

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth One Verse at a Time*

Unmasking Christmas Hypocrites

Scripture: Matthew 7:21-27

Code: 80-177

There's so many things that can be said. I was talking to a pastor this week and he said, "You know, I've been in my church for many years." He's been in his church as long as I've been in this church, nearly 30 years. And he said, "Do you have any...do you have any new ideas for a Christmas sermon, since I've preached so many through the years." We got to talking about it. There are so many, many ways to approach this Christmas season, so many perspectives to bring to bear upon it. It's never been difficult for me to sort of find a way to approach the message. It's always been difficult for me to decide which of the many ways I can think of to use.

When you think about Christmas, it's a time of fun, it's a time of joy, it's a time of focus on the family, it's a time for sentiment, it's a time for memories, nostalgia. It's a time for sharing love. It's a time for family. It's a time for home. It's a time for good food and lots of it. It's a time for children, especially in some cases, like ours, it's a time for grandchildren. It's just a...it's a wonderful time and it brings so many rich, rich things into our lives and it's flooded with so many memories that it's enriched in a multiplied sense.

Christmas, however, in spite of all the pluses, in spite of all the good elements of Christmas, it has a way in our culture of significantly surfacing hypocrisy. I'll never cease to be amazed at how many people sing Christmas carols. Some of them are secular, worldly entertainers and some of them are just plain folks who just join in with everybody else and sing Christmas carols. It becomes for me a somewhat disturbing thing because I, in all honesty, see it as a kind of profaning of the Lord. Christmas is, in fact, a kind of profanity for some people. It's a kind of taking the Lord's name in vain. That's what I mean by that. It's a form of hypocrisy, a form of profanity. If not, even a form of blasphemy to pay some kind of superficial homage to Christ which in reality is empty. That is, in fact, taking the Lord's name in vain. And in some ways, the profanity of the sanctuary is more heinous than the profanity of the street. This holiday is so filled with genuine worship and true homage from those of us who genuinely love and serve Jesus Christ, but for others it's really an invitation to hypocrisy. They sing the carols. They get sentimental about the birth of Christ. They look at a myriad of Christmas cards of the manger scene and hear all of the lyrics that are typically the occupants of the inside page about, "Unto us a Savior is born." They might even attend church. In fact, some of you are even here today. But your deference to Christ, your interest in Christ is seasonal, it's empty and this is tragic. And I'm always concerned about this particular tragedy because I think our Lord is concerned about it as well, that the church is occupied by people who don't know Christ, that God is

given some hypocritical and superficial praise but not from the heart.

Jesus addressed this issue numerous times when He called for true disciples who really, truly, genuinely wanted to follow Him no matter what the cost and if need be were willing to take up a cross and follow Him. When He talked about what it was going to mean if you went into the world and preached the gospel, how you would run into severe hostility and persecution if you endeavored to lead the Christian life. And He was again trying to call people to a true commitment. He told a story about some virgins who were waiting for a wedding to start and the bridegroom was coming to receive his bride and when he arrived to take his bride, the celebration would come and they were ready with the exception that they didn't have any oil in their lamps and when the bridegroom came, they were not admitted to the chamber because they didn't have the oil in their lamps and they were shut out. And these were people who were religious. Jesus was portraying them in that way and they were in their own minds appropriately prepared for the wedding and they were to be attendants at this wedding. They were to participate in this great event that they were shut out because they were empty. He told another story about some servants who were given tremendous opportunity. Some of them used it and some of them wasted it. And those that wasted it were thrown into outer darkness where there was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus addressed this issue of profanity in the sanctuary. He addressed this issue of blasphemy, as it were, in the church. He addressed this issue of hypocrisy numerous times, but none more potently than in the seventh chapter of Matthew. And I would invite you to turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter 7. This really is a message that must be preached at a time like this because this is a time of all times to come to grips with our true spiritual condition and a genuine character of our interest in Jesus Christ. It's a time to see if ours is but a sentimental interest or a self-serving interest, a superficial interest, or whether in fact we are offering to Christ a true heart.

