found wanting. It's been weighed in the balances and found too costly and rejected for an alternative that will not save.

This can't last. And God's going to correct it. Like that day, I tell you, brother, you couldn't have given a more perfect word about loving Jesus and about the day that we're going to stand before him.

There's a day of correction coming and I'd rather be corrected now than then. Listen to this other day. I'm going to describe it to you and then we're going to read about it.

It's going to be one of the most awesome moments in all of history. Ian talked about a crowd that's going to meet Jesus in the air, be translated and be with him forever. Well, the Bible says there's a day when there's another crowd and God's going to bring them before him.

It's going to be from horizon to horizon. As far as you can see, faces of every creed and color. And as far as you see, there's going to be every profession of person, businessman and beggars and commoners

and kings.

There's going to be every different group, whether it's Baptist, Methodist or Presbyterian. There's going to be every great and small and every size of every tribe, every trade, every territory and every tone. People will be in this crowd and you've seen this kind of crowd.

It's just a pressing crowd. As far as you can see are faces and they're all filled with a tremendous expectancy because they're all watching this marvelous, amazing, glorious throne and they're looking at the one sitting on the throne and they're thinking, this is it, at last, at last, the day that we're going to enter heaven and we're going to be reunited with our loved ones who've gone before. And emotions begin to be stirred and down in the front, someone cries out, Lord, we've preached in your name, praise God.

And over on another side in this massive crowd, someone says, in your name, we've done wonderful works, mighty deeds. And another one, a little lady says, and Lord, you've taught in our churches and we've eaten and drunk your supper on a regular basis. And another one over here says, praise God and cast out demons in your name.

And there's a general commotion going on. This ocean of faces is stirred and expectancy is mounting, praise the Lord, glory. And suddenly there's silence, just sheer silence, not even a whisper because the Son of God is rising to his feet.

And there is an amazing hush, that supernatural silence that sometimes we experience that is astonishing. It's very loud, this supernatural silence. And the righteous judge, the infinite wise one, rises to his feet and on his face is amazing compassion and love, but there's something there that doesn't look like it belongs there.

It's a line of anguish. And he opens his mouth, and they're like this, and he utters these words, Depart from me, I never knew you, you who practice iniquity. And it's just like that.

People begin to fall like you've been running through with sabers and slicing them and shooting them with cannons and artillery. They begin to fall and they weep and they grind their teeth. The Bible says there's horror and shock and anguish.

Look at Luke, chapter 13, and you'll see this true account. Luke, chapter 13, verse 23, and it says, Then said one of them, Lord, are there few that be saved? And Jesus replied to them, Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter in and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen up and has shut the door, and you begin to stand with that and knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, he will answer and say, I don't know where you are.

Then you'll begin to say, We've eaten and we've drunk in your presence, and you have taught in our streets. And he will say, I tell you, I don't know where you are. Depart from me, all workers of iniquity.

There shall be weeping and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourself thrust out. It's amplified, and I think clearer, in Matthew 7, the great sermon on the mountain. If you'll turn there, that's our text.

Matthew 7, verse 13 and following. I want to read with you, and I pray that this word will get down to some of your hearts, to all of our hearts, but especially those that are standing in that place that no man can endure too long, right on the edge of life for money. Verse 13.

Enter ye in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is this way that leads to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. You see, here's two ways and two gates, and it's not the crowd going one side, the lost, the unreligious crowd, and then the religious crowd over here. This is in the religious crowd.

This, if you consider those who aren't religious, this is two ways within what we call religion, and he says, verse 14, straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Now, we've changed that, or we want to in our day, to say, few there be that miss it, but Jesus said, few there be that find it. Then he says, beware of false prophets.

That's where you see the issues really developed. Wrong information. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves.

You will know them by their fruits, the results of their life. Do men gather grapes of thorns or pigs of thistles? Even so, every good tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree, get this, cannot bring forth evil fruit.

Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, you have a right to know them by their fruits.

That's what it's saying. Now, not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but, and the sense in the language is, but only, but only he that is doing the will of my Father, which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, the day we're talking about, Lord, Lord, haven't we prophesied or preached in your name? And in your name, haven't we cast out demons? And in your name, we've done many wonderful works.

And to those many, I will profess to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity. And then he goes to the word of God.

Comparing two groups, they look alike. You see, the houses look alike. They've built a house, but the difference is the foundation, what they're resting on, what they're trusting.

One of them might even have shabby gutters, but it's built on rock. Here's this palatial mansion on sand. And they never know till the crisis comes, till, till they get hit.

And you see, we can cruise right along and look at other people. We think we're fine. He talks about a wise man that builds upon a rock.

That's the word of God. And a foolish man that builds upon the shifting sands of man's thought. And when he got through teaching, they were astonished.

