

Lost Church Members

by Ralph Sexton

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a personal knowledge of God and His salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and warns against the dangers of easy-believism and carelessness in the church.

Duration: 45:42

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:21-23, Matthew 13:24-30, John 3:16, John 14:6, Romans 10:9, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "True Faith", "Genuine Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the parable of the people who appear righteous on the outside but are lost in their souls. He emphasizes the importance of true faith and warns against relying solely on good works. The preacher shares a personal experience of preaching on sin in the church and witnessing several members of the congregation angrily leaving. The sermon highlights the need for genuine repentance and the danger of hypocrisy within the church.

Transcript

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father, who hath ears to hear, let him hear. Anytime the word of God says, if you have an ear to hear, let him hear, it's God saying, sit up, take a deep breath, and pay attention. I have something to tell you.

Now, I really believe tonight that if we're going to go and have revival, and if many of you that are gathered under this gospel pit tonight are going to spend eternity in heaven, then you have to examine your salvation. You have to know whether or not you've been saved, that you have been washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm afraid that all across America, many people are trusting in religious exercise for salvation.

Stained glass, carpet, padded pews, and pipe organ is not salvation. Salvation, my friend, is not in bricks and mortar. Salvation is not in a cathedral roof or in an A-frame building.

Salvation is not in catechisms. Salvation is not in ritual. Salvation is not in water baptism, or sprinkling, or holy communion, or Eucharist.

None of those things can produce salvation. You need to know tonight, by the authority of this blessed book, that the only way that a human being can go see God is to know the Lord Jesus Christ. There's no way to the Father except through the Son.

Now, the Bible teaches very clearly in this passage of Scripture, in verse number 24, it teaches clearly that the wheat and the tares are planted together. Verse 24 says, a man sowed. And notice what he was sowing.

He was sowing good seed. Notice that that seed rooted in the earth. Then notice what it is an illustration of.

It's an example or an illustration of a man's experience with God. In verse number 25, we notice that his enemy came. And his enemy sowed tares.

And that tare also rooted in the earth. And we know that this is symbolic of this man's experience with the devil. Verse 24 is symbolic of an experience with God.

Verse 25 is symbolic of an experience with the devil. One is wheat. One is tares.

I happen to think that this verse of Scripture is a frightening passage in the Word of God. You say, Brother Sexton, it's only a parable. Oh yes, it is only a parable.

But what a powerful parable that it is. Because this parable teaches that there are people that are going to look right, talk right, dress right, and be right everywhere but in their souls. And they're going to die.

And they're going to go meet God. And Brother Sammy, they're going to step out into eternity and be lost for time and for eternity. You say, Brother Sexton, how could that be? I don't know.

I have a hard time with some verses. One verse I find very difficult is when I read where a man walks into God and says, Lord, Lord, have we not done many body works in Thy name? And that man gets an answer from God and God says, Depart. I never knew you.

That's a powerful passage of Scripture. I really think that we ought to have faith, my friend, in the Lord Jesus Christ and His blessed book. And I really believe that there's nothing wrong with us searching our hearts and searching our beings and saying, God, do I really know that I have been birthed into the family of God? I'm afraid that a lot of people... Listen to me now.

Please listen closely tonight. This message could be life and death. There are thousands of people here tonight, but it could be life and death for someone sitting next to you.

Do you realize tonight that someone could be listening to the radio or watching on television or on satellite uplink tonight? Or someone could be under this tent tonight and they could be trusting in their experience rather than trusting in their Christ. They could be trusting in something they've been doing rather than what God has already done. It would be a frightful thing if someone would be under the tent tonight trusting in a feeling rather than trusting in what God has done.

Do you know what God said in His Holy Word? How do you become a tare? How does someone become a tare? Well, I mentioned on Friday night about our trips to Israel where we studied and how we take every day the Word of God and every day is a laboratory of studying and applying the Book. And one of the things that we've studied there in the Holy Land is the wheat and the tare. They grow together.

I'm going to tell you something. I can't tell them apart. I've looked at them.

I can't tell them apart. Now, those farmers can tell, but they say the real way to know is at harvest time. One bears fruit and the other one doesn't.

Now, I want to know something tonight. I don't know about you, but I don't want to wait till harvest time to have assurance of my salvation. I don't want to wait till the trumpet sounds and find out whether I got to go or I didn't get to go and then say, well, now, since I'm left behind, I guess I better pray.

