

Perseverance and Missions

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the importance of understanding true salvation and the dangers of false security within the church.

Duration: 54:39

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:13, Matthew 7:18, 2 Corinthians 13:5

Topics: "Genuine Faith", "Eternal Consequences"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Matthew 7:13-14 and its context. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the difference between destruction and life, heaven and hell. The speaker explains that those who hear the teachings of Jesus and act upon them are saved, while those who hear but do not act upon the word are destroyed. He uses the analogy of a pig and a man to illustrate the natural inclination towards sin and the need for genuine conversion. The overall message is a warning about the consequences of not building one's life upon the teachings of Jesus and the importance of genuine faith and obedience.

Transcript

Again, it's a great privilege for me to be here this morning with you. I pray that God will use this session for speaking about the work of God in preserving His people, talking about people continuing to walk in the grace of God, enduring until the end. This morning we're going to address that theme, but I want to address certain things that I spend a great part of my life, when I'm in this country, preaching in churches that would not necessarily hold to many of the same views that I do.

In Christianity in America, and I should probably use the word Christendom instead of Christianity, because a great deal, at least, of what is called Christianity in America is not Christianity. There are certain areas where it's almost a crisis. Some of those areas are this.

First of all, a lack of understanding of the Gospel, that Roman nails and a thorny crown does not take away our sin, but rather our Savior going to a tree, bearing the sins of His people and being crushed under the wrath of God to satisfy justice. We turn the Gospel into some romantic, sentimental story, almost of martyrdom, rather than preaching what ought to be preached, that God is a just God, man has violated the law of God, and for God to be able to righteously forgive, justice must be satisfied, and that was done through the death of His Son, crushed under the wrath of God's judgment against sin. That's a crisis area in America today, as not being preached as it should be.

Another great concern of mine in America is with regard to what is known as the security of the believer. That's what we're going to be talking about today. The idea, not the truth itself that is almost hidden within that statement, but the idea and the way it is preached of security of the believer today has made a way for the church to be filled with carnal, lost, unregenerated people who will die and go to hell.

And we have to come to a true understanding of what is going on in our country, in the churches in our country, and how it is affecting the eternal destiny of many, many people. Now, we all know that Baptists by and large, at least in America, believe in what is known as the perseverance of the saints, but commonly called today security of the believer. Now, there are other denominations in America and around the world that do not hold to that doctrine.

They believe that a person can fall from grace, that a person can genuinely be saved and then lose their salvation. I totally disagree with that, but I want you to know that the false practices of the Baptist church in America has promoted that belief more than any other thing. The carnal, wicked church role in Baptist churches has promoted the idea that a man can be saved and then lose their salvation.

And I believe that many denominations probably sprang forth because of what they saw in us. Let me give you just a few things to think about. Number one, salvation is not merely a human decision through which a man decides to jump out of the line going to hell into the line going to heaven.

Salvation is not merely a human decision, but is a supernatural work of God, parallel if not exceeding the work of God in the creation of the universe by which a man becomes an entirely new creature. A new creature really changed. What do we have in America? Since we no longer truly believe that salvation is a work of God, it's more just a decision, or even worse, a praying of a prayer, going through a ritual.

What do we have? We have our churches filled, our church buildings filled, with people who have prayed a prayer, and that is their confidence. They go to church, but by and large, because there are so many good things going on there. There's a place for their children.

There's wonderful entertainment. They learn wonderful, mighty things like how to balance their checkbook and how to have self-esteem. And everybody needs a social circle to move in.

But on the great day of judgment, we will see, as in Ezekiel 13, the wall that was built was not a proper wall. It will fall. And then, shepherds over those flocks will be asked, where is that wall that you built? Because it will not stand up against the storms of God's judgment.

One theologian in a major denomination among the Baptists said, if we seriously take the Scriptures to heart, we would have to admit that less than ten to fifteen percent of all the people on our church rolls are even born again. Now, this is by way of introduction. There's another thing I want to say.

I hear many people saying today, even proper, very well-known people saying, the church in America is in a devastating crisis. There's just as much ungodliness in the church as out of the church. Just as much fornication in the church as out of the church.

Just as much homosexuality, drug addiction, everything else in the church as out of the church. You know, the church needs to repent. That's not true.

That is not true. That is not true. The church of Jesus Christ in America, although not perfect, is broken, humble, beautiful, and grown in Christ.

