

A BIBLE STUDY IN MATTHEW 7

D O N G E R R I T Y

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By Don E. Gerrity

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BIBLES CITED...

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The Gospel Of Grace Through Christ Crucified

“For by GRACE are ye saved THROUGH FAITH; and that NOT of yourselves: it is the GIFT of God: NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV)

A large majority of pulpits are teaching a false gospel that neither Jesus nor Paul taught which is the false gospel of *'works for salvation'*. This false doctrine mixes God's Grace with our own human efforts to either be saved, or remain saved. It seems to be a great confusion in the Christian community and is hurting our witness for salvation in Christ.

The real problem here is that such teachings want to mix the Old Covenant with the New Covenant but the reality by Scripture is that the New Covenant REPLACED the Old Covenant! The truth is that the Law of Moses is obsolete, growing old and is ready to vanish (Hebrews 8:13). In fact, Apostle Paul goes on to say this about following the Law for being or maintaining salvation,

“Knowing that a man is NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, BUT BY THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED. “ (Galatians 2:16 KJV)

Ignoring that the Bible was written for different dispensations, and that not all Scripture is directed to us living in our current dispensation, has caused this mixing. Yes, all the Bible is for us and for our learning. Absolutely. It is all God's Word. But when reading Scripture we need to know what dispensation is being addressed. The vast majority of Christian religious organizations and denominations are not teaching the Biblical ***Gospel of Grace*** that Apostle Paul taught. Most of these organizations teach the false gospel of works based salvation (gaining or maintaining righteousness by *our works*).

Salvation and Justification with God is not based on our works in any manner and if members of these organizations would read their Bible, to see if the teachings of their pulpit lines up, they will quickly come to the truth. Matthew 7 is one of the passages

where many pulpits and believers are actually teaching the opposite of the true meaning because they are not looking closely at the context of who is being addressed, and who is Jesus talking about. Many are actually teaching this passage is about a believer who loses salvation which is *completely wrong*. This false teaching is running rampant in the Christian community and this short study will show the truth by the Scripture itself in Matthew 7.

I hope this study commentary will bless you and empower you to boldly show others how false it is to believe that Matthew 7 is Jesus stating a believer can lose their salvation.

- Don Gerrity

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Judge Not, That Ye Be Judged

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matthew 7:1-2 KJV)

This is how Mathew 7 starts and it is important that we see the truth of this. Matthew 7 is mostly all about people who claim they are saved believers, but they are not. This runs through the entire chapter as we will see by context. These first couple of verses are showing people who think they are some how better than others who have more sins, or worse sins, than they have. The truth is we all have sin and it only takes one sin to be disqualified as righteous.

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” (James 2:10 KJV)

The real point is looking at ourselves truthfully and comparing ourselves with God; not our neighbours. What does God think about us? What does God think about you and me? That is what really matters isn't it? We need to step back from this kind of thinking about others around us because doing so is actually very hypocritical and it is a way to ignore our own short comings and our own sins.

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (Isaiah 64:6 KJV)

This is how God sees you and me before we are saved by belief on Christ. All the very best good deeds we do, are as filthy rags to God. But how can doing good works be seen as bad by God? Well, this scripture does not actually state such. Let's use an analogy about man's best friend; a dog. A dog goes outside knowing that if he rolls around in the mud his owners will not be happy when he tries to enter the home again.

Who wants all that mud in our homes, ruining the carpets and furniture, right? Well, it simply is in a dog's *nature* to roll in the mud. The dog just cannot help himself! And so, there he goes rolling in the mud. Now, the dog has learned that his owners are not going to be pleased with what he just did, regardless. So on the way home, he grabs the newspaper on the lawn in his mouth to bring it to his owner and *try to appease him*. Now will this act erase all the mud on his fur coat? NO. The owner just sees a dirty muddy dog with a newspaper, which is also now also tainted by his wrong doing of rolling in the mud.

