

Matthew

16:13-20

One Liner of the Week

"Your good feelings about Jesus, your good attitude towards Him, and even your respect for Him are not enough. Your outward activities of church attendance and being kind to others are not enough."

Food for the Soul

S Matthew 17:1-27

M Matthew 18:1-20

T Matthew 18:21-35

W Matthew 19:1-15

T Matthew 19:16-30

F Matthew 20:1-16

S Matthew 20:17-34

Discussion Guide

March 3, 2024

Sermon Synopsis

There are many important questions that we must consider and answer in life, but there is none more important than the question that Jesus asks in Matthew 16:15. After hearing all the opinions of the crowd, Jesus looks to His disciples and asks directly, "Who do you say that I am?" This personal question is one that He is asking each of us today, and we must be careful in how we answer. Our answer to this question determines the difference between life and death, heaven and hell, forgiveness and condemnation. We invite you to listen today in hopes that you will hear and answer this most important question correctly.

Group Question #1

It's a hard pill to swallow, I know. A horse pill, in fact, that causes us to choke slightly on certain occasions. There are people who seem to do all the right things. They know all the songs. They're involved in the Church in all the right ways. They know all the lingo. But, despite all of this, it may be that such a person is yet lost, unregenerate, and unsaved. How can that be? After all, outward deeds that point to the reality of salvation ARE a necessity. Good works are the proof of genuine salvation, most certainly. A thought like this begs a question: Is it possible for a person to have the "good" works without having the salvation that causes them to occur? As a group, read Matthew 7:21-27. The reality of what Jesus says, particularly in verses 21-23, is the big, red, hard to swallow horse pill. Discuss verses 21-23 and save the discussion of verses 24-27 for a few moments. Again, I ask, is it possible for a person to have the "good" works without having the salvation that causes them to occur?

Group Question #2

"Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness." Church folks who handle the Scriptures carefully and reverently can't help but have a subconscious reaction to Christ's words here. "Am I that person? Have I fooled myself? Have I fooled everyone else? Am I the real deal? A real Christian?" Friend, I get it. I've been there before, myself. If I'm honest, I'll be there again in the future, probably more than once more. That's the reality of living in this world as a fallen person, even if you are saved. Unsaved people CAN do good things. But, they do those good things for all the wrong reasons. If our motives for doing good things are bad, that makes the deed itself bad. Jesus' words from Matthew 7 prove that fact categorically. As a group, give 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 a read. A right heart motive for doing good things sure seems to be built upon the foundation of "love", doesn't it? How can we examine where our motives to do good come from? Does it come from love for God? Or love of self? I don't know that a more important question has ever been asked!

Group Question #3

Lets end our time together by reading, as a group, 1 John 5:2-3. In the final analysis, genuine Christian love really is the proof of salvation. Love for God is the starting point, the beginning of a right heart motive for doing good things. Good done from this bedrock pleases God. As a group, read Matthew 7:24-27 again. You see, it isn't the "working" that saved the man who built his house on the rock. It's the rock he built it upon. Dear friends, it is the righteousness of CHRIST that saves you and NOT your own good deeds. But, good deeds rising from right heart motives are the side effects of having one's hope built on the firm foundation of Christ's righteousness. We need to hang our hats on Him! Love for God manifests itself in obedience to His law. There's no way around that. That means what God calls sin you will call sin as well. That means what God commands you to do or not do you will genuinely desire to either do or not do those things. You'll struggle, you make a real effort, to live as God would have you live. THAT is love for God. That is genuine salvation! In light of our understanding that true salvation is rooted in Christ's righteousness and not our own deeds, how can we daily examine and ensure that our actions and obedience stem from a genuine love for God rather than a desire for self-justification? How does this understanding change the way we view our struggles and efforts to live according to God's will?