Matthew 7:21, these penetrating and unforgettable words of Jesus, "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. 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?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them, or does them, they 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 that 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 upon 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 that house and it fell and great was its fall."

This is a powerful passage, to put it mildly. And the message basically contained in this passage is the tragedy of self-deception, of thinking that all is well between you and God when in fact it is not, of finding out that you will not be in heaven but rather you will experience terrible destruction. That's the message. And it's basically addressed at people who are to some degree religious people. In fact, this whole sermon is focused at Jewish religious leaders who have an outward form of religion without the heart, who are hypocrites, who are profaning His name, who are really blaspheming in the name of religion because of their superficiality. They pray prayers but they're hypocritically and superficial. They fast but their fasting is so that they might look religious. They offer gifts but their gifts are nothing more than a paraded facade of piety. Their hearts do not belong to God and it is that which Jesus confronts.

Now in the passage that I just read to you, the warning of our Lord is against two possibilities. First, the possibility of mere verbal profession, verses 21 to 23. And secondly, the possibility of mere intellectual knowledge. What you say and what you know are not the issues. What is the issue? What you do. He who does the will of My Father who is in heaven, verse 21. Verse 24, "He who acts upon these words of Mine." The issue here is not what you say and not what you know, but how you live. Both paragraphs really deal with the same issue but one looks at it from the side of verbal profession, and the other from head knowledge. So we could split it into two subjects and say Jesus is addressing empty words and empty hearts. And there are multitudes of such self-deceived people today for whom this is one of many, many warnings in the Bible.

Now what is it that causes people to be self-deceived? How is it that people can think they're going to heaven and think that they have been serving the Lord and lay claim to saying, "Lord, Lord, we've done all this in Your name?" How is it that people can build this edifice, this house, as it were, of religious activity and belief and be self-deceived? How is it that people can mess the reality of their spiritual condition?

Well there are a number of ways. Number one, they can have a false assurance based on the past. There are many people who have a false confidence that they're saved because of some past event. It may have been a baptism, it may have been a prayer they prayed at the conclusion of a sermon they heard. It may have been a gesture of lifting up the hand or walking down an aisle to a response to the pleadings of the preacher. But making a decision, praying a prayer, going through a baptism, or a catechism or a confirmation or anything else provides a false assurance because those externals in themselves do not save. Many people in and around the Christian church look back to such events as evidence of their genuine relationship to the living God and to Christ. But they're wrong, so they live with false assurance.

Secondly, they are lulled into deception because they are unwilling to do self-examination. They're just not willing to look deeply and honestly into their own hearts. And if you approach them about doing that, they're offended by it. They're so used to doing what they do the way they do it, they're so

used to grace. God hasn't destroyed them yet, God hasn't poured out great judgment on them yet. They haven't had to deal with severe consequence to their sin, everything seems to be fine. After all they have an interest in the church and an interest in Christ and they believe in Him. They're so used to grace that they become comfortable with their sin and they're not about to do a real honest self-examination. And when you call them to it, they're threatened by it.

Thirdly, people are lulled into the deception because they become content with religious activity. They think that because they have regular or occasional involvement in the life of the church, that that makes the point well enough. Well it might make it to men, but it doesn't make it to God. Having a false assurance based upon some past act, being so used to grace that you get comfortable with the pattern of your acceptable sin that you're unwilling to do self-examination, being content with your church activity and your beliefs in certain aspects of Christian faith are what lull people into deception.

And there's one final one I would suggest. Many people live along with these other things in a sort of fair exchange mentality that says, "Well my good certainly outweighs my bad. And on the basis of that, I think I'm okay."

All of those are the things that lull people into this deception. How can you spot these people? How can you identify them? Well it's not easy. In fact, it's difficult and that's why Jesus said that the tares, that's the false, can always be told from the weak, or determined to be distinct from the weak by anything visible. And that's why in many cases we have to wait until the Lord does the judgment.

