

**Conversion to Jesus Christ:
(#15) Becoming a Disciple of Jesus Christ**

Today we arrive to the last message in this series on conversion to Jesus Christ. In our study of conversion, we have considered God's work of grace in bringing His chosen people to experience their salvation. Early in our study we addressed God's work of grace toward His people *prior* to their conversion. God had caused them to become dissatisfied with who they were and how they lived. He had revealed to them that their estrangement from Him had brought them ruin and would be their eternal ruin if they continued in their course of life. God was preparing them for the day in which He would cause them to be born from above, or born again. We then rehearsed *the conversion event* itself that resulted from their regeneration.¹ By God's grace He brought each of us who are true Christians to the time and place that we turned from our sin and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. It was at that time that God had caused us to be translated into His kingdom, over which His Son is King. We were converted from a life *in* sin unto a life *in* Jesus Christ. Upon our faith in Him, God justified us, that is, He pardoned us for our sin and He declared us to be righteous in His sight due to the imputed righteousness of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Since that day we have been in a state of peace with our God. It is also our privilege to experience subjective peace, because we know that we will not be condemned on the Day of Judgment that is coming upon the world at the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now to complete our study of conversion today, I would like us to consider not what we have been converted *from*, but to what God has converted us *unto*. In other words, *what is the nature of the life of the truly converted person?* We have already shown that in many ways many people have been deluded that they have been converted to Jesus Christ. We have attempted to show how people can undeceive themselves about this matter and seek true salvation in Jesus Christ. But it is here, perhaps, that true and false conversion can be best discerned and distinguished. *Into what kind of life has your "conversion" brought you?* Are you living as a disciple of Jesus Christ? Every truly converted person does so.

Let us begin with the reading of our Lord's instruction regarding the responsibility to obey Him in order to experience salvation. In **Luke 6:46-49** we read these words:

⁴⁶“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

Our Lord Jesus set forth the nature of being a true disciple—it is a life of obedience unto Him. When we were converted, we ceased to be governed by our own thoughts and opinions and we submitted to Jesus Christ as the Lord to govern our lives. We purpose and seek to live holy lives as we are directed by Him. We do so with view to the final judgment when our lives will be assessed, the outcome of which will be eternal life or eternal damnation.

Now the Christian life as one of holiness is set forth in the Scriptures in different ways. Frequently it is described as a life of faith, that is, a life characterized by “believing.” But it is also depicted as a life of “obeying,” or “striving.” It is described as a life of “suffering,” “enduring,” and “overcoming.” In the Gospels the Christian life that is set forth in its culmination of everlasting life is that of being a *disciple* of

¹ Regeneration is another word for the new birth.

Jesus Christ. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to be a Christian. “The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch” (Acts 11:26).

Only disciples of Jesus Christ will inherit salvation. And as a church, we are to be in the business of making disciples. Our Lord commanded us,

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and *make disciples* of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen. (Matt. 28:19-20)

He did not command us to make believers of everyone, but rather we are to make disciples (which are true believers).

In order to make a disciple of someone, he must be taught to embrace and submit to Jesus Christ as Lord, who has authority to instruct, correct, and direct His people. Our Lord told us that we are to teach our converts to obey Him, “teaching them to observe all things” that He had commanded them (cf. Matt. 28:19). True disciples submit to Jesus as Lord of their lives. Disciple makers must press total submission to Jesus Christ as a condition of baptism and church membership. Unless one submits to Jesus as Lord, he is not a disciple of Jesus Christ. If one is not a disciple of Jesus Christ, he is not a Christian. He does not have, nor will he inherit salvation. Again, “the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:26).

How then, do we make disciples for Jesus Christ? One way that we may see how this is done is to trace through the course of the Gospel of Luke of how our Lord Jesus made His disciples. As we consider how and what He did, we may learn from His example and from His teaching. There is progression of this theme of making disciples in Luke’s story. The focus of the third Gospel is this:

Jesus Christ has been given authority to bring salvation to people. This places responsibility on all to hear Him intently, but further, it compels all to obey him completely. We are both to hear and heed His Word.