It's going to be too late then, my friend. How do you become a tare? Now, please, I want you to listen very closely because if you don't listen to me closely, some are going to go out and they're going to misquote me and you're going to tell people that I said something that I didn't really say. So you've got to listen closely to what I'm saying.

Some people became a tare at a church altar. Please listen to what I'm about to say. Some people were made a tare at a church altar.

Someone knelt down and they felt like God was dealing with them and another person knelt down beside them. And in love, but in ignorance, they dealt with this person and they said something like this, Do you believe there's a God in heaven? Yes, I believe that. Do you believe He had a Son and His name was Jesus? Oh, yes, I believe that.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary for your sins? Yes, sir, I believe that. Well, then stand up, you're saved because you believe. But my friend, that's not salvation.

You say, but I believe there's a God in heaven. I believe God's got a Son and His name is Jesus. I believe He died on the cross for my sins.

The demons in hell believe that God's got a Son and His name is Jesus. The demons in hell believe that Jesus died for the sins of mankind. But they're not saved and they know who Jesus is.

Why, when He met them up on the north shore of Galilee, they started accusing Him and said, Have you come to torment us before our time? You say, the demons in hell believe that? That's right. Well, then how do I get saved? Well, I'm telling you, some people were made payers at an altar because someone didn't deal with them properly from the Word of God. Some people were made payers in a service because their emotions or their feelings overwhelmed them and they trusted their feelings for salvation.

Now, listen to me very closely here. I'm getting ready to teach a series of messages at my home church on what is worship. And many times we confuse worship with sentiment or we confuse worship with nostalgia.

And there's a big difference. An emotion and feeling is not salvation. You can be saved and not have any thunder and lightning.

You can be saved and have thunder and lightning. We're all individuals. But you cannot trust an emotion or a feeling as whether or not that's the criteria that you've been saved and washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Some people have been made payers because they have trusted a feeling rather than the personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people are trusting moral works for salvation. Some people believe that if they keep the golden rule, then they are saved.

Some people believe if they do kind, charitable deeds, then that is salvation. But salvation is not in kind, charitable deeds. Salvation is not in doing good works.

Salvation is not something you can earn or work up. My friend, it has to do with a gift from a thrice holy God. One of the reasons we're not having revival in America is because we no longer fear God.

There's no fear of God. There's no fear of grieving the Holy Ghost. There's no fear of injuring the blessed third person of the Godhead.

We go into church anymore smacking our gum, talking about the ball games and the races. There's no reverence. There's no knowledge of God.

There's no spirit of God. And if we don't like what we're hearing, we turn it off or we get up and walk out because we just don't want to get involved. And because of that, we've got people going to hell of church abuse.

That's right. Some people are made payers because they believe their works will get them in. They think that God's something like an Emily Post and Santa Claus hybrid, and that God has provided salvation on Christmas and that Emily Post is keeping the record of the good deeds and one day will add up the total, and if I get enough points, I get to go in.

But this isn't a point system. You don't go in on your works. You go in through and by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there's no other way for salvation.

How do you become a tare? You become a tare at an altar or by emotions or feelings or by trying to be a good moral person or by trying to keep the golden rule or by your own works. But none of those things can work. None of them will work.

How is a tare then produced? I've told you how you can become one. How is a tare produced? Tares are produced by church membership. Sad to say that in a lot of churches across America, the only thing you have to do to be a member is to walk an aisle and sign a card.

And that's all there is to it. There's no examination. There's no pastoral inquiry.

There's no conversation about, Do you know your name's been recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life? Do you just walk the aisle, sign a banana, and become one of the bunch? And that's all there is to salvation. I'm going to tell you something tonight. You say, Brother Ralph, we wished you to close last night, but we didn't.

Listen, we need to know if we're saved and why we're saved. A tare is produced by taking someone and making them believe that putting them underwater and bringing them back up will save them. I want you to know I can baptize you to the tadpole, know your Social Security number, and you can die and go to hell.

I can sprinkle you till you think it's raining on your face, and you can die and go to hell. Salvation is not in a religious exercise. You can produce a tare by keeping the law.

Many people believe if they'll keep the Ten Commandments or attempt to keep them, or if they'll keep certain dietary laws, or if they'll observe certain days, that they will earn favor with God and purchase salvation. But that is not salvation. Law didn't get me here.