But there are some things to look for, some things that I think characterize self-deceit. First of all, they tend to be selfish. In other words, the focus of their life is all around their life. They want to live their life the way they want to live their life and wherever God fits in, or wherever the church fits in, or wherever being involved in some kind of service to the Lord fits in, that's fine, but it never becomes the dominating issue of their life. They're not consumed with love for Christ, they're not consumed with matters of His Kingdom, they're not seeking first the things that are above and letting the rest be added. Their affections are not on the heavenly things. But rather, they're very interested in self-indulgence. Much more interested in self-indulgence than worship. In fact, they tend to be very poor in worship. They tend in many cases to have absolutely very little, if any, regard for worship because they're very much involved in self-indulgence. And their activities in the church tend to be to service them in some way with the necessary experience or blessing or feelings or protection or help or whatever. Much more concerned with self-serving byproducts of the faith than with the author of the faith who is the Lord Jesus Christ. Self-deceit people tend to be self-focused people.

Furthermore, they tend to be committed to the church or to a Sunday-school class or a denomination or a group of people more than the Word of God. They're not pursuing truth, that's not the passion of their heart. They're not hungry for God's Word. They're not desiring it more than their necessary

food...as Job put it. Their involvement tends to be sort of superficial and somewhat social and a little bit sort of necessary and required. But they're not driven by a passion for God and Christ and the Kingdom and the passion for the Word of the living God.

They tend also to be over-indulgent in the name of grace. They explain their lack of penitence for their sin, they explain their indifference to being repentant by saying, "We live in grace, God is gracious." Truthfully they lack penitence for their sin. As I said earlier, they become comfortable with their sin. They aren't broken. They don't have a broken and a contrite spirit. They're not deeply concerned over their sin because it dishonors the Lord they love so profoundly. And so they tend to be typically over-indulgent in the name of grace. They can throw grace around and they can throw the Christian freedom issues around as a way of explaining away the lack of brokenness over their sin.

These people also can be noted because they have no hunger for holiness. They're not like the deer that pants after the waterbrook, as the psalmist said, so his heart pants after thee, O God. They don't have a Beatitude Attitude where they're poor in spirit, where they're meek and broken and crushed and hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Those are all indicators of self-deceived people who are banking on some past event, who are unwilling to do self-examination, who are content with their external activity and take a look at their lives and think they're sort of Christian good outweighs the bad. These are the people who need to hear what this passage says. It's a time for us to really search our own hearts.

Let's look, first of all, at the first few verses, the folly of empty words...the folly of empty words. 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." Immediately Jesus says the dividing line is between the sayers and the doers. The dividing line is between the sayers and the doers. It really doesn't matter what you say, that's not the issue. It's what you are. And not what you are superficially, but do you from the heart do the will of God, and the will of God, very simply, is revealed here. Do you practice sin or do you practice righteousness?...to borrow the words of John. That's the issue. There are those who say to Me, "Lord, Lord," and there are those then who do the will of My Father. And the only thing God accepts is a righteous life which is the product of transforming grace through salvation producing good works, Ephesians 2:10, "We're created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." We are known by our fruit. Faith without those good works is dead. Verbal profession is necessary, yes...Romans 10:9 and 10 tells us very simply, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved for with the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." There must be confession but not apart from heart belief. Just the profession can't stand alone. And that's what you see in verse 21. People who come and say, "Lord, Lord," and they make this great profession and it's a very respectful and polite way in

which they will address the Lord... "Lord," that's a very polite, respectful way to address someone, it's even a orthodox and fundamental thing to say Lord because that defines Jesus as God. So they were polite and respectful and orthodox and fundamental and even acknowledging that Jesus bore a divine title and therefore a divine identity. And in the repetition of "Lord, Lord," you see some passion and you see some zeal and you see some fervor. And then three times in verse 22 they say, "In Your name...in Your name...in Your name. Well we've been doing everything for You. You're our Lord. We respect You. We honor You. We acknowledge who You are and we have a fervor and a zeal and a devotion to You so that everything we do we do for You."