The problem is what these people are calling the church is not the church. Like one great apologist stood up a while back and said, 75% of the young Christians do not believe the resurrection is an important issue. My friend, if they don't believe the resurrection is an important issue, they're not Christians.

Or, have you ever heard someone say, we're Christians, we shouldn't be hating one another. If you're hating one another, you're not a Christian. What does it come down to? It comes down to this.

In most churches in America, if someone begins to doubt their salvation, this is what will happen. They will go to the pastor or someone else and say, you know, I'm really doubting my salvation. The pastor will usually say, well, was there ever a point in time in your life when you prayed and asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart? And they'll say, well, yes.

And then they'll respond by saying, well, were you sincere? And the answer is, well, I think so. And the pastor will usually say, this is just the devil bothering you. You've trusted in Christ.

You've received Him into your heart. Or you're an evangelist. I mean, honestly, I mean, they really do these things.

You know, after someone makes a profession of faith or they pray a prayer to receive Jesus, the evangelist will say, now you go out the back of your house and you drive a stake in the yard in your garden and put the date on it. This is the date that you were saved. And if the devil ever bothers you, you just go take him out there to that stake and say, there it is.

No, really. Or another one. Let me just put this past you.

I mean, these are really genuine cases. A man comes forward. The preacher starts talking to him and says, do you want to receive Jesus? Yes.

Yeah, yeah, I would like to do that. Well, just pray and ask the Lord to save you, to come into your heart. Well, I don't really feel comfortable praying out loud.

The preacher says, that's fine. Just pray, you know, quietly. Well, I just really don't feel comfortable praying.

I really don't know how to pray. Well, I'll tell you what, I'll pray the prayer for you and you repeat the words after me. Well, again, you know, I just... I'm really, you know, saying stuff out loud.

I'm not a good speaker. Finally, the preacher says, alright, I'll tell you what. I will pray the prayer to God and if it's what you want to say to Him, squeeze my hand.

Behold the power of an almighty God in salvation that all He can bring forth from the sinner's heart is squeeze my hand if you want to go to heaven. But then also we take the other side. There are people who hear the Gospel and seem to have mighty conversions.

And they seem to just be transformed in a moment and even walk with God for maybe a year or two it seems, participating in the church, even teaching in Sunday school, all sorts of things. And then all of a sudden, it's gone. Well, they're carnal.

They're backslidden. Well, they're Christians. They're just not walking with God.

Well, the Bible does not teach that a genuine believer can live in a continuous state of carnality without growing. Then there's the most pathetic case. It occurs with children, young people.

How many people that have been in church all their life, usually around when they're 20 or 25 or 30, rededicate their life? And here's what happens. You get a bunch of kids in a vacation Bible school. I have nothing against vacation Bible schools.

I have nothing against children evangelism. Just the way it's being done. You get a bunch of kids in a vacation Bible school.

How many of you love Jesus? Have you ever seen a kid raise his hand and go, No, I hate Him. And then, okay, how many of you want to go to heaven? You ever heard a kid go, Well, I'd rather go to hell. Okay, you want to go to heaven.

You love Jesus. How many of you would like to pray a prayer and ask Jesus to come into your heart? And then they're baptized. Pathetic heresy.

How dare you treat the child that way. And then they usually stay pretty normal because they live within a culture, a church culture. They're around other young people.

They're going to youth groups and everything's exciting because they always have a youth leader there who's really good looking and personable. Of course, when he leaves, no one comes to youth group anymore until you get another guy better than him. They've got this thing going on.

But then the child gets 15, 16, 17, 18. They're on their own. They're starting to move out from under mom and dad's wing.

Start going into the world, doing the things of the world. Not wanting to come to church, to fellowship. There's no desire for Christ or reading the Word or growing in godliness.

Nothing. And then what happens? Here you see parents coming to the church and pray for my child. I know they're a Christian.

They're just not walking with God. Then they go to their children and they say, look, you're a Christian, but you're not living for Christ. There's just no rewards.

There's going to be nothing in your life. You're a Christian. You need to live like one.

Again, pathetic heresy. What should be addressed is this. You made at one time a profession of faith in Christ.