Now, who are these people that he says, depart from me, I never knew you? You see, as they're surprised as this description comes of weeping and wailing and grinding of teeth, these people aren't intending to be shocked. Here is a vast company of people expecting to enter into heaven forever. And instead of hearing enter in, they, here, depart.

Why are there so many? What went wrong? I wonder how many of you in this room will be in that crowd. Well, these people are what the Bible calls deceived. That's what I've been warning you about.

From people that don't preach the word as it is, but as they would like it to be. They were deceived. That horrible word.

You see, in the earliest part of Genesis, Satan is known as the deceiver. All the way through the Bible, he's a deceiver. In the book of Revelation, verse nine, he's called that serpent who deceives the nations.

But we talk about him as the tempter. The devil made me do it. Or we talk about him as the accuser.

Oh, the devil's been giving me a hard time today. Or we talk about him as the destroyer. The devil wrecked our equipment.

But how often do you hear the devil spoken of in his main role, which is to keep a man from truth, and to deceive him, and to keep him in a state where he is going to be in this crowd. You see, many deceivers are in the world. See, deception is believing something that is not the truth.

It doesn't mean that you have unbelief, according to you. It simply means that you believe something that is not the truth. You may believe it very strongly.

But you see, it's not unbelief, it's wrong belief. Wrong belief. And it's not based on God's word.

And you know, the thing that really frightens me, or many of you, is that no one is ever deceived on purpose. How many people do you know that raise their hands and say, here am I, deceive me. These people weren't deceived on purpose.

They were deceived because they were foolish. They didn't go about what God said. They were not liking what they heard.

Imagine the horror of having felt good for years about what you believed, which these people apparently did. They felt great. But then in one moment, realizing that everything you've built upon is falling beneath your feet, it's too late, I've been wrong, I've been fooled, but it's forever too late to correct it.

Imagine that. I mean, that's why they're grinding their teeth. That's why they're weeping and moaning.

Because they've said the right things all these years or days, but their hearts weren't right with God. You see, the Proverbs says, though a man has fervent lips, he could have sin in his heart. Verbal respect and historic belief in Jesus is not enough.

You can be a waking sinner, or you can be a sleeping sinner, you're lost all the same. You can be concerned for your soul, or I'm concerned if you don't know the Lord, you're in the same boat. Well, Titus 1.16 describes these people.

They profess, Titus 1.16, they profess to know God, but in works they deny Him. They are being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work a stranger. Now, these people are deceived about the most important thing in time or eternity, about their salvation.

And I want to look at how they're deceived, because I think it's going to affect many in this room, and many that we love will be affected by this. So I would listen and take notes so that you might take this home. The first way that this group of people were deceived, and this is common, common, common, in verse 21, they were deceived about the nature of true surrender, or what it meant to really be committed.

And in verse 21 he says, "...not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord," that's the right words, "...will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who is doing the will of my Father which is in heaven." Now, obviously, they had some verbal attachment to God. They knew what to say, because you see, these people here thought that they could own Jesus Christ as Savior while rejecting Him as Lord. And, of course, they didn't want to go to hell.

Who does that believes in hell? They wanted to be protected from hell, but it says here that they weren't doing the will of the Father, apparently. They had retained control of their life all along down the inside. Now, they had an outer commitment, and they were in the right place at certain times, but they had a comfort zone belief that they'd never get down to affecting their will.

See, the key truth is, on this point, is that you and I cannot receive what Jesus Christ gives, which is salvation, until we believe and receive who He is, and He is Lord. No man makes Him Lord. God the Father made Him Lord, it says, when He raised Him from the dead.

And His crown is on the Lord's head, and nobody's going to take it off. I have set my King on my holy hill, and He is there. And so, you see, I must acknowledge Him as who He is, and He is Lord.

Well, He's Savior for some and Lord for others. The Bible says, is Christ divided? Absolutely not, is the answer in an indignant tone in the original language. You see, it's not scriptural, and we're going to have to stake our lives on this.

It's not scriptural to believe in a Savior who is not also Lord. And you say, well, Al, I don't know about that. I know a lot of people, but what does the Scripture say? You see what I'm saying? If you're looking at what you think, you're a candidate for this group.

What does the Scripture say? Well, I'll tell you what the Scripture says, and anybody who doubts it, you look for yourself. In the New Testament, the word Savior is used twenty-four times only, and eight of those times is a descriptive term referring to Father in Heaven. And every time that word Savior is used, it's used as a descriptive term about a group of people that are already right and related to God.

Only once is it in the singular, and I think the Holy Ghost did that for a reason. It's Mary, the mother of Jesus, and it's showing that she needed to be saved, because she was a sinner saved by grace as well. The signal of the Holy Ghost.