Grace got me here. Mercy got me here. Hey, I've never been good enough to keep a man's law, let alone God's law.

And if I get into heaven, it'll be through and by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and by His marvelous grace. You need to know what you believe and why you believe it. Another way that tares are produced is by carelessness.

Men and women that handle the holy things of God in a careless way. Men and women that are not trained or not handling the things of God in a careful way by telling someone that you've saved them instead of God saving them. Oh, what a dangerous situation it is because then that person believes they're alright when the truth of the matter is you told them they were alright instead of God telling them they're alright.

Easy-believism can put people in hell. You say, do you believe it's that bad? I was in a southern city not many months ago conducting a crusade like this at service time. A big limo pulled up.

The window came down. There were two or three occupants in there. A couple of those occupants were women.

They asked what was going on. There were four or five of us preachers standing at the edge of the tent before the service began. One of the preachers stood up to the edge of the car.

I could hear the conversation. I was about four feet away. He said, we're having an old-fashioned revival meeting.

We would like to invite you folks to come back in about an hour for service time. We'll be starting up and you're welcome to come and to hear the singing and the preaching. And the woman that was on the other side of the car responded.

She said, sir, I've tried that. She said, I've walked the aisle seven times. And she named a church.

And she said, I've been baptized seven times. She said, I really think all they wanted was to count my head as a baptism or to say that I was a number there. But I don't think anybody really cared about my soul.

She said, I'm a nude dancer at a nightclub just about a mile from this tent. She said, we're on our way to work. I stepped up and I said, look, if that's true, if you've walked an aisle seven times, if you've been baptized seven times, then you know enough about God that whether someone dealt with you right or not, you can know tonight that your sins can be forgiven.

And what you're going to do is wrong. And I said, you can accept Jesus tonight or you can reject Him. And she said, I don't know, maybe some other time.

And hit the button and the window went up. I'm telling you, my friend, we can be careless and we can cost souls. Easy-believe-ism can damn people.

No, I'm not saying that we don't care. We don't go on soul winning. I'm not saying don't have bus visitation.

That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying don't you save them instead of God saving them. You can make someone a tear.

You can make someone a tear with religious education. You can convince someone because they know about God and the triune Godhead. And they can know about the books of the Bible and the construction of the penitent.

You can educate them and tell them and they can be so educated that they can read the Old Testament in Hebrew and they can read the New Testament in Greek. But they can die and go to hell if they don't know the Lord Jesus Christ. You say, Brother Ralph, I don't believe it's that bad.

I was preaching a revival meeting outside of Washington, D.C. And I didn't know the pastor. I'd never been to the church. I'd only had a letter of invitation.

I received my letter and I was leaving another city to go to this city to preach. And I had quite a distance to drive. I got in town just at church time.

Just as church was beginning. I didn't even have time to go to the hotel. And I just grabbed this shirt in the parking lot, got ready, and went inside to sing and had already started.

As I came in, I came around on the left side of the building, turned around, and I sat on the front row. They finished the song service. The pastor looked my way and he said, from the photograph we have on our revival posters, I assume that this is our evangelist.

He said, Brother Sexton, would you come to the platform and preach tonight? I came that night. God burdened me to preach on sin in the church. While I was preaching, someone in the center section stood up and made an obvious gesture to slam their Bible.

Slammed it shut. Put it under their arm. Turned and walked out.

I didn't know that was the chairman of the deacon board. Another one stood up, angrily walked out. And then another one.

To make a long story short, over seven people got up and walked out while I was preaching. I didn't know what was going on. I just know what God burdened me to preach.

And I was preaching. As I was preaching, came down to invitation time, I called on someone to pray and I felt an urgent burden in my heart just to slip out of the building. I went back down to the pew, got my overcoat, my briefcase, headed out to the door to the car.

I got in the vest of view and I heard someone whisper. I turned. It was the pastor.

He said, Could you see me in my office? We walked down the corridor to the educational wing, went into his office, sat down. He said, Reverend Sexton, we have a great problem. We have a serious problem.

I said, Sir, what is it? He said, You have insulted my people tonight. You've come in here on the opening night of this meeting and preached on sin in the church and said we don't appreciate it. This is a good church.

These are great people. You've insulted them. He said, We didn't hire you to come in here and preach on sin.