But at this moment, your life is beginning to show that maybe that profession is false. And although I cannot condemn you, you can have no biblical assurance that you were ever saved. Possibly the greatest and most damning heresy is not the doctrine that the ones God saves by His power, He keeps saved, but the way it has been twisted to turn into a ticket to heaven and to live like hell.

And that's what we're going to look at. Again, I would like to have four hours in this because it is so very, very important. I want us just to go really quickly to Matthew.

Chapter 7, verse 13. Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, for many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

Now, the first thing you have to understand about this text is its context. It has been so misrepresented. Now, usually this text is preached by saying this.

Okay, most of the world does not consider itself Christian. Most Americans don't consider themselves Christians. There's a small group over here of people who call themselves Christians.

You know, all of us Christians. We go to church and everything. So those on the broad way to destruction are all those in the world who don't identify themselves with Christ.

They don't identify themselves with Christianity. They don't call themselves disciples. And then there's those of us over here who call ourselves disciples and Christians and we're on the narrow way.

That is not at all what he's teaching. Not at all. What he's teaching is this, and it's terrifying.

He's not even dealing with the world. He's saying among those who call themselves My disciples, among those who call themselves Christians, among those who identify themselves with discipleship, among them only a few will be saved. You say, Brother Paul, where do you get the authority to say something like that? Well, just look for a moment.

Look at the context of what's being said. We're in verse 13, but I want you to go over now verse 21. Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

Who's he talking about? We have a Hebrew idea of repetition here. Lord, Lord. It's not just someone who silently says Jesus is Lord.

It's not someone who hides. It's not someone who even denies the Lord. It's someone who emphatically declares that Jesus is Lord, and he says, not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.

The whole thing is about the idea you will not know them by what they profess. You will know them by what they do. And so this is not even dealing with Hollywood.

This is not dealing with New York. This is not dealing with ungodly this or that. This is dealing with you.

This is dealing with everybody who considers themselves to be a believer, a disciple, a Christian, anyone who's ever said Jesus is Lord. He's saying among that group, few will be those who find it. That's what he's saying.

Now I want us to look at verse 13. He says, Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow.

Now this is my point. As Baptists in America, we have done well in the sense that we have talked about a small gate. We have done well to say that it is not multiple choice, all roads do not lead to Rome, and Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one can come to the Father except by Him.

We've done well to do that. There's only one problem. We have forgot that there's not only a narrow gate, there's a narrow way.

There's not only a small gate, there is a narrow way. And if I were to readjust this verse according to what I see among Baptists, it would be this. The gate is small and the way is broad that leads to life.

That's what I would see. That's what I would have to rewrite, because that is the practice of most Baptists. Oh, I've got Jesus.

Jesus is the only way. Jesus is the only one. But they're looking, walking, talking, acting just like the world are very close to Him.

We have done well to say there is a small gate, but we have forgot that there is a narrow way. And that narrow way is just as important as that small gate. Now, whenever I touch on this, people start getting really, really kind of spooky, because they're thinking, what's he talking about? Is he talking about works? Is he talking about... Well, let me explain to you how this works.

This is New Testament. This is Reformed. This is Puritan.

This is early Baptist. This is early Congregational. This is early Presbyterian.

This is the way Christians thought. And it's this. To pass through that small gate is to repent of your sins and to trust in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Now, I said there's not only a small gate, there's a narrow way. Now, the false idea of this is you walk through the small gate and then you try with all your might to stay on that narrow path in order to stay saved. That's what some denominations believe.

That's not the truth though. The truth is this. Let's say I'm a person and I tell you, I have passed through the small gate.

I am trusting in Jesus Christ. The question in your mind is going to be, we will see. Because the evidence that you have truly trusted in Jesus Christ is that you will walk in the narrow way.

Because He who began a good work in you will finish it. And He who loves you will discipline you. Let's begin with a false profession.

Let's say there's a man. He hears the Gospel. He rejoices in it.

He even starts going to church all the time. He starts reading his Bible. I mean, his life begins to change.

He even starts teaching a Sunday school class and everything. But then one day, he sets off the path. And he stays off the path.

I mean, it might not be abrupt at first. It's a gradual just kind of weaning himself away from other believers and things, getting more involved in the world. And eventually, he's just gone.

Did he lose his salvation? No. He demonstrated he never was saved. Now, a true believer that has truly passed through that small gate, trusted in Christ their Lord and Savior, and they're going to be growing and growing.