Well, twenty-four times is important. I mean, the Virgin Verse only mentions a couple. Well, how many times on the way of Scripture is the Lordship mentioned? Five hundred and twenty-two times the word Lord is in the New Testament, and we are never told one time in the New Testament to receive Christ as Savior.

Not once. Not once. You're looking vain.

We talk about it in our day, and I'm not disparaging these expressions. All I'm saying is they are not scriptural expressions. They may be adequate, and they may be based upon scriptural truth, but to say, I'm going to invite Jesus Christ into my life, that's not really said in the New Testament.

These are newer terms that came around the last two hundred years. To say, I'm going to make a decision for Christ. That's a new term since Mass Evangelism has come in Finney's day.

And to say, I'm going to ask Jesus into my heart, that's not even a term that's in the Bible either. Well, what is the term that's in the New Testament? Well, that term to accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior is not in there. But instead of that, we do read about how to receive Him.

It says in Colossians 2.6, it says, as you have therefore received Christ Jesus as the Lord, so walk in Him. Walk in Him. And so the message of the early church was consistent with this.

In the book of Acts, two times the word Savior is used. One hundred and seventeen times the word Lord is used. They preached Jesus Christ the Lord.

Paul, what was his message? Well, he says in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 5, we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves your servant for His sake. Not once are we told to receive Him as personal Savior. Now, I believe He is Savior.

But you come to Him in repentance and humbly. We don't come to the feet of a chubby sky-sitter. We come to the feet of a monarch, not to bargain, but to bow.

We come to Him. And it says we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what it says in Romans 10.9 on the Roman Road.

And Romans 10.13, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, it means Master, no question about what the word means, Acts 16.31, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved and your house. So it's always the Lord that we must deal with. And I believe tonight that you'll have a tough time.

One man said to me once after a message like this, son, you're going to have a hard time getting that out of the Bible. And I said, you're right, brother, it's in there to stay. It's there to stay.

It's always the Lord that you've got to deal with. Jesus said to some who were outwardly one way, in Luke 6.46, He says, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and don't do the things I say? The key issue in the evangelical church today is precisely here. I asked Stephen Offord as we had a meal, but he thought the most important area of preaching was in America.

He said, without batting an eye, the Lordship of Christ. You can translate that down to the cross, repentance. So that's exactly where it hits the road in a practical way.

So we must not just realize, we must not just recognize the Lordship, we must realize the Lordship of Christ. It must be realized in our life. Jesus said of some, these people draw near to me with their lips, O Lord Jesus, but their heart is far from me.

Well, Hebrews chapter 5 verse 9 says it as clear as I know how to say it. So I'll just read it. Hebrews chapter 5 verse 9. Remember, we read that earlier.

It says, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him. And Jesus said in John 8, 12, that whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness.

He said it. They shall have the light of life. And remember in 1 John 1, 5 it says, God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

So if you're walking with Jesus, you're walking in the light. An inner change of mind, that repentance work we've been talking about. Who controls your life or what? That's the issue.

Who or what? You see, a lot of people want Jesus's help. I don't blame them, but they don't want his interference. Let me tell you, you can't have one without the other.

Not forever, anyway. He'll help you to get your attention, sure. But if you don't morally come to him as well as physically, soon his help will turn to interference of his own.

He will interfere with you. A lot of people want to be free from guilt. They're coming apart from guilt.

That's all they want, though. You see, they don't want to be cleansed from guilt. They act like a spoiled child who wants his way, but doesn't want to spank him.

You must have a lot of kids. I got a strong little one. Okay, I thought that hit home.

You see, it takes more than mental effort, painful trying, Bible knowledge, sacrificial service to be saved. It takes Jesus Christ living in my life as King. Now, I'm not saying that you come to the Lord and you're perfectly submitted to the Lordship of Christ.

I am saying that Lordship is an ever-increasing awareness of more and more who he is. And it doesn't take much of a man to come to Christ, but it takes all of him. You can't say no to him and come.

You can't say no, Lord. You can say no, Jesus, but you can't say no, Lord. It's only yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. So, they were deceived by the issue of, when it meant to surrender, they took a Savior who wouldn't, by rejecting him as Lord.

They took him health-wise, but rejected him moral-wise, and they were ultimately deceived. That's the horrible part. And they went right on with their theological debate.

Well, the second way they were deceived is that they were mistaken, deceived about the very will of God. They didn't know what God's will was. That's obvious in the text.

In Matthew chapter 7, we see them speaking about the will of God. Again, verse 22, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, haven't we preached? Haven't we cast out demons? Haven't we done many wonderful works? You see, they thought, perhaps, that it was all to be found in preaching, and in the supernatural acts, mighty works, or in casting out demons, or in eating the supper, or having the Mass, or whatever. They were busy people, busy working for God, but they thought it was performance, God wanted.

