

Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

7:21-29

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

The Lord Jesus Christ winds up the Sermon on the Mount by a passage of heart-piercing application. He turns from false prophets to false professors, from unsound teachers to unsound hearers. Here is a word for all. May we have grace to apply it to our own hearts!

The first lesson here is the uselessness of a mere outward profession of Christianity. Not every one that saith "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Not all that profess and call themselves Christians shall be saved.

Let us take notice of this. It requires far more than most people seem to think necessary, to save a soul. We may be baptized in the name of Christ, and boast confidently of our ecclesiastical privileges; we may possess head knowledge, and be quite satisfied with our own state; we may even be preachers, and teachers of others, and "do many wonderful works" in connection with our church: but all this time are we practically doing the will of our Father in heaven? Do we truly repent, truly believe on Christ, and live holy and humble lives? If not, in spite of all our privileges and profession, we shall miss heaven at last, and be forever cast away. We shall hear those awful words, "I never knew you: depart from Me."

The day of judgment will reveal strange things. The hopes of many, who were thought great Christians while they lived, will be utterly confounded. The rottenness of their religion will be exposed and put to shame before the whole world. It will then be proved that to be saved means something more than "making a profession." We must make a "practice" of our Christianity as well as a "profession." Let us often think of that great day: let us often "judge ourselves, that we be not judged," and condemned by the Lord. Whatever else we are, let us aim at being real, true, and sincere. /P>

The second lesson here is a striking picture of two classes of Christian hearers. Those who hear and do nothing, and those who hear and do as well as hear, are both placed before us, and their histories traced to their respective ends.

The man who hears Christian teaching, and practices what he hears, is like "a wise man who builds his house upon a rock." He does not content himself with listening to exhortations to repent, believe in Christ, and live a holy life. He actually repents: he actually believes. He actually ceases to do evil, learns to do well, abhors that which is sinful, and cleaves to that which is good. He is a doer as well as a hearer. (James 1:22.) And what is the result? In times of trial his religion does not fail him; the floods of sickness,

sorrow, poverty, disappointments, bereavements beat upon him in vain. His soul stands unmoved; his faith does not give way; his comforts do not utterly forsake him. His religion may have cost him trouble in times past; his foundation may have been obtained with much labour and many tears: to discover his own interest in Christ may have required many a day of earnest seeking, and many an hour of wrestling in prayer. But his labour has not been thrown away: he now reaps a rich reward. The religion that can stand trial is true religion.

The man who hears Christian teaching, and never gets beyond hearing, is like "a foolish man who builds his house upon the sand." He satisfies himself with listening and approving, but he goes no further. He flatters himself, perhaps, that all is right with his soul, because he has feelings, and convictions, and desires of a spiritual kind. In these he rests. He never really breaks off from sin, and casts aside the spirit of this world; he never really lays hold on Christ; he never really takes up the cross; he is a hearer of truth, but nothing more.

And what is the end of this man\

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