We affirm as disciples of Jesus Christ that every Word that the Lord Jesus of the Lord Jesus is binding upon us. This includes all that is recorded in the Holy Scriptures, either directly in His recorded speech, or indirectly through His prophets and apostles. Recognition and acknowledgment of Christ’s *authority*, is essential to being His disciple. But in addition to acknowledging His authority, disciples of Jesus Christ have fully given themselves *to learn God’s will from and through Jesus Christ*. We are to be committed to learn as fully as possible all that God’s Word has told us, as we understand it through Jesus Christ. If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, or if you desire to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, or if you desire to be a disciple-maker for Jesus Christ, you must be teachable, and desirous to learn of Him and from Him. But not only are we to learn from Him, but to be a true disciple *we must be committed to obey Jesus Christ in all aspects of life*.

Let us turn to **Luke 11:27** and **28** and consider our Lord’s words of instruction to His disciples.

As He said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” But He said, “Blessed rather are those who *hear* the word of God and *keep* it!”

In this portion of Luke’s Gospel there is a focus on obedience to the words of Jesus Christ as an essential aspect of discipleship to Jesus. Here we read that the people recognized that He had authority. But our Lord pressed upon them their need, therefore, both to hear and obey Him. Actually these few words are a culmination of what the Holy Spirit had been conveying through the record of His Gospel.

Actually Luke had developed this theme in four stages as his story progressed. Luke established

- (1) The fact that Jesus had *authority*.
- (2) But then Luke showed that since Jesus has authority, people have a responsibility to *hear* Him.
- (3) But since Jesus has authority, people not only have a responsibility to hear Him, but they are to *obey* Him.
- (4) Lastly Luke showed that those who refuse to hear Him, or those who do hear but refuse to obey Him, will encounter *the judgment of God upon them*.

Let us consider these. *First*, the early chapters of Luke's Gospel story in many different ways reveal and reinforce the **authority** that God had given to Jesus Christ. Early in the Gospel we read of Jesus' baptism and the voice of the Father regarding Him (3:21f), and His victory over the devil's temptation in the wilderness (4:1-13). As a result of these experiences we read of our Lord in Luke 4:14:

Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

Our Lord had authority to teach and heal as He began to minister in Galilee.

We read of the gathering at His hometown synagogue established the fact that God had given to Him authority to teach the people (Luke 4:14-30). We read of the authority of Jesus over the fish of the sea in Luke 5:4-11. The following account tells of Jesus healing a man of leprosy (4:12-15). The episode in which Jesus healed the paralytic man served to show that God has given to Jesus even the authority to forgive sins (4:17-26)! Lastly we may see that God had even given Jesus authority over the Sabbath (6:-5). The point that is underscored is this: ***because God had sent Jesus Christ and because He had given to Him such authority***. All people everywhere should give their utmost attention and effort to hear His teaching. God has promised great blessing to them who do. But He has assured there would be great calamity for those who fail or refuse to hear Him. And so, the great emphasis these early chapters of Luke's Gospel is that God has given Jesus of Nazareth the ability and the authority to communicate His Word, His will, to His people. Therefore, they should be very earnest and attentive to desire to listen and to learn from Him. As we should be also. We should pour over God's Word attentively, scrutinizing it closely, seeking understand it thoroughly.

But then secondly, this point is made by Luke: Jesus' Word should be heard and embraced as truth. Because God had sent Jesus Christ and because He had given to Him such authority, ***all people everywhere should give their utmost attention and effort to hear His teaching***. God has promised great blessing to them who do; but He has assured there would be great calamity for those who fail or refuse to hear Him. And so, the great emphasis of these early chapters of Luke's Gospel is that God has given Jesus of Nazareth the ability and the authority to communicate His Word, His will, to His people. Therefore, they should be very earnest and attentive to desire to listen and to learn from Him. As we should be also. We should pour over God's Word attentively, scrutinizing it closely, seeking understand it thoroughly.