You've heard people say, save to serve, save to serve. Probably you're safe to serve. No, you're not safe to serve, you're safe to worship.

Part of worship is servants, of course. I'm not minimizing servants, but the Lord doesn't have children just for servants any more than you do. Well, darling, I think you need a little more help around the house.

Let's have some kids. I mean, that's absurd, especially after you have three, and then you have four and five. You have to have five kids to be able to have a family.

I mean, he has five, I have five, and then Vince has five, and then there's other people like Bill Morgan has seven and adopted four, so he's crazy. We're going to have a reunion some day. Anybody else have five at that scene? Doesn't Olin? But we have a lot of kids around anyway, we're going to have a massive reunion.

Busy people! Of course, Jesus wants strength. It's not my ability that I offer it. Attaining something, it's containing someone.

That's the whole problem. It's in him a yielded heart to walk by faith. Good master, what shall we do that we might work? John 6, he says, this is the work of God that you believe on him who he hath sent.

So, you see, in reality, we are to respond to God by yielding ourselves so that he might work. It's not me living for him, doing for him. It's Christ himself living in me.

The just shall live by faith. What's that mean? It's a response to the word of God based upon his power. And you see, when God speaks to you this weekend, and if you just evaluate and don't embrace, if it just becomes information and not transformation, then suddenly you are an unbeliever.

Because you see, unbelief is failure to act on truth. It becomes faith when you act. Until you act, you're standing in unbelief.

You're trying to evaluate. So God is not looking for sponsors. He's looking for vessels that he can live in and move in.

And a lot of people in the church situation cover a lack of true surrender to Jesus by bitterness. They serve on this committee and on that committee, and they're deking here and eldering there, and they're doing all these things to cover a lack, a nagging lack, that the Holy Spirit says, but you don't know me. You don't really know me.

I could tell you about so many deacons that didn't know the Lord Jesus that in one moment would bang, and they surrendered because they realized that all they did didn't mean a thing to God. And they got truly born again by the Spirit of God. It's not what we can do that matters.

It's what he has done. And so these people thought that it was service and their confidence was in their preaching and in what they had been taught and their Bible study and all those actions, supernatural works, and they didn't have the will of God, which is worship as their central core. So they were deceived about what real surrender is.

They were deceived about the nature of sanctification and the will of God. And thirdly, they were deceived, this is a big one, about what it really even means to be saved, what salvation really is. Look at verse 23.

Then I will say to him, I never knew you. That's what Jesus said. I never knew you.

But you see, even though these were good people on the outward sense, they didn't understand what salvation really meant. They thought that to be saved was a thing that God gives. You've been saved? Yeah, I was saved back then.

They thought eternal life is some thing. God gave me eternal life when I prayed that prayer. It's kind of like, you know, it's your life extended.

Someday I was going to die, but now he's erased the period at the end of my life and he's extended my life on out into eternity. It's not the extension of my natural life. No, no.

Eternal life is not a thing God gives. Because eternal life is a person. In fact, the Bible even talks about specifically, it says that eternal life is Christ.

In 1 John chapter 5, verses 11 and 12, this is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this eternal life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life, and whoever doesn't have the Son does not have life. So eternal life, you see, is a person who is life living in you.

And, in fact, in 1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 16, it actually says, God alone has immortality. He's the only one that has immortality. Well, if God is the only one who has eternal life, then how can he give to me eternal life? And to the extent that I am in him, I'm alive, and he's in me, I'm alive.

See, salvation's not just making a decision. It's not a decision we make. Oh, no, it's a person we receive.

That's what it means to be saved. It's not just a rubber stamp that you get for walking an aisle or being confirmed. Oh, no, it's a relationship to God.

That's what it means to be saved, a relationship with God. See, these people had religion, but they didn't have any relationship. They had inspiration, but they didn't have intimacy.

They were inspired by what they heard from their pulpits, but they were not intimate with the one that the Bible was about. They knew the book, but they didn't know the author. This is eternal life, Jesus said in John 17, verse 3. This is eternal life that we might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

So Jesus didn't come to make bad men good just to have a reformation. He came to make dead men live. Regeneration.

Not just a new leaf, but a new life. And so salvation is a person living in me who happens to be Jesus, like Ian said earlier. Not me living for a person.

You can try to live for Jesus, but you see, a lot of people are trying to live for Jesus that have never received the only life that can live that life is his. They're trying to live it. They're trying to do it, but it won't work.

Let me say that you can believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for you and go straight to him. If you can believe it as a historic fact, you can even burn your body for the fact that it happened in real and history. But you see, that doesn't save you believing in a historical crisis.

