

Where Millions Miss the Way

Matthew 7:21-23

In Matthew chapter seven, what's often called the sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus placed a premium on obeying God. Listen to him. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven. But he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Did you know that every dispensation of time has been punctuated by the importance of obeying God?

We talked today about obedience, and there are a lot of people in the world today that minimize the importance of obeying God. And yet Jesus stressed the importance of complying to the will of the father. I think it's noteworthy that in the book of revelation, chapter 22 and verse 14, John, as he closes out the inspired record before laying aside the pen of inspiration, John said, blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter through the gates into the city.

In a lesson today, let's talk for a moment or two about the theme where millions miss the way. Now again, we're looking at Matthew chapter seven. I mentioned a moment ago, verse 21, for our study today we're going to focus on Matthew chapter seven, verses 21 through 23. First and foremost, I want to call your attention to the importance of legislation that is divine legislation.

Listen again to Jesus. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Did you know that James wrote in James chapter four, verse 12, that there is one lawgiver who is able to save and destroy, who is the one lawgiver? Well, that would be Jesus.

You see, the Bible tells us in Luke chapter four at verse 32 that his word was with authority. That is, the word of the Lord was with authority. Everything that the Lord Jesus said was backed up by divine authority. Now, again in James chapter four, verse 12, James said, there's one lawgiver. That is, Jesus Christ is the one lawgiver.

He has the ability to save and destroy. There are those in the world today that want to minimize not just the importance of obedience, but also the whole concept of law. I hear Jesus saying in Matthew 28, in verse 18, prior to ascending to heaven, the Lord said, all power, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Here's what God the Father said concerning the son when transfigured on the mountaintop, God spoke from heaven, and God said, this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him. Now that means that whatever the Lord has to say, we want to make sure that we are in compliance with that. You remember what Paul said in Colossians chapter three.

Paul said, whatsoever you do in word, or indeed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. What does it mean to do something in the name of the Lord Jesus? Well, it simply means to do it by his authority. That's what we're talking about. The authority of Christ. So again, the Bible says there's one lawgiver who has able to save and destroy.

So if there's one lawgiver, then that would imply that there's a law. Now, again, the whole idea that we're not under law, there's no divine law. Well, let's just look at what the Bible has to say. In Galatians chapter six, you remember in verse two, Paul makes reference to the law of Christ. In James chapter one, at verse 25, James speaks of the perfect law of

liberty in James two, in verse eight.

James identifies the royal law and then listen to him in James chapter two and verse 12. James said, so speak, and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. So are you saying then, that we're under divine law? Well, of course you remember John said in verse John chapter three at verse four that sin is to transgression of the law.

What law? The law of God. The law that has been handed down by the great law giver. Well, how then does the Lord regulate the conduct or behavior of his people? Well, it's called the Bible. We have the last will and testament of the Lord. Listen to Paul in Second Timothy, chapter three. Paul said, all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped unto every good work.

So the Word of God, the Word of God, functions as a pattern. That is, we have a paradigm that we're to follow in Second Timothy chapter one. Paul would say to Timothy, hold fast the form or pattern of sound words which you've heard from me. So there is this pattern or body of legislation that has been given to us by the divine law giver.

We are accountable to that law. Now let's go back again. Look at Matthew chapter seven. Jesus said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of my father, which is in heaven. Did you know that the Lord here is simply saying that the prerequisite to entering the kingdom of heaven is to be submissive to the teaching of the Lord?

Are there people in the world today that in their heart of hearts they would say, I'm following the will of God. And yet, based upon a closer examination of Scripture, the scriptures would say they're not in compliance with the will of God. Well, can I know that I'm following the teaching of the Bible? Well, of course I can.

How can I know whether or not I am following the teaching of Scripture? Well, all I have to do is analyze my life in light of this body of information that we call Scripture. I'll miss you in a moment ago that the scriptures are what regulate the behavior of God's people. Listen to Jesus in John chapter 12. Jesus said, he that rejected me and receiveth not my words has that which judges him.

The word that I have spoken, he said, the same shall judge him in the last day. So it's imperative that I submit my life to the teaching of Scripture. Matter of fact, go back and look for a moment to at Matthew chapter 16. In verse 24, Jesus said, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

Well, what that says is, if I want to be a follower of the Lord, number one, I've got to be willing to deny self. Now that's not easy to do. There are a lot of people in our world today. It's all about me, myself and I. It's what I want to do and what I think. Well, the Lord Jesus said, but I've got to be willing to deny myself.