We hired you to preach on the deeper depths and the higher heights. And I said, Pastor, we do have a problem, but it's not the same problem you think we have. I said, First of all, you didn't hire me.

God called me. And I said, I work for God. And I said, I'm a lot more afraid of God than I am you.

I said, He feeds me. He rides around with me. He lives with me.

And I said, Look, I've only got one gear since He called me to preach. I only know to preach what He lays on my heart. That's all I know what to do.

I said, I don't know a lot about homiletics or hermeneutics. I don't know a lot about the ins and the outs. I said, All I really know is when He's around and when He's not around.

That's about all I know about preaching. And I said, All I know to do is go to my room. I said, It's been several weeks since I've been home for a meal with my little family.

I said, You won't make me mad. You won't even hurt my feelings. I said, I'll go back to the room.

I'll pray. I'll fast. If you call me, I'll get in my car.

I'll drive home. I said, This time tomorrow night, I'll have my feet under my table. I'll be eating.

My wife's cooking. And I said, When it's dark, I'll go sleep in my bed. I said, I've never found a restaurant cooks like my wife.

I've never found a motel bed sleeps like my bed. And I said, You won't make me mad. But I said, Sir, I'm going to warn you.

I said, If you don't call me, I'm coming back tomorrow night and I'm going to preach just exactly what God lays on my heart. I said, That's all I know to do. Nothing happened.

No phone call came. I waited in the parking lot while they sang. I didn't want to talk to anyone.

Came in, sat on that same front pew. Pastor wouldn't even look my way. They turned this way.

Listen, he'd turn his head, wouldn't even look, wouldn't even speak, wouldn't shake my hand. And when they finished the last special, he turned over to the wall and said, I guess it's time for the man to turn. Walked off.

The building was filled. They were standing up. They wanted to see the nut from the mountains.

They had heard about this hillbilly. They had called Mama, Grandpa's, Aunt's, Uncle's. They brought them in.

They thought they was going to have a knife and a hanging and a shooting and a gut ripping at the same time. And you know what? I didn't know what to do. I prayed.

And God burdened me that night to preach on the sovereignty of God and salvation. Now don't let that make you nervous. That just means that God does the saving and man's the one that needs to be saved.

Amen? It just means God's man. God has no other choice but to offer us salvation because He's merciful and holy and true in all things. And man, listen, if we reject Him, God will still be God.

He'll still be high. He'll still be holy. And He's high and holy and man's low and lowly.

There's no way around it who He is. And as I preached that night, all of a sudden while I was preaching on that, a man stood up in the middle. And boy, here it went again.

Slammed that Bible shut. He hit the aisle. But instead of a right turn, he made a left turn and headed towards the altar.

A little while, another one got up and went to the altar. And then another one. And then another one.

And while I was walking back and preaching, I heard him crying out, Oh God, save a hypocrite like me. Oh God, would You save a lost church member like me. Hey, that night, the chairman of the deacon board got saved.

The Sunday school superintendent got saved. Hey, the deacon's wife got saved. All over that building, God began to deal.

The altar filled up and church members started getting saved. I started out doing the invitation to go pray. Got back in the vestibule.

I heard psst. And I said, Oh no. He said, Could you come back to my office again? Walked back down the hallway.

Went back into his office. And he said, Brother Sexton, we have a problem. I said, Yes sir, I know.

I know you told me last night. He said, But you don't understand, Brother Sexton. Tonight's problem is different from last night's problem.

He said, Do you know what you were preaching about inside a few moments ago? I said, Yes pastor. He said, Let me tell you something. He said, I don't know anything about what you were talking about.

He said, Would you look on this wall? This is where I graduated from college. This is where I went to university. That's where I went to seminary.

He said, I can read Hebrew and Greek like you can read a newspaper. He said, But I don't know anything about what you're talking about in there tonight. He said, Do you think God would save me? I said, Pastor, That's just exactly what He came to do.

He crawled up under that big old desk and like a little baby, He said, Jesus, folded His hands like He was saying, Grace. He said, Jesus save me. I don't want to go to hell from behind the pulpit.

Hey! And God saved him by His marvelous grace. Hey, tonight folks, it doesn't matter if you're the pastor. It doesn't matter if you're the associate pastor.

It doesn't matter if you're the deacon, Sunday school teacher, choir member. You need to know that you can go to hell out of church. John Wesley got saved on the boat back to England after he'd been preaching in America.