He was raised from the dead, and now today he wants to do with you. And you see, until I, today, on the basis of what he did then, allow him to do a work in me, I'm lost. You see, he did a work for me.

Yes, he did. He did a work for every one of us over 1900 years ago. But that's not what saves us practically.

It's when we, on the basis of what he did for us, allow him to do a work in us. We become his. Romans 8, 9 says, if any man does not have the spirit of Christ in him, he does not belong to God.

So if you don't have the spirit of Christ in you, you don't belong to God. I'm going to tell you, you can't have the spirit of Christ in you without knowing it. You cannot.

So it's not enough to believe, at a distance, that Jesus did a work for you. You've got to submit to him and let him do a work in you. The real motive for being saved is not just to have a happy life.

It's to have a right relationship to God. You see, he didn't come just to save me from hell. In fact, most of the preaching in the New Testament never even says that.

He says, Jesus Christ will be deliverer from sin. Not just to save you from hell. Oh yes, he'll save us from hell.

Glorious, glorious, glorious. But you see, if you're not being saved from your sins, you're not being delivered from hell. The next way they were deceived, they were deceived about the nature of sin.

They didn't understand what sin was. And we don't until the Holy Spirit teaches us. In verse 23 of Matthew 7, Jesus calls them workers of iniquity.

They were good people, it seemed, didn't they? I mean, church folks, preaching. I mean, the world would have said they're bad people. Well, they might say.

But a lot of respectable people are in this crowd. Jesus says, you are lawless. Well, what does that mean? Well, it doesn't mean just nasty stuff.

Not bad works. But it means they were sinners, lawless. They've never had an inward moral purpose established.

They didn't have a moral monitor on the inside. Or in other words, they had retained control all along. They had never repented.

And so, they had no moral dependence on Jesus. It's kind of like Adam's sin. What was that? What was Adam's sin? Adam's sin, he didn't murder anybody, he didn't rob a bank, he didn't commit some sexual atrocity or watch pornographic films.

That wasn't sin to him. Sin was going his own way. And that's what sin is.

It's independence from the Word of God and independence from who he is. And if you want to repent of sin, you've got to deal with who he is and what the Word of God says. Otherwise, you've never repented.

You've got to repent morally, not just geographically. You see, in 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse 19, it says, the foundation of God stands sure. The Lord knows the ones that are his.

In all this debate about who's who, God knows who are his. Let everyone that names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. That one verse would be enough to settle it for any intelligent, honest person.

If you dare to take that name of Jesus on your lips, then you must depart from iniquity. Because if you don't, you end up being a monker instead of a worshiper. So, these people obviously had an awakened heart, but it was an altered heart.

And so they were in a shocked situation. You see, Hebrews 12, 14 says, without holiness, no man will see God. Without holiness, no man will see God.

You say, but Al, I know him. I do know him. No matter what you say, I don't like the way you're talking.

And, we have come to know him. If we keep his commandments. How does that verse? Well, I'm just having a hard time keeping his commandments.

Well, then you haven't ever come to know him. He that says, in the present tense it says, he that keeps on saying, I know him, but he's not keeping his commandments, is a liar. And the truth, which is a person, is not in him.

But whoso is keeping his word in him, God's love is being perfected. It's a process. And this is how we know if we are in him.

That you're seeking to obey him. The one who says he's in Christ ought to be walking even as he walked. Because he said, if you're on earth as I was sent, so send I you.

You say, well Al, that leaves that lot of folks. That's why it says you to be defined. There's a classic example in scripture of that rich young ruler, remember? In Mark chapter 10, he came to Jesus, and he was a theologian par excellence, but he saw light.

And he recognized he didn't have that quality of existence. And so he came and fell in the dirt at Jesus' feet, this young lawyer who was on the court of Israel. Now that was really humbling, wasn't it? It's like the chairman of the deacons or more coming and falling at the feet of Jesus and said, what can I do to be saved? That's humbling.

Well, even that's not enough. Because he came to Jesus' feet and said, what must I do to be saved or have eternal life? And Jesus gave him the law because, you see, he said, good master. You see, in that prayer word, he realized he defied what he thought goodness was.

He was talking about just outer things. He recognized that Jesus was good, but he didn't know he was God. So that means the rich young ruler thought he was good too.

And Jesus said, why do you call me good? There's nobody good but one. That's God. See, the guy didn't know he was God.

And then he says, you know, the commandments don't steal, don't kill, don't commit adultery. That's enough to wipe most of us out right there. But this young man, he really had come up the right way.

He hadn't done that stuff. At least his conscience didn't condemn him there. But Jesus didn't say, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.

And he also didn't say, thou shalt not covet. But when he did, he looked at that young man when he said, all these I've done since I was a child. And Jesus said, one thing you lack.