I've got to be willing to subjugate my life to the teaching of Scripture. I can't bend and alter the scriptures to fit my lifestyle, but rather I am to alter how I live and how I think to the teaching of God. So Jesus said, if any man will come to me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

What does it mean to take up the cross? Well, a cross signified death. In the first century. The Lord Jesus put to death on Calvary. Well, when Jesus said that we are to take up the cross and follow him. That means not only are we turned on ourself, but I've got to be

willing to die to self. I've got to be willing to again subjugate my life to the teaching of the Lord.

Listen to the Apostle Paul in Galatians chapter two, in verse 20. Paul would say, it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. Here's the here's an example of a man who was willing to subjugate or to submit his life to the teaching of the Lord. After all, the Lord Jesus is identified by Paul as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

So, as members of the Body of Christ, we are a part of the Kingdom. The Lord Jesus is the King. And since Jesus is the King, he has the right to control again how we live. So look again at Matthew seven, verse 21. Jesus said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven.

Now look at the next verse. The Lord said, for many will say unto me, in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? In your name cast out demons in your name done many mighty works. Note the declarations there. First we have legislation, but then secondly, there are declarations. Here are people that are acknowledging in the presence of the Lord.

Lord, look at all we've done on your behalf. Now the Lord here did not deny the fact that they that they in their lifetime had not made sacrifices. Matter of fact, he didn't even deny the fact that they had served. That is, here were people that thought in their heart of hearts that they were serving the Lord. They had made great sacrifices for the Lord.

Are there people today that are on distant shores, and they have sacrificed and served in their heart of hearts, in the name of Jesus? Well, of course. Well, what's the problem? The problem is not that they haven't sacrificed and served. The problem is their lives are not in compliance with the teaching of the Lord. Now again, what's the prerequisite to entering the kingdom of heaven was to do the will of the father.

You remember Jesus asked a question on one occasion, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Can I then know? As I asked just a moment ago, can I know whether or not I'm a child of God? Well, of course I can. How then can I know whether or not my life is in compliance with the teaching of Scripture?

Well, look at Romans chapter eight in about verse 16. Here's what Paul said. Paul said, the spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Well, what are you saying, Paul? Now, in the first century, you had the miraculous. You had ongoing revelation. Well, today the gospel is not in men as it was in the first century, because the apostles were God's divine ambassadors.

They were the earthen vessels in whom the Word of God was placed. Today we have God's completed revelation. It's called the last will and testament of the Lord. So the Holy Spirit, through the Holy Scriptures, can assess my human conduct or my human life. Well, how do you how? How's that possible? Well, here it is. I can open up the pages of Scripture and I can hear.

I can hear Jesus saying, except you believe that I am. You'll die in your sins. In other words, unless you come to believe that I am who I claim to be, that is the Son of God. Jesus said, you'll die in your sins, and if you die in your sins. The Lord said, where I am, there you cannot come.

Is it mandatory that I come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God? Yes, it is because Jesus Himself said, if I do not come to that understanding and

acknowledge that, then I'll die in sin. Now listen to what the Hebrew writer said in Hebrews chapter 11, verse six, without faith it's impossible to be well pleasing to him.

Are there people in the world today? In their heart of hearts they would tell you, you know, Jesus was a good man. I believe that he was a great teacher. I think he was interested in the welfare of the human family. Here was a man that sought to serve, to sacrifice. He was a man that went about for the betterment of the human family.

Don't deny that. But they fall short of acknowledging that he's the Son of God. Well, is that an imperative? I mean, do they really need to conclude that? Think about it. In John chapter six, Jesus had identified himself as that living bread that came down from heaven. In John six, Jesus declared himself to be the bread of life.

Well, John said that when those who were present on that occasion heard that. The text says their response was, this is a difficult saying. This is a hard saying. Who can understand it? Well, John said, by way of commentary, from that time many of his disciples went back. Walk no more with him. Jesus then turned to the 12, and he asked them, Will you also go away?

Remember what Peter said? Peter responded by saying, Lord, to whom shall we go? For you have the words of life eternal. Now listen to me. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Christ, the son of the living God. Was that a mandate? Yes. Was it an imperative that they understand that Jesus had the words of eternal life full?