Quite amazing. It is to them that He has to say in verse 23, "I never knew you, depart from Me who practice lawlessness." It doesn't matter what you say. Only matters what you are. They made some amazing claims to prophesying, exorcism, miracles. Obviously if the Lord didn't know them, they were not miracles by His power. They could have been satanic counterfeits or they may well have been just outright fabrications. There are lots of people today who think they're prophesying, who think they're exorcizing demons and think they're doing miracles and they are doing none of them. It's nothing but their imagination or some satanic counterfeit.

But they thought they were doing it in the name of Jesus and they must have had a measure of success and response. They made their profession in verses 21 and 22 and Jesus makes His in verse 23. In the Greek He says, "I don't know you now and I never have. I do not know you now and I never have." Not for a single moment. It wasn't that they had something and lost it, they never had it. "I have never known you, I don't know you now, you have always worked lawlessness." That's what that last phrase means. You have never changed. You have had an unbroken pattern of rebellion against My Word. That's the issue. It's what you do with the Word of God that is the defining issue. The Word of God calls upon you to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. The Word of God calls on you to love the Lord Jesus Christ, to repent of your sin and embrace Him as your Savior who died in your place, to acknowledge Him as your Lord and to obey Him. The Word calls on you to walk in the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit, to love things that are heavenly. If that is not the direction of your life, if that is not the passion of your heart, if you are not committed to fulfilling all that Scripture says, even though you fail miserably, if that's not the goal of your life to be obedient to the Word of God, then Jesus says, "I don't know you...I don't know you." And your profession is a kind of profanity.

Jeff O'Hara wrote, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say? You call Me the Way and walk Me not. You call Me the Life and live Me not. You call Me Master and obey Me not. If I condemn you, blame Me not. You call Me bread and eat Me not, you call Me truth and believe Me not. You call Me Lord and serve Me not. If I condemn you, blame Me not." Verbal profession without obedience is profanity...hypocrisy. And James 1:22, James said, "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

I guess I worry at a time like this at Christmas season that we start to feel emotional and sentimental thoughts about the birth of Christ and that can add to our self-deception. The issue is a life devoted to the will of God. Even David who failed so many times could cry from the depths of his heart, "Teach me to do Thy will, O God." That's the heart of a true Christian. Where that is the heart, the profession is true worship. Verbal profession is self-deception if it's not matched a life that longs to obey God's will. God's will is that you be saved through faith in Christ. God's will is that you be Spirit-filled, be not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is. What is it? Be filled with the Spirit. God's will is that you be sanctified, pure. He's expressed that in Scripture. And many, many other things. And if the longing of your heart is to do that and that's the drive and passion of your soul, that's evidence of regeneration. And if that's not there, all the superficiality is a form of hypocrisy.

Secondly, from the folly of empty words to the folly of empty hearts. And in verses 24 to 27 Jesus gives us an illustration. He draws a picture and it's a picture about building. "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them, or does them, 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 that house and yet it didn't fall for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do 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 that house and it fell and great was its fall." Very simple story...two men building two houses, a flood comes, one stands, one falls.

What is Jesus talking about? Well He's clearly defining the spiritual truth which is being illustrated by His story, "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them," is compared to, "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and doesn't act upon them." So you have here an illustration of obedience over against disobedience. On the one hand, obedience which is obeying the Law of God, on the other hand, lawlessness or rebellion, or indifference. But you'll notice that both of these build houses and the house represents religious activity, it represents a religious life. In our terms it represents being involved in the Christian community, being a part of the church. You're in there, your way of life is in the church, your home is in the church, you're putting up your edifice right there with all the rest. In fact, there are some interesting similarities. If you just notice right away, you see that both of these individuals build a house. And house represents life, activity. Everything surrounds that house. All of life surrounds the house, particularly in the ancient world, before modern means of travel. Everything is centered in the house. And so here is a man's life being built metaphorically in the house and the idea is the main feature is religious life...this is his religious house, he's putting up his religious life. He's got all of the building materials and he's putting it all together and he's building a life of religious involvement to one degree or another.