And let's say that they step off the path. Now, we know that even in our growth and our life of obedience, there's sin. But when I talk about step off the path, rebellion emerges.

A drawing to the world. A thing. What will happen? Well, let me tell you what won't happen.

If they're a true believer, they won't live in carnality for their entire life. Nor will they live in carnality for a long time. Why? Hebrews 12.

They have a Father who loves them and will come swiftly to discipline them and bring them back. A Father who will not let them go. A true Christian can fall.

He cannot stay there. Let me just give you an illustration. Let's say I was your pastor, and I came home from preaching one night really late, like one in the morning.

And you're a member of the church, and I drive by one of the corners here, and your 15-year-old daughter is out with a bunch of hoodlums, and they're all out there drinking. She's out there. You're a member of the church.

Now, I'm not going to be mad at her, but I am going to go to your house and wake you up. You would not want me to be your pastor. I'll wake you up, and I'll call you out on the carpet, and I'll say, what is going on here? What kind of derelict father are you? You're in bed.

Your 15-year-old daughter is down on a street corner drinking with a bunch of hoodlums. Would I not be right in saying you were a derelict father? Do you think God's a derelict dad because that's the way most preachers are preaching Him today? Because He's got all these children running around that have never been changed. They're not godly.

They love the world. They love the things of the world. They live in sin.

And He's not doing anything about it. Or maybe He can. You know, God wants everyone to do good, but He just can't make them.

Well, then again, let's go back to the power of God in salvation and the faithfulness of God to not only save the people, but keep them. And what Jesus is teaching us here is not that we are saved by walking in the narrow way, but the narrow way demonstrates that a genuine work of conversion, a work of grace has happened in our life. Now, let me say two things.

Very, very important. You walk around like at least in the Bible Belt. You can go around and you just knock on anybody's house and they'll say they're saved.

Okay? And if you bring about repentance or faith, here's what they'll say. Well, I repented. I believed.

As though it were some kind of flu shot. You do it once and you get over with. Alright? Here's what you've got to understand.

When Jesus comes to Israel and He says, the Kingdom of God, you know, has come. Repent and believe the Gospel. Both of those are present tense imperatives.

What He's saying is the Kingdom of God has come. Now spend the rest of your life living in repentance and faith. If you are not repenting now, you didn't repent then.

If you're not believing now, you didn't believe then. Because He who began a good work will finish it. He continues it on.

The Christian life is this. I was saved. I am being saved.

I will be saved. I believed in Him. I'm still believing.

I repented of my sin. I'm still repenting. It's not something I got done.

It's something that continues on. Do you understand? That is very, very, very important. And that's what we're dealing with when we're talking about perseverance.

Now, the second thing I want to say that is extremely important before we get to our main text is this. We have taken two separate doctrines. We have molded them into one and we have lost them both.

We have what's called, and I'm going to use modern terminology even though I don't like it very much. We have what's called the doctrine of security, people say. Alright, but if you look at the doctrine of perseverance, of persevering until the end, there's two things in there that you need to see.

One is what's called the doctrine of security. That is, he who truly believes and is truly saved is secure, is kept by the power of God. That's the doctrine of security.

But there's another doctrine out here called the doctrine of assurance. They're two different things. The doctrine of security says, he who truly believes is saved and is kept saved by the power of God.

The doctrine of assurance asks the question, how do you know you truly believe? The one who believes is secure. But how do you know that you believe? Let's face it. Everybody believes.

You go anywhere. I believe in Jesus. The devil believes in Jesus more than anyone else here.

You say you believe in Jesus. How do you know that it's a saving belief? How do you know that it's a saving faith? How are you going to test that? How are you going to judge it? In superficial American Christianity it only comes down to this. I believe.

I believe. And we have all these little diagnostic questions that really don't mean a hill of beans. Because we've already learned all the answers to them too.

The question is, how do you know you believe unto salvation? When there's so many people deceived and Jesus Himself said, among those who say they believe, few of them are even going to be saved. How can you and I know that we truly believe in Jesus Christ? And that we truly are saved? Well, let's see some general things and then we're going to see some tests. Look at verse 16 of chapter 7. You will know them by their fruits.

Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles are they. So then every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. Have you ever heard someone... I'll start preaching this and someone will say, judge not lest ye be judged.