When our Lord went to Capernaum and began to teach in their synagogues, they acknowledged His teaching authority. "And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority" (4:32). Later the Roman centurion recognized Jesus' authority. He said to Jesus, "For ***I also am a man set under authority*** (i.e. with authority), having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it" (7:8f). We read of the crowds in **Luke 5:1**, "So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him ***to hear the word of God***, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret." What is suggested by this is that all people should come to Jesus in this manner. Later a description that Luke provides of the crowds suggests a favorable response to Jesus that all people should render unto Him. In **Luke 6:17** we read,

And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, ***who came to hear Him...***

In Luke 9 we read of the God the Father commanding Jesus' disciples to hear Jesus. It was when Jesus was transfigured before Peter, John, and James.

A cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. **Hear Him!**" (Luke 9:34f).

But then thirdly, Luke emphasizes that if He has this authority, then not only should He be heard, but He should be heeded; His words should be obeyed. For example, we read in Luke 8:22ff.

And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out. ²³But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. ²⁴And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? **For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!**" ²⁶Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. (Luke 8:22-26)

Notice how the winds and water are personified so that it would seem that the Lord commanded them as though they were persons, and they obeyed. This is one of the subtle ways in which Luke shapes his narrative to suggest that people, too, should obey Him.

We may also read similarly earlier in Luke's Gospel this account:

Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and **it left her**. And immediately she arose and served them. (Luke 4:38f)

Notice here that similar to what we had seen in Luke 8, Luke personifies the fever, presenting the fever as a person who obeys Jesus' word to him. The fever obeys, the winds and water obey, should not all people obey Him also?

Let us look at one more place. **Luke 8:26-33** read:

²⁶Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" ²⁹**For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.** For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.

³⁰Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?"

And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. ³¹**And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.**

³²Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. **So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.** ³³Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

Demons could not but obey Jesus' command to them.²

² Just as a side note: Luke is also building a case against the unbelieving Jews. Luke tells of fevers, winds, and waves, even demons recognizing Jesus' authority and obeying Him, but the Jews did not and would not. Even demons were more aware and responsive to what God was doing through Jesus Christ than were the Jews.

And then *fourthly*, later in Luke's Gospel an emphasis is given that those who refuse to hear and obey His Word will encounter the wrath of God. ***God's judgment is upon those who refuse to submit to Jesus as Lord.*** There are many places in which this theme is presented, of which we have no time presently to address.

But let us now turn once again to **Luke 11:27f.**

As He said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!" But He said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Here we have our Lord pronouncing the one to be "blessed" who both hears and obeys His words. "Blessedness" describes the one who is in a right relationship with God. The favor of God is upon Him. He has salvation. Only the one who hears, and as a result of believing Jesus' words, obeys His Word, has salvation. He is a blessed man of God.

By the way, this woman who called out to Jesus, may be regarded as the first Mary worshipper. Jesus rebuked her for she did not speak the truth. More blessed than Mary are those who hear and keep His Words. They only are promised salvation.

To underscore the teaching of our Lord let us turn to the last portion of our Lord's sermon recorded in **Luke 6:46-49**. This is the passage that we read at the beginning. Here we read that a true disciple of Jesus is one who both hears and obeys His Lord.

⁴⁶"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

The parallel passage to this is **Matthew 7:26-29**. There are a few differences in wording, but they are essentially the same teaching. But if one looks closely, it may be recognized that the words of Jesus in Matthew 7 and those recorded in Luke 6, were given on different locations. We should not think that our Lord did not repeat his teaching before different crowds and in different contexts. Recognizing the different contexts, some have labeled this discourse of our Lord in Luke 6 as *The Sermon on the Plain*.