This is how God sees every human before they accept the gift of salvation through Christ. All our righteous acts and good deeds cannot erase the huge sin debt carried. Does that mean that God does not love us? Not at all. That owner still loves that dirty old dog! But the only way to allow him in the house is that the dog must be cleaned. With so much mud, the dog cannot clean it all off by himself. So the owner grabs a hose and washes the dog clean. This is what God did for us by sending His only begotten Son, Jesus, the Christ. It is not our own works and good deeds that save us, nor keep us saved. It is the finished work of Christ and believing in HIS work that cleans us and saves us. Besides that, Apostle Paul is clear that the wages of sin is NOT GOOD WORKS,

"For the wages of sin IS DEATH; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. " (Romans 6:23 KJV)

The New Testament was written in the Greek language. The word '*death*' in this verse in the Greek is '*thanatos*' and it is defined as '*to die, to be dead*' and is used here as a Metaphor for *eternal spiritual death*, not just bodily death. So good works will not pay the penalty for our sins in God's economy. The Bible is clear that a blood sacrifice is required because sin is such a horrendous offence to our Holy God (Leviticus 17:11). God cannot allow sin and it's effects into Heaven. Heaven is a perfect place for perfect people and we are all disqualified if we are relying in ourselves and our good deeds and works.

In Matthew 7, it is clear that this group of people Jesus is talking about are relying on their own good works and deeds for Salvation *which will not save them* but may give them a false sense of hope for salvation and being righteous before God. This is why they are looking at others and condemning their sins. This is what a *false works for salvation gospel* message achieves. Judging others and ignoring our own filthiness in

committing sin! We are not to judge others in condemnation as believers. That is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” (Matthew 7:3-6 KJV)

In verses 3 to 6, Jesus is passing judgment on followers of Christ who are also looking down on others because of their sins, while believers also have sins they are contending with. You know believers also have a huge amount of sins they have committed in life, just as an unbeliever. That goes for you and I as well. The difference is that the sins of the whole world were paid for by Christ (1 John 2:2). For believers today, we have all been forgiven all our sins BY BELIEF on Christ crucified (1 John 2:2, John 3:14-18) and His righteousness was placed to our account by imputation of God (2 Cor. 5:17-21). It is ONLY the finished work of Christ that saves believers from the penalty for sins which is eternal death (Romans 6:23).

We see many believers doing this to unbelievers today in a rampant fashion. They really believe that by bashing unbelievers because of THEIR sins, as if saved believers are so much better than they regarding sins, that God will somehow commend them for it. Well, here in Matthew 7, Jesus says the opposite of this! *Jesus is telling them that it is very wrong.*

First, thinking that doing so will make an unbeliever change their ways is ridiculous. Only once the Holy Spirit INDWELLS a person is that even possible. And the truth is, judging others really hurts the witness of believers to the lost because doing so makes all believers *look like hypocrites!* And isn't it so clear when Jesus is calling such believers hypocrites? Passing severe judgment and criticism on an unbeliever who is committing a sin and thinking that beating them over the head about their sin will bring them to Christ? It will not work and will hurt the witness of the truth of the Gospel instead.

THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WARNING AND CONDEMNING

Warning someone that they need forgiveness and that Christ can help them overcome sin is one thing. Talking down to an unbeliever about their sins as if you have none, is condemning and not a good thing to do. That is called Pride. **Do not do that! God frowns on that!** We are not to be haughty to others as saved believers. God hates a haughty spirit!

*"Pride goeth before destruction, and **an haughty spirit before a fall.** "*
(Proverbs 16:18 KJV)

*"And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon **the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.**"* (2 Samuel 22:28 KJV)

Instead, preach the Gospel. Tell others who are not saved, how to get saved and why Jesus came and died on that cross. To change us at our very core nature, to change our Spirit and become born again by belief on Christ where we can receive a NEW creation in our Spirit, which is the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:17-21). Christ is the judge and not us believers! In Romans 2:4 we see the true way to lead others to Christ,

*"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that **the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**"* (Romans 2:4 KJV)

It is the '*goodness of God*' that leads people to Salvation and that is all about the love of God. As believers we need to be tender hearted to the lost in love. Jesus taught that we should "love our enemies" right? Jesus told Nicodemus,

*"For God sent **NOT his Son into the world to condemn the world;** but that the world through him might be saved. "* (John 3:17 KJV)

So I ask you, if God did not send Jesus to condemn the world, then *why should believers be doing that to other people?* We definitely should not be doing that. Doing so makes us a hypocrite you see? And if we own up to the fact that we have sins, we

can win others to Christ as well. Jesus again states this clearly saying,

*“A new commandment I give unto you, **That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.** By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:34-35 KJV)*