Of course. Does he have the words of eternal life today? Yes, he does. Jesus himself said, I am the way, the truth, the life. No man comes unto the father but by me. Listen to what the apostles said in acts chapter four, verse 12. Peter and John said, neither is our salvation in any other. There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

You want to be saved? You need to understand Jesus is the Son of God. You need to believe that. You need to be willing to acknowledge it. But then we're not finished. When I open the pages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit through the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures tell me that I must repent. In acts chapter 17, when the Apostle Paul was in Athens, you remember he said, the times of ignorance God winked at, but less than time, but now commands all men everywhere to do what?

To repent. On Pentecost day, when the Apostle Peter preached the gospel. We have a we have a record of that presentation the apostles are preaching. When asked, what shall we do? Peter said in the long ago, repent. That's that's a mandate. It's not optional. It's an obligation. So, number one, I've got to believe that Jesus is the Son of God if I've done that and check it off.

Secondly, I have to repent of sin. If I've done that. Then I can check that off. And then to confess with my mouth what I believe in my heart. Well, what is that? That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, just like the eunuch did, recorded by Luke and Acts, chapter eight, verse 37. But listen, I'm not finished.

No, the Bible says that I have to be baptized into Christ. Well, why? Well, Jesus said to be save Mark 1616 Peter said that I'm to be baptized so that I might enjoy the remission or the forgiveness of my sins. Now somebody says, well, now, wait a minute. You're telling me that I've got to be baptized in order to be saved?

Listen, don't take my word for it. No, you take what the scripture say and you investigate what the Bible says. If what the Bible says is that you need to be baptized, then do that.

Well, in Mark 16:16, Jesus said, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Well, if I've done that, I can check that off.

Peter said, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Again, if I've done that and checked that off and I can also know that in so doing, the Lord will put me in the church. In Acts chapter two, verse 41, the Bible says that those who gladly received his word were baptized that day, about 3000 souls added to them.

Now look at verse 47. The Lord added to the church daily those who are being saved. Now let's look again at Matthew chapter seven. Jesus said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. For many will say to me, in that day.

What day? The day of judgment. Go back again and look at Acts 17. The Bible says that God now commands all men everywhere to repent. Why? Well, because he's appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained, given assurance unto all men. And that he raised him from the dead.

That's found in Acts chapter 17, verses 30 and 31. When Paul said, God has ordained a day about the day of judgment, he's talking about the day when we will stand before the Lord and give an account of the deeds done in the body. Now, again, listen to Jesus. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied by your name?

Have we not cast out demons by your name? Have we not done many mighty works? Again, he didn't deny that here were people that had served. They had made great sacrifices. They make reference to their words and their works. And his name. What was the problem? They didn't comply with the will of the father. Are there people today again?

Are there people today in the world that believe in their heart that they complied with the will of God? Sure there are. Do you remember what Solomon said? There is a way that seems right unto a man. But the ends thereof are the ways of death. Somebody says, well, I just believe in my heart I'm saved. I mean, I have this feeling that I've been saved.

I know that I have a relationship with the Lord because I just feel that. Well, Solomon said, he that trust in his own heart is a fool. Now we've got to have evidence. How then can I have evidence that I belong to the Lord? Well, again, just what I said. I've got to go to the Bible like you remember the Bereans of old when Paul and Silas made their way to Berea?

The Bible says that those who were in Berea were more noble than those in Thessalonica. Why? Well, they received the word with all readiness of heart. But the Bible says they searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things were so. Well, what are you saying, Luke? Luke's telling us that the people in the first century, they had an inspired apostle in their midst, and yet they compared what they heard with what the scriptures taught.

Wouldn't it stand to reason? We would want to do the same thing? I mean, you think about are you willing to. Are you willing to base your salvation on what somebody has said without having book, chapter and verse? Was it not Peter who said, if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God? How many times have you heard somebody on the radio or television tell you, if you want to become a Christian, here's what you need to do.

Bow your head. Accept the Lord Jesus into your heart and then recite the sinner's prayer and you'll be saved. You heard that? Sure you have. I've heard that many, many times. Now, is that what the Bible teaches? Can you give me a book, chapter and verse where somebody in the New Testament did just that? They accepted the Lord into their heart, and then they recited

what they believed to be the sinner's prayer.

And were saved. I can't find that in the New Testament, but I can find I can read about people that believed in the Lord Jesus. You know, the Bible says faith comes by hearing. Hearing by the Word of God. I can read where people demonstrated an obedient faith. They put their faith into action. They repented of their sins.