Had 100,000 converts and was never saved until he got saved on the boat going home. You say, Brother Ralph, I don't understand that. That confuses me.

How could John Wesley preach and 100,000 be saved and he wasn't saved? I'll tell you why. God honors His Word. If a donkey can preach, then a man can preach the Word and God can honor His divine Holy Word.

Salvation's not in the power of a man's lungs or in a man's degrees or in a man's vocabulary. It's in the inerrant, infallible, holy, inspired Word of God set on fire from heaven by the anointing of the Holy Ghost of God. That's the power for salvation.

That's what this generation needs to see is the power and the demonstration of God's anointing one more time before the trumpet sounds. God says, if you don't know tonight, you could be a pair at the house of God. You say, but wait, preacher, I'm a good person.

I've got a good family. I'm going to tell you something. It doesn't matter who you are.

Dr. Billy Graham was the president of his youth group in his church when he got saved. Huh? It doesn't matter how big your name is and who you are. I want you to know when God comes by, you better know that you've been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Brother David, as long as I preach and live, I'll never forget Leona Barnett's Kannapolis tent meeting. Brother David and I, listen, she spoiled us rotten. Every other night she'd bring us a coconut cake, a box of cookies, a pie.

Listen, she loved on us. Week after week, her and her husband came. Her husband was on crutches.

They had little old lawn chairs they'd set up on the right-hand side of the tent. And every night they were there. If I'd have had to pick a saint in Kannapolis, I'd have picked out Leona Barnett.

Always had a smile. Always there. And Brother David, I guess it was about the sixth or seventh week of that meeting.

I don't remember exactly. But one night, Brother David tried to start the song service. And as he stood to sing, halfway through the first verse, all ears filled up.

We couldn't... Weeping, wailing, God was moving in. We'd already had seven saved in the parking lot. Hey, I mean, they'd drive up, get out of the car, and God the Holy Ghost was so on that ground, they'd weep and wail and say, I can't wait for church to start.

Hey, that's what happened was when God shows up. Boy, there was a brokenness. Brother David tried to start the music again.

Here came another wave. He tried to start again. And now it's about eight o'clock.

He tried to start service again. We still hadn't started. And here comes another wave weeping and wailing their way to Jesus.

And all of a sudden, I saw Miss Barnett get out of that chair and come and kneel over on the right side by the piano. And I thought, boy, she looks funny. Her face was ashen gray.

And I looked at her and I said, she's under a tremendous burden for someone. Miss Barnett's heart must be broken for someone lost under the tent tonight. Maybe there's a family member she's burdened for.

And I walked by her because we were just walking through the altars praying and dealing with people and when I walked by her, you could have knocked me down with a feather. She was crying out, oh God, I'm a hypocrite. God, I'm a show.

God, I'm a sham. You know I've never been saved. God, I don't want to go to hell out of a tent meeting.

Save me. God, have mercy on me. She got up the next night and testified.

She stood up and said, I'm 73 years old. She said, I joined the church when I was 13. She said, for 60 years, I've been a hypocrite.

For 60 years, I've been playing church. She said, I was such a good teenager, they made me the president of the youth group. She said, I sang in the choir.

She said, I played the piano when I was in my 20s. She said, I was on the mission society. I was on the ladies board.

She said, I taught a Sunday school class. She said, I was faithful. And said, I got in my 20s.

I knew I was lost. She said, I knew I had never really been that bad. But she said, I knew I'd never been saved.

And she said, we'd have a good service and I'd feel God deal with me and I'd tell Him to go away. But what would people think? They'd think I'm such a good Christian. And yet I know that if I died right now, I'd go to hell.

And she said, I'd push God away. And I'd push God away. And she said, I did it in my 40s.

And in my 50s. And in my 60s. And she said, I'm 73.

But she said, last night, God came by my lawn chair. And God said, Leona, this is the last time I'm going to talk to you. This is the last time I'm going to speak to you.

And said, if you don't get right tonight, I'm going to leave you alone. And you'll die and go to hell out of this place in the middle of a revival meeting. And she said, I got so... I thought my heart was going to stop.

She said, I thought I was going to die. She said, I was afraid I was going to go to hell before I could get saved. And she said, I've been a hypocrite for 60 years.

But she said, last night, God saved me. God covered my sins by His precious blood. And she said, now, I'm going to serve Him for the rest of my life.