Secondly, they both built in the same place. In the story they built in the same place because the same flood hit both houses. So the idea is this isn't some person who has his own religion and he spun off and he's in a corner somewhere. No, he's right in the main stream, he's right in the church, maybe right in our church right here and he's just building his old spiritual house, his religious house, just along everybody else's. And they kind of look the same to us. In fact, that would be the third point, they apparently built it the same way because Jesus didn't identify any distinguishing features...same enterprise, same location, same basic external building materials...be at the church, do certain things, sing certain songs, go through certain ceremonies or rituals, be involved in certain activities. But there is a huge difference in these two houses. And it is at the most crucial point because you will notice that He says, "The wise man," in verse 24, "had a foundation of rock." He uses the word *petra* which means a rock bed, not just a stone, *petras*, not just a boulder. But He built this thing on rock bed. To put it in today's vernacular, this house had...had deep, deep footings of solid rebar(?) concrete and a thick concrete foundation. But verse 26 says, "The foolish man built his house upon the sand." Can you imagine the guy going down to the beach and building his house on the sand? Pretty foolish and certainly the people who heard Him tell the story would understand the folly of that. They were used to sand, it surrounded them. It was all across the coast of Israel from Jerusalem down the hill to the southern part of the Jordan valley, you had nothing but a desert and east of that was nothing but desert. They were used to sand.

They were also used to flash floods in Israel, still are. There are many conditions there that are very similar to California. Many mountains and when rain comes, it comes racing down mountains in many cases that have been stripped of vegetation and creates tremendous water movements down canyons and places like we're familiar with here, they would be very familiar with it. The topography of Israel is almost identical to Southern California. We can identify with that. We...we when the rain comes always watch on the news, the houses going down the hills. A wise man makes sure he's got a deep rock bed to build on, a fool builds on shifting ground.

He is rebuking here these Pharisees and these Jewish religionists and any religious person who just puts up the edifice without the foundation. No regard for true spirituality, no real love for God, no real devotion to Christ, no purity of heart, no real integrity in behavior, no longing and passion to obey the Word of the living God, they prayed, you know, they fasted, they gave but they did it all for public show to enhance their reputation among men and to give them more leverage to get men to do whatever they wanted them to do for their own sakes. They had a religion of externals. They had a house, all right, pretty impressive, but on sand. You know, they brought their bodies to the house of prayer, but they didn't bring their souls. They worship with their mouths but not in spirit and in truth. The wise man builds on rock.

And what is the rock here? Well it could be the rock is God. You certainly can make a case in the Bible for our God being called a rock, Deuteronomy 32, Psalm 18, Psalm 89. Christ is even called a rock, Isaiah 28:16, 1 Peter 2:6, Romans 9:33. But the rock here really is the Word of God, these sayings of Mine. It's the person who builds his house on the Word, on obedience to the Word, like in Acts 20, it is the Word that becomes the foundation for building your life. It was on the confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," that He said He would build His church. It's the truth of God that is the rock bed foundation. Knowing the Word, believing the Word, obeying the Word. The foundation then is obedience to the Word. And that's the only...that's the only validator, the only foundation of true salvation, the only one. Salvation is recognizing sin and the Savior, turning from sin, embracing the Savior and then coming to realize that the divine standard by which you were condemned, the Law of God, the divine standard by which you were condemned now becomes the divine standard by which you are enabled to live your life to the glory of God. When a person has a foundation, it means they pursue righteousness. It means that they long to obey the Word of God. This is building on the rock.

As you look at these houses, too, there were some differences in the way they were built. And that takes us to the foundation issue. One built the easy way, the other built the hard way. It is not easy to build a house on rock, to penetrate the rock, to dig down deep into the rock to make a strong foundation, but that's what the wise man did. The fool took the easy way, built on sand. Nothing to prepare, just kind of smooth it out, go ahead and build. Like going in the wide gate and walking on the wide way that leads to destruction earlier in this chapter.