THE REAL WAY OF SALVATION

In Matthew 7, Jesus now explains the REAL WAY of Salvation which is not about our outward self righteous works and deeds, nor judging each other, but by belief on Christ alone. This is a very powerful message of HOPE Jesus is giving in these verses! Let's unpack this great hope:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 7: 7-12 KJV)

First, we need to ask God for Salvation, knowing we are sinners and unable to save ourselves by our works and deeds. If you seek God with this correct truth and attitude, you will not be acknowledging and judging the sins of others but will instead have already acknowledged your own sin debt against our Holy God. And if you seek God in this way, you WILL find the truth! And when you do, and you knock on God's door and ask Him for mercy to forgive you and save you, God will OPEN THAT DOOR my brothers and sisters! ***What a hope!***

Jesus goes on and mentions how much more God will give these who seek Him in this manner good GIFTS. Interesting word, GIFT! In Ephesians 2:8-9, we see that Salvation is not about ourselves nor our works and good deeds but it is a GRACE GIFT from God. And as a GIFT, it can be received or rejected. **A GIFT is not earned.** We receive the gift by BELIEF on Christ as Jesus said Himself in John 3:14-18.

Jesus also mentions a '*stone*' and a '*fish*'. A stone has no life. A fish is alive. But Jesus also mentions a '*serpent*'. What could Jesus be talking about here? Is there something more to the usage of these words stone, fish, and serpent?

- **STONE: A stone is DEAD.** It has no life at all. So if we ask God for forgiveness and to show us how to obtain salvation, will God give us our deserved DEATH instead? God is love and He loves you more than any being existing, even while you are drenched in sin! This is the very reason Christ came and died on the cross shedding His most precious blood to save us.
- **FISH: The Fish is Jesus.** It has LIFE and gives life to all who believe on and ask for salvation of Christ. Ever see a bumper sticker of a fish on a car? This actually became a symbol used by early day believers and is still in use by some today.
- **SERPENT: This is an easy one right?** It is talking about satan and what he is falsely deceiving unbelievers with. He is all about *works and good deeds* and spreading lies so the truth will not be seen. The devil is "*the accuser of our brethren... before our God day and night.*" (Rev.12:10 KJV) . The Pharisee leaders were under this false lie. Their teaching was all about Law following in self righteousness. Jesus described them with some very strong words indeed. "*Ye SERPENT, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*" (Matthew 23:3 KJV) Believe me, the people listening to Jesus in Matthew 7 knew exactly what HE meant by serpent and WHO Jesus was talking about!

Jesus says clearly that believers should do unto others as they want done to them. Today we know this as the '*Golden Rule*' right? I mean, I was taught this in Elementary school without knowing anything about true Salvation by belief on Christ's work on the cross. And we see here that Jesus also mentions '*the Law and the Prophets*' and that is the entirety of the Old Testament. This *Golden Rule* applied in Old Testament times and also here in New Covenant times as well. Be truthful about who we really are as sinners (Isaiah 64:6) and act with respect to others from this truth. Jesus paid a high price for our salvation and forgiveness of our sins against God! In His great suffering and blood shed. What amazing love God has for us while we were His enemies even!

Just because we are saved by belief on Christ, does not mean we are somehow *better* than unbelievers who have sins. Not at all. We still have the Flesh in our minds we contend and fight with every day (Romans 7). Do not judge them with condemnation. Instead show them the love Christ has bestowed on us as believers. Only this love of God will lead a person to repentance and salvation. The Ten Commandments absolutely do have their part in helping a person come to salvation; to show them that they do in fact have sin. But it should go no further than that from a believer to an unbeliever. Show how much God loves them!

Jesus is telling us thus far that,

1. Unbelievers need to stop thinking to judge others in condemnation. This was what the Pharisee religious leaders were doing.
2. Believers should not be condemning unbelievers of their specific sins as if we are any better because we are saved. That is being a hypocrite.
3. The real way to be saved is acknowledging our OWN sins and asking God and seeking the truth and it is not about works, but asking for the GIFT of Salvation and receiving God's grace and unconditional love by belief on Christ and His once for all sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10), paying ALL the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).
4. Treat others as God treated us when we were still His enemies. While we were His enemies (Romans 5:10) He sent Jesus to die on that cross and save us! Apostle Paul to the Ephesians wrote, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED;)" (Ephesians 2:5 KJV)