What was it? Well, Jesus looked at his heart and saw a shekel sign. He could have been a young lawyer. He could have been an athlete, an athlete.

He could have been an athlete. He could have been an astronaut. He could have been anybody that's diverted and going that way.

One thing you lack, not two, just one. Go your way and sell what you have. You see, that money is your God.

That's what is in the way. Get rid of the thing that's keeping me from that place, and you'll have treasure in heaven. And until that moment, that rich young ruler did not realize he was an idolater.

He really thought he wanted eternal life. Some of you this weekend have realized that you may not be too sure you want what we're talking about. Well, you better decide because it's the only way.

It's the basic truth of God's word. If you don't want that, it just reveals a plague of your own heart because that's the way you come to him. The rich young ruler could bow his knees, but he never would bow his will.

That rich young ruler got up and he said he went away sorrowful because he had great possessions. He knew what he needed, but he couldn't let go of what he wanted. He gave up a heavenly treasure for earthly.

He gained the world but lost his soul. He came to the right person. He asked the right question.

He came the right way. He got the right answer. The Lord Jesus, it says, looked on him and loved him.

He wanted to help him, and everything was there except this young man got up and walked away. Was he saved when he walked away? I mean, it sure beats signing the card, doesn't it? Coming and falling in public and getting a nice white suit dirty. I mean, that's humility.

We let him come to the church and let him kneel. We didn't have to kneel. We just got out there a little card.

We call him saved. Jesus loved that man too much to say bow your head and close your eyes and mutter an apology and you have a ten-legged crown and a gold streak. Don't you ever doubt it.

He didn't do that. He dealt with sin. He dealt with sin, and the man didn't kneel.

He gave him the law, and the man, he didn't see his sin, and he went away sorrowful. And I'll tell you the thing that really scares me for some of you. When that man got up and walked away, like some of you might get up and walk out of here tonight, Jesus did not wring his hands and say, oh, but I love him.

He's leaving. He's leaving. Look, James and Johnny's leaving.

Come back. I've changed my mind. I'll take 99%.

You see, if Jesus calls you back after you walk out, then one day he's going to owe an apology to that young ruler before all the eyes of the universe because he's been a respecter of persons. I'll tell you what. If you let him walk away, he'll let you walk away.

And you know what? I don't think that guy dropped out of religion. I'll bet he went back to the synagogue or wherever he was, and he probably was a little nervous because he knew he'd said no to life, and he upped his giving, or he joined the committee. He might even have headed up the finance committee.

Who knows? For the new synagogue. I don't know because he had such business acumen. But he kept his own life, and he walked away a dead man.

See, even after totally rejecting Christ, a lot of people keep on going through religious motions, and they have tears of I ought to, and they sing Amazing Grace. But you see, they don't know God. Well, I'll tell you, there's a lot of deception around when it comes to dealing with sin and independence.

That rich, young ruler would not put God in the place of control, and he died unless he got saved later. You know, there's a lot of debate nowadays about who's saved and who's not saved, and I don't know why there is, except we're afraid of what the lobbyists will do and all the rest of it. I'm not afraid of saying it.

Let them sue me. I don't care. In 1 Corinthians 6, verse 9, I mean, it's so clear about deception.

It says, 1 Corinthians 6, Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? How can you be more clear than that? Do not be deceived. You know why I said that? Because so many people are. No fornicator, no idolater, no adulterer, no malachoi.

It's a word for homosexual. No abusers of themselves with mankind. No thieves or covetous or drunkards or revilers or extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.

How much clearer can you get? See, if you're living in habitual adultery, I can tell you, you will not be in the kingdom of God. I don't care how many preachers tell you you will be. The Bible says you won't be.

There's a church called the Metropolitan Community Church. Oh, they feel really good about the way they study the Bible. I saw a film once of a wedding in that church.

You know, I walked in this place and they were having a film of a wedding in the Metropolitan Community Church. And I zoomed in on the wedding that was being performed. And there was two people down there being married.

And the priest was up, the person was up there saying, and I now pronounce you joined in the name of the Lord Jesus, in all the right words. And then he bent down and he kissed one of the chief. And he went over and he kissed the other one of the chief.

And they were both men. I saw it on film. And then they sang power in the blood.

I saw it. It was a real happening. And they were actually singing blasphemy as they, and after the service, they were interviewing the sweetheart group.

And he said, Oh, wasn't it just, I mean, wasn't it just so wonderful. We sense the presence of God. We feel like he's going to bless this union.

I literally felt nauseated in my stomach. And from that day on, I said, I'm going to demolish that. The Metropolitan Community Church is one of the fastest growing churches in the United States.

And who has the courage? We're so concerned about garbage in society. Who's going to clean up the pollution in the church? What I want to know and all the other stuff you see to see that's why they'll be in this crowd. They will be.