They confess in the name of Christ. They were baptized and as a result of that, they enjoyed forgiveness. Think about Saul of Tarsus. The Lord Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus for three days. Saul of Tarsus is doing what? He's praying and fasting. He had been instructed to go into the city, and the Lord said, it will be told you what you must do.

Praying, fasting for three days and the last comes on the scene. And and I said, and now what terrorist now? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Are you saying then, that over the period of three days that Saul is praying and fasting and he was saved? That's exactly what the Bible concludes.

No, Saul wasn't saved until he obeyed the gospel. We can't enter the kingdom of heaven until we submit to the teaching of Scripture. Now, how many times have you heard somebody say, well, you know, one church is as good as another church? I mean, after all, it really doesn't matter. Some would even say, you don't even have to be a member of the church to go to heaven.

They have the idea that you can have a relationship with the Lord, separate and apart from the church. Well, let's just put that to the test. Again, Jesus said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. For many will say, and I may that day.

What day? If the day of judgment, the last day, the turmoil day in the history of the universe. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, in your name cast out demons in your name, done many mighty works. A lot of folks on the Day of Judgment, a lot of folks are going to stand before the Lord, and they're going to talk about all the great things that they've done for him.

And yet Jesus will say, depart from me, you worker of iniquity. I never knew you. Why? Well, because they weren't in the church. You mean to say that I've got to be a member of the church to go to heaven? Well, again, look at acts chapter two. When the gospel was presented, the death, burial, resurrection of Christ, his ascension to heaven, coronation, and heaven seated at the right hand of the father.

It is from that vantage point that he has all authority. As a matter of fact, Peter said, let all the house of Israel know surely, that this same Jesus whom you crucified. God's made both Lord and Christ are you. Do you mean to tell me that when those people were baptized, that they were added to a divine body that we call the church?

Again, don't take my word for it. What does the record say? 3000 people respond to the gospel. They're baptized into Christ. The Lord added them to the church. Acts two, verse 47. Well, do I have to be a member of the church to go to heaven? Look at Ephesians chapter five, verse 23. In Ephesians 5:23, Paul said, and he is the Savior of the body, the he there is Jesus.

Jesus is the Savior of the body. Okay. What's the body? Well, Ephesians 1:22 and 23 Paul said he put all things in subjection under his feet, made him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Okay. If the body and

the church are one and the same.

How many churches are there? Well, if I read the scriptures, there's only one church. How do I know that? Again, Ephesians four, verse four, there's one body and one spirit, even as you're called in one hope, you're calling. So what's the body? He's the head of the body, the church. Colossians 118. Well, who's the savior of the body?

Jesus is Ephesians 523. How then do I become a part of the body of Christ? I got to do what they did in the first century. What did they do? They believed in the Lord Jesus, repented of sin, confessed his name, were baptized into Christ when they complied with the will of the father. What happened added of the church?

You remember Jesus asked on one occasion, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? You mean to say that there are people in the world who claim to have a relationship with the Lord, who claim to be servants of his, but they haven't complied with his teaching. Listen to John first John two verse three.

John said, hereby we do know that we know him, our John. How do we know that we know him? If we keep his commandments? You see, if I'm following the teaching of this book, and I have submitted my life to what the Bible has to say, then I stand on. I stand on solid ground. Matter of fact, I'm standing on the testimony of what is recorded in this book that we call the Bible.

Now look at verse 23. Very quickly. Jesus said that he would say to those who boast of all these works and words in his name. He said, he will say to them, depart from me, you worker of iniquity. I never knew you. Number one, the Savior here. He's going to judge us. Matter of fact, John said in John chapter five, and John is quoting Jesus.

Jesus said, The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the son. John five, verse 22. Matter of fact, in verse 27, we find that the Lord has received authority to judge the human family. So Jesus said that he will say on that great and final day, depart from me, you worker of iniquity. Now we're talking about people that have never enjoyed the blessings and privileges of sonship.

Isn't it interesting that the Lord says here, I never knew you, indicating that there had been some prior knowledge? No, he said, I never knew you. So what then was the result? Separation. Condemnation? We might say there's legislation. You have declarations. But then in verse 23, condemnation. Jesus said, depart from me, you worker of iniquity. I never knew.

Q what a sobering thought where millions miss the way a lot of folks in the world today, they think they're saved, but they failed to stand on indisputable ground, which is the testimony of the word of the living God. I pray that you'll obey the gospel. Hope to see you back here next week until the end. God bless.