The Truth About The Straight & Narrow Gate

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14 KJV)

Many believe that the WIDE meaning is the *bad works* of a person. And that NARROW must be the *good works of a person* because it is hard to maintain good works in the light that God is PERFECT in every way. But is that the truth of Matthew 7:13-14? Context matters and so if we look at other passages of Jesus, do we see that meaning conveyed for how to become RIGHTEOUS before God? The answer is a resounding **NO**. Jesus is clear that Salvation is by one thing and that is *changing our mind* (the Bible definition of the word REPENT) and BELIEF ON Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. Look at John 3 where Jesus told Nicodemus how a person becomes RIGHTEOUS. It is by being *born again* in the Spirit – *not by our works*. Jesus goes on to tell us how to be born again in The Spirit in verse 14-17 and it is all about BELIEF ON CHRIST with NOTHING ELSE MENTIONED. And then Jesus makes this very clear statement,

“He that BELIEVETH ON HIM is not condemned: but he that BELIEVETH NOT is condemned ALREADY, because he hath NOT BELIEVED in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18 KJV)

And when we look more into other words of Jesus we also see Him say,

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you REST. Take MY YOKE upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find REST unto your souls. For my YOKE IS EASY, and my burden IS LIGHT.” (Matthew 11:28-30 KJV)

A LIGHT YOKE? A LIGHT BURDEN?

If we are to believe that it is our good works that save us and keep us saved, how does that fit Jesus' words? The Jewish people in that day were under the religious leaders called the Pharisees and they gave the people a hard burden to keep themselves righteous by their deeds and good works and Law following. One of the punishments for failing, for example, was being stoned to death. Jesus states the opposite of this.

Given this is Jesus words as well, we need to look closer at Matthew 7:13-14 for proper context, because Jesus NEVER contradicts Himself, and in fact, Apostle Paul does not either. Apostle Paul states clearly that this cannot be about good works when he wrote,

*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that NOT OF YOURSELVES: **it is the GIFT of God: NOT OF WORKS**, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV)*

Just before Jesus' statement in Matthew 7, in verses 13 and 14, Jesus was clear that belief on HIM and seeking HIM is the way to be saved and not by works and good deeds. So what is the straight and narrow gate? It is JESUS CHRIST, not our self righteous efforts. Did not Jesus say this,

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6 KJV)

Do you realize that most , if not all, of the world's non-Christian religions teach *works for salvation*? And the reality is that all the false religions calling themselves Christians by their works and deeds are just as unsaved. That is what Jesus is warning them about in Matthew 7. That is what Apostle Paul warns about in Galatians 3 calling those believing in grace plus works '*foolish*' and warning in Galatians 5:4 that "*Christ is of none effect unto you*" believing wrongly this way.

We see that Jesus is focusing on false prophets who teach that it is a persons good works that saves them. Even if they use the name of Jesus, if they are relying on their works, they will stand guilty on their judgment day. In verse 22-23, these people relying on their *works for salvation*, never even mention that Christ paid for their sins.

Is Jesus Teaching The Loss Of A Believer's Salvation?

Okay, now we turn to the real meat of Matthew 7 and it is where many believers are reading and ignoring the previous context just shown. I have seen some teaching the words of Jesus in Matthew 7 to teach that,

1. That Matthew 7 shows that a believer can lose Salvation.
2. That a person with good fruit is saved and a person with bad fruit is not saved.

Both of these teachings are wrong by the very context found within Matthew 7. If you have been taught these, please stop telling others this as truth and I am showing you why in this study. It is the very reason for this study; to help empower you with the truth.

These two wrong teachings about Matthew 7 are running very rampant in Christian communities. Many pulpits are also stating these very wrong teachings about Matthew 7. We must watch the context very closely! Otherwise, as a believer you will be condemning others in harsh judgment, when Jesus has clearly taught against doing such in Matthew 7. Let's look closely at this passage of Scripture with proper context to see the true meaning of Jesus.