And I say, twist not Scripture lest ye be like Satan. Because Jesus is saying, you will know them and you will know yourself if you are in the faith by the fruits you bear, not by what you say. Your profession of faith in Jesus Christ is worth absolutely zero.

Because Jesus said, many will come before Him on that day and say, Lord, Lord. And He said, depart from Me, I never knew you. It's not He who says, Lord, Lord, but He who does the will of My Father in Heaven.

Is He saying it's not the one who believes, but the one who obeys the will? No. He's saying the one that truly believes will demonstrate their belief by doing the will of the Father on a consistent enough basis to know, to demonstrate that really something's happened. Now let's get back to this.

Jesus comes to these guys. Jesus was... You did not want to get in a debate with Jesus. Jesus was a... He was as innocent as a dove and He was as shrewd as a serpent.

Jesus captured men alive. He set traps for them and caught them. He did.

Jesus is sitting there. He's going, now, correct me if I'm wrong. Figs.

You don't find figs on thorn trees, do you? And the reply from the crowd, of course not, Jesus. I mean, you're a carpenter. You're not a farmer.

But I mean, everybody knows that. You don't find figs on thorn trees. You don't find thorns then on fig trees? No, Jesus.

You're not going to find thorns on a fig. Jesus, if anybody comes to You saying they've got a fig tree and it's got thorns on it, they're trying to sell you something, Jesus. They're lying to you.

They're deceived. I mean, any absurd fool knows you're not going to find thorns on a fig tree. I mean, it's absolutely absurd.

And also it is absurd, Jesus said, to call yourself My disciple and not them. It's just as ridiculous. It's ludicrous.

And yet that is done in almost every church in America today. Like an illustration I always use. Let's say I showed up late for your church.

And you're kind of angry. You say, Brother Paul, don't you appreciate the opportunity you have here to speak in our church? I say, listen, don't be angry with me. I was driving here.

I was going down the highway. I had a flat tire. And I was changing the tire.

And I just wasn't thinking. And a lug nut flew off the tire. And it went out in the middle of the highway.

And I just went out looking. I ran out there. And I picked up the lug nut.

And when I stood up, there was a logging truck weighing 30 tons going 120 miles an hour, 10 feet in front of me. It ran me down. And that's why I'm late.

You're going to go... You're either a lunatic or you're an immoral liar. Why? Well, that's impossible. No, I got run over by a logging truck.

It's impossible. It's ludicrous. It's immoral.

It is impossible to have an encounter with a logging truck and not be changed. Then why do you tell me it's possible to have an encounter with God and not be changed? So has God become smaller than a tiny truck? All these people running around with an encounter with God, but their lives are the same. Think about that.

Jesus is laying out an argument of absurdity to them, catching them in a trap. And they walk right into it. The fact of the matter is, salvation is a mighty work of God.

And if God has not changed and is not changing you, if God has not trapped you, if God is not before you, behind you, beside you, making you walk in a certain way, you know not God. If you can live in sin and revel in it and find nothing crushing down on your soul, no conviction of sin, no discipline from the Father, no breaking of the heart, you're lost. Let me give you a demonstration, an illustration from Spurgeon, just to give you an idea why this is so true.

Let's say that we have a pig in the back there behind those doors. Alright? And I put a plate of the finest food here and a bucket of garbage here, and I say, loose the pig and let him go. Well, Phineas, you don't have to be a farmer to know where the pig's going to go.

He's going to go straight to the bucket of slop. Why? He is a pig. By his nature, he's a pig.

He does what pigs do. It's just natural. He is a pig, so he loves garbage.

He turns away from the finest food, sticks his head in this bucket, and eats it with joy. Now let's say that while he is eating this without any shame, without any remorse, full of joy, I have the power in one second to change him into a man. Now what's going to happen? Well, there are certain things a man cannot eat, even if he tries.

In one second, he throws his head out of that bucket and he begins to vomit up all that he had taken down. What he once loved, what he now hates, despises. He's sick inside.

Why? He no longer has the stomach of a pig. He has the stomach of a man. He no longer has the nature of a pig.

He has the nature of a man. Men cannot take that stuff down without becoming sick. Not only that, he turns around and looks at you.

He's ashamed. The thing he once had no shame about or remorse about whatsoever, he now is so ashamed. I just described your conversion, if you have been converted.

I just described mine. A man is born in sin. By nature, we love to sin and we hate righteousness and then God is here offering salvation, hope, everything else.