God is not confused. He knows who are his. Well, it says it again.

It's not just there. If it was just there, there might be a leg up for someone to say, well, it's just a slight exception. Look at Ephesians chapter five, Ephesians chapter five, verse three.

In a room like this, you'd be surprised what some of these dear brothers are, dear people in here, friends, they're friends of ours, but you'd be surprised the double lives that are in this room. By experience in churches, I can tell you that just because a person looked nice does not mean that they don't have affairs going on the side. Trying to make themselves feel better about their turmoil.

I'll tell you something, mister, you're going to be in this crowd. In Ephesians chapter five, it says in verse three, but fornication and the word is pornea. It means all kinds of things that relate to pornographic and fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness.

Let it not be once named among you as is becoming to saints nor filthiness or foolish talking or jesting, but you're not convenient, but rather giving of thanks for this. No, no pornographer, no whoremonger, the word is pornographer, no unclean person, no covetous man who is an idolater, get this, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Do you believe that? Your life may depend upon whether you believe that or not.

And then it says, do not let men deceive you with empty words. You see, empty words are words that don't have love behind them. Love tells you the truth.

And it says, obey God if you love him. For these cause things, the wrath of God comes upon children of disobedience. Don't be in that crowd.

Well, look at first John chapter three, one more confirmation. I'm hitting as hard because I know that some of you are teetering right now between life and death. You're beginning to see that you could not possibly be regenerated in your inner man and have the life you have of disobedience and independence.

First John chapter three, verse five, it says, and you know that Jesus was revealed, manifested to take away our sins and in him is no sin. Whoever abides in him does not sin. It means present tense, practice sin.

Whoever practices sin, independence, has never, it means I'm giving the sense of this verb, has never come to see him nor does not know him. Look, children, do not let any man deceive you. He that present participle is doing righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

The one who keeps on, present tense, committing sin is of the devil. And the devil keeps on sinning from the beginning. This is the reason that the son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Whosoever has been born of God does not practice sin. For God's sperm is the word, his seed, that which gives his nature, that which transfers that holy chromosome to the heart. It is in that person and he cannot sin because he's born of God.

I'm not talking about sinless perfection. I'm talking about moral purpose of your life. If you have the holy nature of the Lord Jesus in you, you will fail him.

For sure you will. But when you do, it will grieve you. And if it doesn't grieve you, you're on your way to the woodshed because whom the Lord loves, he will chasten and then it will grieve you.

And you will not be perfect, that's true, but brother, you'll want to be perfect. You'll want to be. Let me tell you something, one more thing.

Secret sin, you got it all hidden from you, mystery. Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven. It ain't secret and invisible.

Well, deceived about sinning. And I think in our day, that's what's happening. People are deceived, they're singing in the choir, they're getting their jollies on Sunday morning, being religious while they're out having affairs on Saturday night.

Businessmen creeping around some hotels and going into bars and being part of the world all week and coming in and being part of the people of God on Sunday. Or just absolute cesspool mouth and heart and have it. And yet still with an eye of glee in God and calling yourself a Christian, I'll tell you something, you're going to get corrected, but I hope it's going to be before he's down in this crowd.

The last way they're deceived is they're deceived about the nature of conversion, what it really means. You see, salvation is much, much more than just being forgiven of sins. We hear that preaching and I thank God for that.

But salvation is the restoration of God's life in the inner man based upon the forgiveness of sins. That's why he can do it. And so these people, as you see from the text in Matthew 7, they are trusting an experience in the past, a real experience, casting out demons.

It's a real experience. In the Lord's Supper, it's a real experience. Maybe they had a prayer answer.

They can point back to a past experience. When I was 13, I walked in the aisle and I really cried. But then about a year later, I got away from God and I haven't prayed a prayer in years.

And I went to college and got drunk for four years. But I'm saved, though, because I know what happened to me back there when I was 13 years old, way back there. And he's coming in the future to take me out of this mess in heaven.

So you can point back way far in the back to what happened when you were 13 and you can hope in the future. But I'm going to tell you something. You don't have a guarantee of either one if you can't point to the now.

The Bible says now faith is. And that's the most neglected tense in the Christian life. It's the present tense.

The Bible says today is the day of salvation by their fruits today. You can tell. You can stand and say, Christ, live within me.

You see, these people have experience with the power of God, but they had no genuine conversion, no real change in their life that lasts. They trusted experiences with God and not Jesus. They were sincere, but they were wrong.

They were those stony ground hearers that heard the word of God and emotionally said, this is what I need. Oh, oh, that's wonderful. And they went to church and they were so joyous until it really came time to be tested.

And the sun came out and the suit just went flat because the stony beneath the surface was still there. You never repented. You never let God deal with the center of your whole being.