*"15 Beware of **FALSE PROPHETS**, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

*16 Ye shall know them **BY THEIR FRUITS**. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*

*17 Even so every **GOOD TREE** bringeth forth good fruit; but a **CORRUPT TREE** bringeth forth evil fruit.*

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

*20 Wherefore **BY THEIR FRUITS** ye shall know them.*

*21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth the WILL OF MY FATHER** which is in heaven.*

*22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have **WE not** prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done **many wonderful works**?*

*23 And then will I profess unto them, **I NEVER KNEW YOU**: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:15-23 KJV)*

This is a very power packed passage of truth to decipher and so let's do just that. The real context starts at verse 15. Jesus is talking about **False Prophets**. This is the context of this passage. They come to you as sheep, as Christians. They come with various verses of Scripture, all taken out of context by the way, to tell you it is your works that matter for salvation. They teach about Jesus and even use His name in their doctrines but it is false teaching.

It is these false prophets who are the verse 23, "*ye that work iniquity*". Jesus speaks about the false prophets, and what are they doing wrong? What is their iniquity anyway? They are thinking and telling others that it is *what they do* that qualifies them for salvation in Jesus. We need to take this very seriously! Jesus gives the Jews at that time (and us today) a stern warning here. In Matthew 7:22 Jesus makes it clear,

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have WE not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

*Do you See it? They are saying have not **WE**, and in thine name **WE, WE** have done many wonderful **WORKS**. **WE WE WE!** They rely on their own ability to please God and by doing such think they are saved.*

To them Jesus gives stern warning in verse 23 that on Judgment day for them (The Great White Throne Judgment of the unsaved),

*"And then will I profess unto THEM, I **NEVER KNEW YOU**: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:23 KJV)*

Notice that verse 23 does not say they were believers who lost salvation. Not at all. It says that Jesus NEVER KNEW THEM. This is definitely about those who think they are saved by their works. They are being judged and condemned to eternal separation from God at the future Great White Throne Judgment of unbelievers and in defending themselves, they will show nothing but self righteous pride. They will not even mention that Jesus paid for their sins. Instead, they will try and stand as righteous because of their works. They will say to Jesus, did we not do this? Did we not do that in your name? Etc. That my friends is the devil's BIGGEST LIE. Satan's biggest deception to the whole world is deceiving people into believing this. This is also what the Jewish Pharisee leaders taught; works of the Law to be saved. Jesus clearly brings this false teaching to light in Matthew 5 an 18, showing the extent of this wrong teaching.

What About The Fruit Inspecting?

*“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. **Ye shall know them by their fruits.** Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”*
(Matthew 7:15-20 KJV)

What about the fruit inspecting in this passage? Verse 15 is the context and it is all about **false prophets**. In verse 21-23 it is clear that Jesus is teaching that salvation and justification are not by good works. If salvation is not about works then what is verses 16-20 all about? **The fruits in this passage cannot be good works.** Otherwise, Jesus would be teaching in opposition to the verses coming after these. It is clear that in Matthew 7, it starts with a comparison of judging and condemning others with showing love and mercy as Christ has done for us. Jesus then tells them that *'narrow is the gate'*. Jesus is the narrow gate.

*“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:
no man cometh unto the Father, **but by me.**”*
(John 14:6 KJV)

The whole world is teachings salvation by good works and religious rituals. The Jewish people teach salvation by Law keeping. That is the *wide gate*. The *narrow gate* is believing on Christ alone as Messiah for our justification and righteousness.

Jesus' teachings are telling the Jewish people of that day, that good works of the Law will not save them in righteousness. He told them that HE IS the foretold Messiah who was to come and be the final payment for sins (read Hebrews 9 and 10). Loving others as God loved us are good works a believer should have but now Jesus is switching to talking about unbelieving **false prophets specifically** starting in Matthew 7, verse 15. Jesus is giving a stern warning of great importance and so we must have proper understanding and use the context properly.

GOOD TREES AND CORRUPT TREES

“Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” (Matthew 7:18 KJV)

CORRUPT TREES

An unbeliever has at their core being, as the root, a *Spirit of Adam*; having a sin nature at their very core. They sin because they have a sin nature at their core being. They know they have sinned against God. That is the truth. But they think that they can gain God's favor by their outward living in good works. They fail to realize that this is not the wages for our sins with God. In God's economy of righteousness, the wages for sin is not good works (Romans 6:23); it is eternal death. Failing to realize this truth, they remain lost in their debt of sins. To them it is all about external works and good deeds. They live in fear of God and death. And so, how do they live outwardly, in love or condemnation and judging of others? They condemn others as hypocrites and this is the corrupt fruit of an unbeliever. Their very core is a sin nature Spirit and so, they sin and then condemn others sinning as if they have more sins than themselves. Jesus showed this at the beginning of Matthew 7.