But no, we want the filth of sin, disgust. We want all the immorality, everything there is in the world. We want it.

We love it. We eat it down. We boast about it.

We play with it with our friends. We lay in it, roll in it like swine. But what happens? Is salvation simply a pig waking up one day going, I don't want to be a pig anymore.

Even though I love all this stuff, I'm going to try with all my heart to get away from it. And even though I just hate doing all this righteous stuff like reading Bibles and praying and loving and sacrificing, I'm going to do it because I want to go to heaven. And that's the way most people see salvation.

Well, I'm going to do it because it's the right thing to do. If you came to church today this morning because it's the right thing to do, go home. This is not helping you.

Christianity is not about doing what's right even though you don't want to do it. Christianity is about the fact that God came down, took out your heart of stone, put in a heart of flesh that can respond to Him, that loves Him. And it's not that you turn away from the bucket of filth because you love it.

You turn away from it because you hate it. It's not that you turn to Jesus because it's the right thing to do. You turn to Jesus because He's the most beautiful thing you've ever seen.

And now a true Christian is going to the commandments of God, the Bible says, is not burdensome for Him. He loves Him. Why? His nature has been changed to be like God's.

Now, can a Christian fall back into the world? A Christian can fall back into the world, stick his head in that bucket, and what's going to happen? He might get a few bitefuls before it all comes out. Christian, have you ever experienced a thing where maybe you were saved out of a life of sin or something, and then for some reason, you went back and tried it, and it literally made you nauseous? I mean literally made you nauseous. You see, here's the thing.

Another doctrine that has really messed up the church, I think, in America is this idea of two natures. White dog, black dog, and all this kind of thing. We have been given a new nature.

Our heart of stone that cannot respond to divine stimuli has been removed, and it has been replaced with a heart of flesh, meaning a heart that can respond to divine stimuli and responds willingly. It is not that we've turned over a new leaf, except we've become a new creature. It's not like where I live, where there are many, many coyotes.

It's not like God captured a coyote, put him in a cage, and just stopped him from eating sheep because he's in a cage. You've done nothing to the coyote. He's still a coyote.

He's still a villain. You let the cage go. You open the door.

He's gone. He's killing sheep again. It's not that God put a coyote in a cage.

It's that God changed the nature of the coyote so he can lay down with the sheep. That's the difference. So many Christians, their Christianity is doing the right thing.

Have you been changed? Have you been changed? And is that change continuing? Now, I want you to see something that goes along with the illustration of the pig. And it's this, verse 18. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

Now, this is another case in American preaching where we have only taught a half-truth and it has brought havoc. You will hear preachers all the time on radio, TV, everything, saying a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. You'll hear evangelicals saying, and it's correct to say, look, if you're lost and you don't know the Lord, don't think you can produce good fruit.

You need Jesus. You're not even hooked to the vine. You need Jesus Christ.

You can't save yourselves by works. You can't even do good works. You must have a relationship with Jesus.

You must be changed by the power of God before you can do anything pleasing to God. Now, there's nothing wrong with that. The only part is they left out the other part.

It not only says, look in verse 18, it not only says that a bad tree cannot produce good fruit, it also says a good tree cannot produce bad fruit. You don't hear that being preached. And what is he saying? That a Christian has been changed in such a way that he will never sin? No.

In the same way that the finest orchards in the world will still have some bad apples. What it's saying is this, that salvation is not just a makeover and it's not just something that is decided to do, but it goes down to the very core, the very root of our life has been changed, our very natures. A man born in sin, as all of us are, cannot, there's nothing in his roots, there's nothing in the trunk of him, there's nothing in his character or his nature that will enable him to produce anything good before God.

But in the same way, a person who has been truly converted, although they must fight with the flesh and we still sin, it is impossible for that person to live a life marked by bad fruit. It's impossible for him to live a style of life marked by bad fruit, although you'll be able to find bad fruit. It will not be a life marked by it, characterized by it, but it will be a life that is changed.

Now, let's look again. Let's go farther. He says, now notice that in verse 16 he begins this by saying, you will know them by their fruits.

And in verse 20 he ends it by saying, so then you will know them by their fruits. Now, I want us to look. He says, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Not everyone who declares emphatically that Jesus is Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven. There's all kinds of people walking around crying out hallelujah, listening to Christian music, playing Christian tapes. You walk in their house, it sounds like you walked into a Christian bookstore with music blaring, everything else.