Have you ever noticed these people are in a hurry? They want the quick fix. They want a short cut. They want a quick route to peace in their own heart, solve all their problems, fix up their life. Somebody gives them a quick superficial treatment of the gospel and they quote/unquote accept Jesus. It's a short fast approach. Keep it moving, no time for soul conviction, no time for preaching the law, no time for grappling the depth of sin and depravity, no time for really digging down and finding out how corrupt and unworthy we are. No time for really measuring our life against the Law of God to see how far short we fall. Just jump on the Jesus bandwagon. They're superficial. They name Jesus but it's shifting sand and if you don't get there instant upper from Jesus, they collapse and look for another sandy place to build another house. No deep plowing, no real hard work, no foundation, no brokenness of heart. A.W. Pink said, "If I had never mourned over my waywardness, I have no solid ground for rejoicing." Lack of depth, lack of sincerity, lack of passion, lack of devout love of God, lack of sincere dealing with one's sin, those are superficialities that tend to mark the person who doesn't dig deep.

On the other hand, the wise man, according to Luke 6:47 and 48, Luke records the same story, he says, "The wise man dug deep." He went deep into the rock of the Word of God. He penetrated down into it so as to understand it. He was not in a hurry. He was, in Luke 14:28 said, counting the

cost. You know, there are some who say they are saved before they have any sense of what it means to be lost. This is no light confession, the wise man dug down deep. He didn't rush into a profession and then later rush out of it again. He gave it maximum effort. He was not disdainful of the labor and travail of soul to go into the truth of the Word of God and really see it and really search your own heart. He counted the cost. He exposed himself to the truth. He saw his sin. He understood the gospel. He dug deep. He was emptied of self-righteousness. He said goodbye to self-sufficiency. He knew he had nothing to commend himself, not one commendable idea let alone act. He was overwhelmed with his sin. He made the maximum effort in the Lord's strength to place the Word in his heart, to understand the gospel, he embraced it by faith and he cried out to God to forgive him for his sin. He expressed a genuine love relationship toward Jesus Christ, not some routine activity. He didn't build his salvation on visions or experiences or personal needs. But he was a Beatitude person, broken over his own sin, contrite and he sought salvation and the forgiveness of sin. And since it has come to him, he can do nothing but thank and praise his God. That's the wise man, that's the truly saved.

And the question is, where are you? This Christmas season is your interest in Christ a profanity or a true praise? Is the character of your life obedience to the Word of God? Is that your longing and desire? And even though you fall short, that's your pursuit? Or are you respectful of Christ and maybe even orthodox about Him and active in some kind of religious activity and involved in the church and building your religious life adjacent to and in proximity with everybody else in the church, only to have it smashed in judgment? And the test will come, believe me, it will come. We will all face the judgment of God. No one is going to be able to escape that...no one. Spurgeon wrote, "Whether your religion be true or false, it will be tried. Whether it be chaff or wheat, the fan of the great winnower will surely be brought into operation upon all the lives on the threshing floor. If you have dealings with God, you have to do with a consuming fire, whether you be real or falsely a Christian, if you come near to Christ He will try you as silver is tried. Judgment must begin at the house of God and if you dare to come into the house of God, judgment will begin with you. And when the flood comes, the sweeping devastating flood of judgment, the true believer is unharmed. And the false and self-deceived is swept away into an eternal judgment."

It's time, I think, to check our own hearts and do some self-examination. And remember the promise of the hymn writer, "The soul that on Jesus doth lean for repose, I will not...I will not desert to His foes. That soul though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

I hope you can sing and I'll rewrite the song a little bit. "My house is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the strongest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I build, all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand."

Father, we close this wonderful morning together, we are reminded again of the necessity of heart examination. Let us look into our hearts and ask the question, "Is it my desire to do what pleases You? Is that my longing? Am I one of those who does the will of My Father who is in heaven?" And if the answer is yes, may we rejoice in Your grace and if the answer is no, may you uncover that self-deception. There should be no comfort for those marked by empty words and empty hearts who profess to know You and be in the Kingdom but do not and are not. Father, work in every heart to produce a true worshiper of the Christ. May all our adoration not be profanity but genuine praise. To the glory of Christ we offer this prayer. Amen.

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