Let me tell you something. About a year later, she called me. And she said, Brother Ralph, she said, I've got some good news.

And I said, Sister Leona, what's your good news? She said, I just left the doctor. And the doctor just told me I've got less than a year to live. I've got bone cancer.

And she said, I just found out I'm going to go get to see Jesus before the rest of you guys. She said, isn't that wonderful? I said, Sister Leona, you're calling me, telling me you've got cancer, and you're shouting? She said, oh, but Brother Ralph, don't you remember? He could have left me down there under that tent. A

lost church member.

And let me go to hell. And He would have never spoken to me again. But I'm so happy He came by my chair and saved my soul.

Now, I'm going to get to see Jesus. Let me help you understand this problem a little more tonight. Have you ever played in a ball game? Have you ever... I've got a couple of men in my church, Rusty Pulliam and Donny McKenzie.

They played pro-baseball. And one played for the, I believe Cincinnati Devils played for the Mariners. And you know what? They have some real hard rules in baseball.

If you get a hit, you've got to tag the bases. Right? Now let me illustrate something for you. You can go to church.

You can carry a King James Bible. You can be a good person. And you can go and boy, hit and think, look at what I've done.

Boy, look at this. I'm going to church. I'm tying my ties.

I'm raising my children up in church. Oh, look. Now, I'm going from third, and I'm heading home.

And get in home. And then you get in home and somebody says, Depart. I never knew you.

What do you mean you never knew me? Didn't I do many mighty works in thy name? I tithed. I went to church. I had my kids in the youth activity.

We went to prayer meeting when folks stayed home. I went Sunday night. I went to mission conference.

What do you mean you never knew me? And God say, you never tag first when you started around the bases. And there's a lot of people going to church with you and with me every Sunday. There's men in the pulpit.

There's missionaries on the field. There's folks out there. And they never tag first.

They've never been saved by the grace of God. There's people sitting under this tent tonight under the sound of my voice. You're growing in a wheat field.

But if the trumpet sounded tonight, you'd go to hell out of a revival meeting. And your pride is going to hold you in your seat. I'm telling you tonight, you need to know that if you don't tag the bases, you will be called out.

The umpire of life will cry, Out! I never knew you. Out! Church membership can't save you. Out! You did works and you gave, but you're not saved by the grace of God.

Listen, among the wheat is where the tares grow. The most effective arsenal that the devil has is that if he can get you to look religious, talk religious, and act religious, then you're almost certain of being damned in religious activity. Now follow me, preachers.

Listen to what I'm saying. You follow what I'm telling you tonight. How does the medical doctor treat you with an inoculation for the flu? What does the doctor do to keep you from catching the bad flu, the kind of

flu that can kill you and cause you to get pneumonia? What does he do? He takes you and he injects you with a small dose of that virus.

He actually gives you a mild case of the flu. He gives you enough flu to keep you from catching the bad flu. You know what the devil's doing? He's going from church to church, giving you enough religion to keep you from getting saved so you'll go to hell or the church pews.

He's inoculated you with religious activity. Right now while I'm preaching, your old palms are sweaty, there's a knot in your throat, your heart's racing because you know and God knows you're not ready to meet God. You know right now that if the trumpet sounded, you'd be left behind.

You see, if the devil can get you to sit in a church and hold a Bible and say amen and say praise the Lord, and you can go through the motions of walking and talking, the Christian walk, but you never have been to Calvary. You walked the aisle when you were in vacation Bible school and you let somebody tell you what you did rather than you knowing what you did. Listen to me now.

I'm trying to save your eternal, never-dying soul, but causing you to do what the Bible says. Make your election and calling sure. Salvation is a personal experience.

It's not in someone telling you what you did. It's in you knowing what God did. The devil would like to give you enough religion to inoculate you so that you look right, talk right, and act right, but in your heart, it's never been to Calvary.

It's never been convicted and broken of God. It's never been pulled out and washed in that fountain field with the royal red blood of Calvary. And you've never looked up and said, God, be merciful unto me, a sinner.

Forgive me. Do you see what the devil's doing? All across America. Now I'm going to tell you, I'm going to leave the book for a moment.

I'm going to give you some Ralphology. When I leave the book, I'll let you know I'm leaving the book. My personal conviction and belief is the reason that churches are so weak and we're doing so little for God, it's because we have such a large percentage of unsaved people in the house of God.

