Crossroads Church

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The Sermon on the Mount, Part 30

Four Awful Words

Text: Matthew 7:21-23

If you or someone you know would be considered an outsider when it comes to the Church, I'm going to let some of our trade secrets out in this sermon. To look like an insider, you merely have to pick up some vocabulary. When you're speaking of your future plans, sprinkle in the phrase, "If the Lord says the same", or "Lord willing", or "Deo Volente", the Latin phrase for "God willing". If you feel strongly about an issue, state your opinion and then say, "I have a strong conviction about that." When speaking about something sad, place your hand over your heart, suck your teeth a couple of times and say, "God, help us". When recounting a recent dream, give the details and then say, "It seems that the Lord is saying..."

There are some buzzwords that would grant you easy acceptance into the Church world and culture. Dot your talk with words and phrases such as

* Praise the Lord
* Hallelujah
* God is good all the time
* Well, you know what the **Bible** says....
* I'd appreciate your prayers...
* Potluck dinner
* A time of fellowship
* Testimony

This text suggests that in Jesus' day, there was a similar superficiality existent. There were those, according to verse 21, who felt that entrance to heaven could be gained by the uttering of the phrase, "Lord, Lord". Today, perhaps the phrase is, "Blessed and highly favored" or "Walking in my purpose" or "Walking in favor" or "Too blessed to be stressed" or "God is in control" or "God answers prayer" or "I'm not religious; I'm in a relationship" or "I'm trusting the Lord". It is possible to take our precious faith and serious relationship with God through Christ and reduce them to a bag of phrases and clichés which mean little or nothing to us. That is exactly what was going on in the first century. People were attracted to Jesus and His was a brand that was gaining great traction. He was *traction* and *attraction* in one very inviting package. However, there are those who had no interest in getting to *know* Jesus and even less interest in *following* and *obeying* Him. Be careful here. It is easy to starting equating rhetoric with righteousness. That is, we think if we have the *words*, we have salvation.

Jesus, in our text, makes it clear that it is a relationship with Him, through repentance which is the essence of faith. It's not simply knowing the clichés. Not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord"....

What does it mean to *know* another? To *know* is to have an intimate relationship.

God will not say, to lost people, “I never knew *about* you”. God will condemn the lost because, and *only* because, they are not in an intimate relationship with Him.

Disqualifiers:

1. **Words** *alone- "Lord, Lord"(21, 22)*
2. **Wonders** *alone- "We cast out demons in your name and worked miracles".(22)*

Surely*,* knowing the vocabulary of the faith and pulling off some dramatic healings must count for *something!* Yet, Jesus seems to dismiss both. Read with me, Matthew 24:24 and Rev. 16:14.

Matthew 24:24

*For false christs and false prophets will rise and show* ***great signs and wonders*** *to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*

Revelation 16:14

*For they are spirits of demons,* ***performing signs,*** *which go out to the kings of the earth and[a] of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

No, it is not our words or our wonders that assure our standing with our Christ in that great day. It is, as we will see in the next section, our commitment to obedience and following Christ that pleases God. Jesus says that in that day, rather than being impressed by one's words or wonders, to some He will utter those four awful words: **I never knew you.**

We are committed to global ministry, taking the good news of Jesus Christ and his death, burial and resurrection, to every nation. We financially support those individuals and organizations that are committed to the same.

We proclaim the gospel to every creature because we don’t want anyone to hear these four awful words from God: **I NEVER KNEW YOU!**

**Amen**