GOOD TREES

A saved believer in Christ is a person who instead realizes they are a sinner and that they cannot work off their sins with good deeds, turns to God and seeks Him for MERCY, just as Jesus states earlier in Matthew 7 as the right way to be saved. They believe Jesus is the foretold Messiah. Their tree root has been changed and made RIGHTEOUS in the Spirit. Being saved by God's grace they know God's love and how He gave His own begotten Son to save us by His death on the cross. The greatest act of love in all of history. Having received this GRACE, their Spirit inside was REBORN (John 3) and RECREATED (2 Cor. 5:17-21) and have become COMPLETE IN CHRIST (Colossians 2). With this new Spirit, they now work from their new inward Spirit (our tree root), outward into their lives with good works by God's love *through us*. Because of the love God shown us in saving us by Christ, we do not condemn others but eagerly want them to see the truth and be saved.

Jesus talks about two groups of people with an analogy of a tree. What a great analogy! Where does a branch's life come from? The sap, which comes from the ROOT

of a tree. Jesus is a believer's *Root; the indwelling Holy Spirit*. Believers are born again in the Spirit *not by works but by belief on Jesus as Messiah and Christ* (John 3:14-18), who came to pay for the sins of the whole world. This is what Jesus is saying about a good tree bringing forth '*good fruit*'. That is what Jesus means, in the proper context of this entire chapter, when He says,

"A GOOD TREE cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a CORRUPT TREE bring forth good fruit." (Matthew 7:18 KJV)

However, we cannot make this fruit as being our works. Remember, this whole passage is about **false prophets speaking** (starting at verse 15). What are the fruits here in Matthew 7 if they are not good works? Jesus said that these false prophets will be *known by their fruit*. These verses have confused many when not seen in the proper context of Matthew 7. Some believers today are mistaking these "fruits" with the "fruit bearing" of John 15 which is about being a born again disciple bearing good fruit. However, that is not the context here in Matthew 7. It simply cannot be so because Jesus had just previously said that the false prophets come in "*sheep's clothing*". That is, they look like they have good works and people would assume they must be a born again believer. And so there is no way to tell if they are true or false prophets by their good external works is there? Matt. 7 is about unbelievers. John 15 is about the saved.

Judging a person's salvation is not by externals. That is actually a completely *false belief*. Our works have nothing to do with how we are justified in salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9). These false prophets are teaching externals, even while using Jesus' name in doing so. They have missed the Gospel message entirely which is not about good works for righteousness but only faith and belief on Christ alone for righteousness. The fruit Jesus is speaking about in Matthew 7 is not about a person being saved or not, by good works. That is not the fruit Jesus is speaking about when we see the context correctly.

WHAT IS THE FRUIT IN MATTHEW 7 THEN?

The '*fruit*' in Matthew 7 is not a person's WORKS. It is the WORDS these false prophets are teaching! As soon as a teacher is preaching good works for salvation or good works required to remain saved, they are the false teachers being spoken of here by Jesus.

Why? Because they do not have the *'good tree root'* which is the born again Spirit of God, otherwise they would be preaching it as the paramount focus of salvation; Christ Crucified and risen. Jesus is telling us this is a sure way to know if someone is a false prophet. *You can tell by the fruit of their words and teachings.*

If someone is teaching that salvation is all about good works and they are relying on their works for righteousness or accepting God's grace but thinking they then need to work to remain saved; **they are a false prophet.** These two false teachings are actually unbelief in the sufficiency of Christ's blood atoning sacrifice for all sins (Hebrews 10). Either a person is BELIEVING and trusting in Christ and HIS FINISHED work, paying for all sins of the world (1 John 2:2) or they are in unbelief and are unsaved, relying on their own external works without being born again in the Spirit.