How could we be having the fusses and the hypes that we have in the house of God if our people were saved? How could we have the bitterness and the jealousy and the anger if our people were saved? How could we have preachers knifing each other if preachers were saved? When, listen, the Bible says that you know you pass from death unto life because you love the brethren. I'm afraid that we've got a multitude of people over at the house of God that are still wolves. And we brought them in and we put sheepskin on their backs and we got them together and we orchestrated them and taught them to say, Baa, baa.

And we call them sheep, but they've never been to Calvary and they've never been saved by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, tonight, I don't want the devil to give you a little shot and then let you go to hell off a church pew. The devil wants you to trust your tear.

The devil wants you to trust your feeling. He wants you to trust your parent. He wants you to trust your experience.

If he could, he'd try to give you any kind of counterfeit that looks like the real thing, acts like the real thing, smells like the real thing, but when you turn it over, it's not the real thing. It's never been to Calvary. The more the devil can get you to look like salvation, the more destined for hell you are.

I'm going to tell you something. If I had time tonight, I was going to bring a couple of car batteries and I was going to put them out here on the table for you to look at. They're just car batteries.

One's charged and one's dead. You can't tell the difference. I can show you two batteries and you can look at them and one be charged and one be dead and you can't tell the difference.

I can hold up two revolvers and turn them sideways to you and say, here are two .357 pistols. One's empty and one's loaded. You can't tell the difference.

They look the same. I'm going to tell you something else. You can go to church and there's wheat and tares and you can't tell the difference.

You don't know who's saved and who's not saved. Preacher, I love you and I love my sheep, but fellas, we can't tell. Only God knows who's real and who's not real.

I really believe it's an eternal difference that we need. I don't have time to finish what's on my heart tonight, but I want you to do me a favor. Right where you're sitting right now, I want you to understand that pride can cost you your soul.

Pride can cost you. You see, if God the Holy Ghost has already been to your chair and fingered around your heart and said, you're one of those that don't really know, you've never been saved, and you're a church member, you're a church leader, you're a deacon, you're a preacher's wife, you're a Sunday school teacher, whatever, and you say, but I can't do this. I'll tell you something.

I preached this message in my home church. I had 38 of my best people get saved. You'll let pride hinder you from doing business with the Lord God Almighty.

You need to realize that the wheat and the tare are planted together. They progress together. They grow together.

You can't see someone's heart. You don't know. I don't know.

But I'm going to tell you, they'll progress together. They're planted together. But one day, they'll be processed together.

The harvest will come. Judgment Day will be here. The devil wants you to think that you're alright when you've never been to Calvary.

Tares depends on good work. Tares depends on good preaching, good churches. You see? Well, I have to be so careful.

I don't want to be misunderstood. But Brother Clark, if the devil can put you in a good church and put good people around you and put good preaching in your life and good singing in your life, do you know what you do? You think you're pretty good. Do you understand what I'm saying? You're not saved.

You've never been saved by the grace of God. But you're in a good church, a good spiritual church. And you've got a good pastor and he loves God and he preaches the Word.

And there's good singing. And you're surrounded by all this good. So your body and reasoning says, I must be pretty good.

The truth of the matter is, you don't really know beyond any shadow of a doubt if you've barely been saved and washed in the blood of the Lamb. You see, that's the danger. That's part of the devil's plan to destroy.

You say, well, Brother Ralph, I'm going to tell you something tonight. I'm 99% sure. I'm 99% sure that I'm saved.

I'm going to tell you something. You're not 99% saved. You're 100% lost.

You say, no, I'm 99% sure. I'm almost positive. You're 100% lost if you don't know beyond any shadow of a doubt.

You say, but I think, I'm telling you, if you don't know, then you're lost. And only you and God knows what's on the inside. The Bible teaches clearly that the wheat and the tare will be bound.

That that tare will be pulled out of that wheat and that tare will be bound and it will be carried and it will be burned. The wheat that has been bound and bundled, it will be carried into the safe house, into the barn. Both will be cut.

Both will be bundled. One will be to the Master's house and one will be to the fire to be destroyed. The question I want to ask you tonight is will you be bundled and burned or will you go to the Master's house? Are you a wheat? Are you a tare? Don't play church.

Don't play religion. Know beyond any shadow of a doubt that your name's been recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16646.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ralph-sexton/lost-church-members/>

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