You've got verses on the walls saying hallelujah all the time. That means nothing. Are they doing the will of the Father? It's not talking about a sinless perfection.

It's not saying that believers don't sin. It's not saying that believers can't fall. But is their life marked by this one thing? A doing of the Father's will.

Is it? Are they concerned about what the Father desires? And are they seeking to do it? Now, he goes on. He says, Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and in Your name cast out demons and in Your name perform many miracles? Boy, this is something. This is something.

If you can get your mind wrapped around this. Now, what we've got here is a group of people standing before the Lord on that day and he says, Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven. They're going to make a defense for themselves now.

But Lord, we prophesied in Your name. But Lord, we did miracles. Lord, we cast out demons.

What are You saying? You don't know us. Why are You saying? Depart. Look at all we did.

Now, let me tell you something. Let me give you a hypothetical situation that will never happen. Let's say that a true, true believer stands before the Lord on the day of judgment and the Lord says to him, Depart from me.

I never knew you. Now, it will never happen, but let's just say for the sake of argument, it did. And the believer was granted an opportunity to respond.

The true believer. How would he respond? Would he respond by saying, Lord, I mean, I preached. Lord, I did miracles.

Lord, I cast out demons. Lord, I did this and that. Lord! Now, what would a true believer do? Lord, I was born in sin and in sin was I conceived.

Lord, I broke every law You have ever made. Lord, I am unworthy as unworthy can be. The depths of hell are not even enough for me.

But Lord, in all my righteousness, there's nothing more than filthy, filthy rags. I trusted in what Your Son, Jesus Christ, did for me. That would be their defense.

But look at the defense of these guys. Something completely different. Something completely different from the very beginning.

Lord, it's good for You that I am here. That is why I can say that on television, Christians are always labeled as self-righteous, think they're better than everybody else. It is the exact opposite.

It is such a lie. The devil is such a liar. And people are so ignorant they can't see it.

The Christian... I was speaking on Jews and Muslims and Christians. And I put that the Christian is the only person on the face of the earth who can say they're going to heaven and not be bragging. Why? Because they're the only one... Let me put it this way.

You go to an Orthodox Jew and say, are you going to the paradise, the place of the righteous when you die? Yes, I am. Why? Because I love the law of God and I have kept it. I am a righteous man.

You talk to a Muslim and say, are you going to paradise when you die? Yes, I am. And why so? I have read the Koran. I love the Koran.

I have obeyed the laws of the Koran. I have made the pilgrimages. I have fasted.

I have prayed. I am a righteous man. I have given alms.

You go to the Christian. Sir, are you going to heaven when you die? The true Christian. Yes.

Why? I have broken all of God's laws. I have borne Him sin. I have done nothing.

Hold it, sir. I don't understand. Now, I understand these two other gentlemen here because they told me they were going to heaven and then they gave me evidences of all the reasons they deserve to go to heaven.

But you, sir, you're something I don't understand. You're an enigma. You're telling me you're going to heaven and you said it with a smile on your face.

But now you're telling me the only thing you deserve is hell. How are you going to heaven? And he says, by the virtue and the merit of another. I'm going to heaven based upon the virtue and the merit of my Lord and my Savior, Jesus Christ.

Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to the cross I cling. Oh, hail the power of Jesus' name.

Let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal die of them and crown Him Lord of all. That's the difference.

So when we're talking about walking in this path, the true Christian does not see it as walking by their own power and in their own merit, but walking a walk of grace enabled by a mighty conversion, enabled by a mighty cross. And he goes on and he says, verse 23, Then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Let me tell you something.

I hear so many people today saying, I know Jesus. I don't want to sound harsh or crude, but it's a big deal. That's not the issue.

I know Jesus. Let's say I go to Washington, D.C. to preach. And I decide I'm going to drop by the White House.

I walk up to the gates and I go, Hey, open the door. What? Open the door. I want to go see George Bush.

Look, I know George Bush. Open the door. I'm not getting in.

I can stand there all day and tell them, I know George Bush, but I'm not going in the White House. But if George Bush came out of the White House and pointed at me and said, I know Paul Washer. Let him in.