You see, it's not an experience that saves you. You can sit in the pew and have a sunbeam come through the face of Jesus in the stained glass window and hit you on the cheek and you say, oh, and this is the choir singing Amazing Grace, that warm glow. Oh, it's a mouse running up and down my back.

I know it is. It must be God. Oh, yes, he loves me.

I'm saved. I say, well, you have all those you want, but it's not an experience that saves. It's Jesus.

You study apologetics to your blue in the face and believe it historically, but just because you believe something happened doesn't introduce you to the supernatural living Jesus. And he's the one that saves. Apologetics can never save you.

You can be an intellectual persuader and never know Jesus if you don't know the living supernatural Jesus. I can tell you about a chairman of Deacons who was a Christian bookstore last day that came to a retreat. And if you know that retreat, you got to say, you know what my problem's been? I'm not really saved.

I thought I've been saved. I've been trying so hard to do better, reconsecrate, but I've never really been saved. I haven't been supernaturally regenerated.

I can tell you about church secretaries. I can tell you about people in ministries that have been disciple for several years and it had been hard. Reason is they tried to disciple a goat instead of a sheep.

They weren't saved. And there was one woman in the Pentecostal church, precious, precious woman, but she'd been preaching for 40 years, 40 years. And at the end of a meeting, she stood up with tears and said publicly, I just realized today, I don't know the Lord.

And she got saved there that day. I can tell you of a church in Marietta where someone came and preached a message like this and 500 people went forward. I don't know how many of them got saved, but they went forward.

A lot of people go forward, you know, who come forward and never go forward. I can tell you about the chairman of the board of elders. You see, our churches are full of sentimental, nostalgic people, vainly hoping in a stained glass Christ.

A young person comes down an aisle when they're 12 years old, signs a card, and they smutter a prayer. And we say, you're saved now, you're saved now. And then about a week later, they're sitting there and they aren't sitting in church.

They're passing notes in church. You can't get them to read their Bible. There's no interest in the things of God.

They come to you and say, you know, I don't really know if I'm saved. Yes, you are. Don't you remember what you did? I'm not trying to convince anybody they're saved.

The Lord is trying to convince you you're saved. If a person thinks they're lost, there's a reason. You got to find the reason.

You see, you walk an aisle, mumble a prayer, and get dunked, but you're not interested. You don't love the Bible. You never can share the gospel.

And if you have a contradicted life, I promise you this, you'll be a mystocrat. That's a promise based upon the irrefutable word of God. I'm warning you tonight.

The Bible says, if any man is in Christ, he is, not might be or should be, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away. You're not just trying to get over all his nasty habits.

They're gone. He may fall like David fell, but I tell you, God let him know the truth real quick. Old things are passed away.

Everything becomes new. I'm almost finished. Real conversion changes me.

We can stumble. Christians probably will stumble at one time or another, but God will spank you. Christ must be our main purpose and holiness must be our main practice or we are biblically discredited as a Christian.

Now, your denomination or your church or your friends or your wife or your accomplices may say your say, but I'll tell you what, the only thing that matters is the one who has the last word. You can attend church forever and serve there and be lost. You can cry every time this sings or every time amazing grace is sung.

You can still be lost. You can be moral and still be ungodly at the same time. But I know him, James 2, 14, though a man keeps on saying, I know him and or says he has faith and he doesn't have corresponding works.

Can that kind of a faith save him? No, I have faith. Well, you don't have to save him kind of faith. You see, modern evangelism pictures Jesus as a bedroom and he comes to our churches and sweet, precious Jesus, the one who loves you like you've never been loved before.

And all that's true. And so we say, would you come and make a decision for Christ? And we make it sound like he is neurotic or something like he needs you to confirm him so he will have his kingdom, his poor falling apart kingdom. Oh, he loves you so much.

Please, will you come make a decision for Christ? And we beg with Joel and we plead people. We make Jesus sound like a poor beggar coming down now and said, would you accept me this week? Have you decided to add your affirmative vote for me? Please vote for me. I'm so weak in the world.

I'll tell you that is not at all the biblical Jesus that's real. You turn picture around. He's not a beggar.

You're the beggar. I'm the beggar. And he's the one that's going to pass a verdict on me.

I'm going to come before him. He's going to say, enter thou into the joy prepared for you before the foundation of the world or depart from me. With broken heart, he will say, depart from me.

Well, are you in Jesus? You know, just last week, Larry Elliott and I were up in Niagara Falls together. We went out in that bay of the mist. We were up in Canada doing a meeting.

He went with me. And it was really wet up there. Right by Niagara Falls, they have a museum.

And there they have all these pictures of barrels of people that have been over the falls. And they had to set up a thing in a frame that is a piece of rope that belonged to a famous tightrope walker named Blondin.

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