Take notice that I am not saying good works after salvation are wrong. Apostle Paul wrote that after salvation we are,

*"...his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus UNTO good works**, which God hath before ordained that **WE SHOULD** walk in them."*
(Ephesians 2:10 KJV)

Good works only come from our NEW SPIRIT and the indwelling Holy Spirit moving outward in our lives in love towards others (Ephesians 2:10). But the works never save anyone, nor keep us saved. Only belief on Christ saves (John 3:14-18, John 6:37-40, 1 Cor. 15:1-4, Eph. 2:8-9, Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30 etc). False prophets do not have the indwelling Holy Spirit. They are believing and teaching others that they are saved *by their good works and deeds*, yet they are not saved and not born again in the Spirit. We see many such false teachers today. It is the very *Doctrine of Demons* that Paul warned Timothy about for the Last Days in which we live. And this false *'works for salvation'* is rampant, even in Christian church pulpits. It is the Apostate church of the end times.

THE SCARIEST WORDS TO HEAR; "I NEVER KNEW YOU"

The false prophets are teaching *'many wonderful works'* for their righteousness before God. Yet, those believing this false gospel teaching are in for a big surprise and it is most certainly not good at all. It is not a position to be in! If they compare their works to God's and their righteousness to God's, *they completely fail.* Apostle Paul said that believing in external good works to be righteous before God is the sin of PRIDE and

boasting (Ephesians 2:8-9). Paul called the Galatians *'foolish'* (Gal. 3) and that believing works of the Law are required after salvation makes *'Christ of no effect unto you'* (Gal. 5:4-5). Serious business indeed!

In essence, it is believing you are good enough a person to be accepted as righteous by God, which is what the Pharisee leaders taught. The thing is Jesus called the Pharisees *vipers and hypocrites headed for condemnation*, making themselves look good outwardly but inwardly full of wretchedness and evil. The sin of pride is a most serious sin. Remember, it is the same sin Lucifer committed that started this whole mess in the first place. Jesus said about the Pharisees,

*"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** for ye are like unto **whited** sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful **outward**, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. "* (Matthew 23:27 KJV)

What Is The Will Of The Father?

*“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven. “ (Matthew 7:21 KJV)*

Our first question to be answered then is what exactly is the will of the Father Jesus is speaking of? Is this statement by Jesus about our works and good deeds or Law following? Not at all. Jesus is not saying one thing and then another in the same passage of teaching. Jesus is teaching what He always was teaching to the Jewish people and we just need to look at Jesus' words to see the truth. Jesus tells us this in John 6,

*“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that **YE BELIEVE ON HIM** whom he hath sent.” (John 6:29 KJV)*

*“And this is the **FATHER’S WILL** which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this **IS THE WILL OF HIM THAT SENT ME**, that every one which seeth the Son, and **BELIEVETH ON HIM**, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:39-40 KJV)*

This doing of *the will of God* is all about us *Believing on Christ as the foretold Messiah for Salvation*. Jesus is using the word 'do' in contrast to the false prophets teaching to 'do' good works for justification. Jesus is concluding that it is not their false thinking about how to be saved that will matter on Judgment day, if they are not even born again in the Spirit (John 3) and saved by belief on Christ alone, apart from good works. This does not mean that believers should not have good works. Nor does it mean that God does not have other specific *will* for us either. We will have good works because Christ is within us and we are in Christ. We have a new Spirit of God at our core being and now we should '*put on*' new outward living by our new core Spiritual being by renewing our MIND (Romans 12:2, John 17:17) which is still corrupt as believers (1 Cor. 15:50). In Matthew 7 though, Jesus is not talking about our good works after our moment of Salvation. Jesus is talking to unbelievers and false prophets who

are not saved, but think they are by their works. This is the iniquity Jesus is warning about in this passage. Jesus gives them stern warning in concern and love for them,

*“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.** “*
(Matthew 7:22-23 KJV)



About The Author

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Don Gerrity is not a preacher. He is not a leader of a church organization. He uses his talents in writing to help share the Gospel to the lost and to help encourage other believers. Don does not lead in an organization, nor an organizational church, though he does frequent many of the top Facebook Christian groups.

Don is owner of the *SeekKnockFind.org* online personal ministry. A growing FREE resource with Christian articles, YouTube video playlists and links to other Christian resources. The goal of the *SeekKnockFind.org* website is to help new believers expand their knowledge of the truth in Salvation through Jesus Christ and to show non-believers why Christianity and the Holy Bible can be believed with full assurance that the Bible is the truth.

With a growing Facebook group, the invitation is open to you to visit and read posts and comments, and if you wish, to join in our conversations, as we all learn and expand our knowledge in the Word Of God and the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.