I'm going in. You say you know Jesus? That's a fine thing. Does Jesus know you? And then he says, the greatest indictment, in my opinion, against the so-called evangelical church in America today.

Depart from you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. Why is that so frightful? Let me just kind of fill you in on what he's saying.

Because it is a description of the majority of people who profess Christ in America. Depart from me, those of you who claim to be my disciples, but lived as though I never gave you a law to obey. That's what he's saying.

Depart from me, those of you who claim to have passed through the small gate, but you did not walk on the narrow way. Lawlessness. Depart from me, those of you who consider yourselves disciples, but you lived your everyday life as though I never gave you a law to obey, a principle to observe.

Depart from me. You get to 24 through 27, and you're all familiar with this text. Therefore, if anyone hears these words of mine and acts on them, it may be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and burst against the house, and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock.

And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and burst

against the house, and it fell, and great was its fall. Again, by and large, this passage is preached out of context. I hear preachers all the time preaching this this way.

As a Christian, you need to build your life upon the Word of God, because if you do, it will be stable, it will be blessed, and the storms of life will not sink you down. You'll be solid and strong. But if you're a Christian and you're not living according to the Word of God, your life will be unstable.

It's like a house built on the sand. Your family won't function well. Nothing will go well.

It won't go well with you as a Christian. That is not what Jesus is teaching. What Jesus is teaching is this.

Not the difference between a strong Christian and a weak one, but the difference between a lost man going to hell and a saved one going to heaven. Those of you who hear these words of mine and act upon them are those who have heard the Gospel and submitted to it and followed it, have been genuinely converted, become new creatures. You're building your life upon a whole different foundation from everyone else.

And when the storms and fires of God's judgment comes, you will be saved. And the others are those who hear the Gospel, hear the Word of God, hear the teachings of Jesus. They do not build their life upon them.

And when the storms of God's judgment come, they are destroyed. You say, Brother Paul, are you sure about that? Just look for a moment. Just really quick.

Go back to verse 13. You have a narrow gate, which would logically denote that you also have a broad one. So you have two gates.

One is narrow that leads to heaven. The other is quite large that leads to hell. Then you have two ways.

You have a narrow way that leads to heaven. You have a broad way that leads to hell. You go into 16 and on down.

You've got a good tree that bears good fruit and goes to heaven. You've got a bad tree that bears bad fruit and is destroyed in the fires of hell. You've got those who profess faith in Jesus, call Him Lord, and yet their life is not marked by doing the Father's will and they are destroyed in hell.

And you've got those who profess faith in Jesus and their life is marked by doing the Father's will and they show themselves to be saved. You've got those who hear the words, the teachings of Jesus, and act upon them and they are saved. And you've got those who hear the Word and they do not act upon the Word and they are destroyed.

This is the whole thing, the whole logical argument throughout the entire text. This is not five steps to have the fullest life you can on this earth. He is warning you about the difference between destruction and life, heaven and hell.

That's what He's saying. The Sermon on the Mount is a frightful thing in many ways. In many ways.

So, how does it with you? I don't. Don't think of what you profess. Don't even look back to the time when you prayed and asked Jesus to come into your heart.

Just do one thing. Do what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13:5. Examine yourself. Test yourself to see if you are in faith.

This was going to be my introduction and then I was going to preach on 1 John, but it went a little long. Because 1 John is written to those who claim to believe in the Son of God that by reading that book they might know whether or not they're saved. The doctrine of the continuously carnal Christian in America is a hellish, demonic doctrine.

It just is. But yet, it is a foundation stone to church growth in America. And why is this not preached? Mainly because of building programs.

If you have big buildings, you've got to have a lot of people. You lose a lot of people and you can lose your building and your prestige and your name if this is preached. All the people who come to church because it looks more like a six flags over Jesus than a congregation of holy, they would leave.

How is it with your soul? How is it with your soul? Is your life marked by God's sovereignty, His Lordship? You might be quite hard-headed. You might have fallen into sin a few times in your life, grossly. But as we look at your entire life, can we see that there is a God from whom you cannot escape leading you in a direction that He wants you to go? And can you see your heart being more and more transformed to loving that idea? Do you really have a shepherd to guard you with staff and rod? Let's pray.

Father, I come before You and I thank You for Your Word. And I pray, Lord, that You use it in the heart of Your people. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/15/SID15078.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paul-washer/perseverance-and-missions/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net