Here is clear teaching that an evidence of being a true disciple of Jesus Christ and thereby be a citizen of the Kingdom of God is when one "***hears the Words of the King, He acts upon them.***" That our Lord would have to say something like this before this large crowd suggests there are those who do just that--they "***hear***" His Words, but fail to "***heed***" them. There is no salvation for these persons. ***No salvation, no benefit, will come to the one who claims to know or believe in Jesus, whose life is unaffected by Him. For the essence of being a citizen of the Kingdom of God is to be governed by the Lord of the Kingdom, Jesus Christ.***

Now I think that several points need to be reinforced at this point, for a misunderstanding of the implications of this passage for our faith can result in unsettling and troubling a timid and insecure child of God. So let me say very clearly, that the Lord's words recorded here do not explain the *basis* on which God receives sinful persons, granting them forgiveness of sins and giving them eternal life; rather, He is describing the *nature* of persons who are indeed His disciples, who have received forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life, contrasting them with false disciples, who make claims to believe on Him, but whose manner of living reveals their true condition. This distinction is very important. And you will trouble yourself and others if you do not understand this.

Now, having said all that, I need to stress something else. And this is very important for all of us who desire to give a faithful witness to others of the Gospel. Many of us understand fully the basis of our acceptance before God--Justification in Christ on the basis of faith alone. ***But herein we fail: when we tell others about Christ we generally speak only in terms of justification, but when we do this only, we leave off much content of what the New Testament presents as Gospel preaching.*** The reasoning goes something like this, "Because God justifies us--pardons us and declares us righteous--on the basis of faith alone--the only requirement is for you to believe." And so, nothing is said about repentance from sin and obedience to the Scriptures. Little or nothing is said about the responsibility to forgive others, to encounter and endure suffering for the cause of Christ, and to maintain faith in the true Gospel and essentials of the Christian faith (perseverance). Nothing is much said about one's responsibility to order one's life submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In fact to do so is viewed with suspicion as teaching works-righteousness, that one is justified by faith plus works. Consequently, people are told they are justified, regardless of how they live! After all, they are believers! And shame on anyone who even suggests that some who claim to believe may be lost. For they are accepted not on works, but on faith.

But then what do you do when you come to a passage like this? Ignore it! Explain it away! Relegate it as pre-Christian since it was taught before the cross and Pentecost. (But to do that renders nothing the Lord said as being applicable to us.) No. We have to face it. And if for some reason it conflicts with our understanding of things we must adjust our understanding of things so as to be consistent with its teaching.

Well, then, what is our Lord saying here to this crowd which professed to be His disciples? What is the conclusion which may be drawn from His words? He was saying that if you "hear His Words" but if you do not do them, obey them, you have no salvation. ***To "hear" but not "heed" will be of no benefit to you.*** And therefore, when the Lord tells us to act or react in a certain matter, we are under obligation to do so, if we would legitimately claim to be numbered among His disciples.

No, we do not trust in our doing. And we should not entertain for a moment that we are received by God because we do these things, nevertheless, ***obedience is required!*** And ***true faith will be shown to be true through one's obedience Jesus Christ.*** This relationship we have with Jesus is that He is our Lord, Who owns us as His possession, Who protects us, Who provides for us, and we in turn pledge our allegiance and obedience to His laws, to His will.

In our passage of Luke 6:46ff we have a **serious warning to nominal Christians.** We see that **true Christians live according to the will of God; only they will enter the coming kingdom.** Jesus said,

⁴⁶"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock.

Some people assume that true Christians are great in number, a number that includes anyone and everyone who professes faith in Jesus Christ. They look about and believe that the number of true believers is very great. They might argue from Scripture that this is so. They might say, "Do the Scriptures not say, '***Whoever believes*** in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God' (John 3:18)? "***Whoever believes*** is very broad; many believe, therefore, the number of those who will be saved are many, even a majority of the population." They might argue further, "Did not the Lord Jesus say, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, ***whoever hears My word and believes Him*** who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life' (John 5:24)? There are millions upon millions who have heard and have believed."

George Barna, the well-known Christian pollster, has a very optimistic opinion of the number of true Christians in America.

Currently representing 38% of all adults and one-third of all teenagers, there are an estimated 98 million adults and children who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour.³

I remember **Bill Bright**, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, believed that there were 100 million born again Christians in America.

But when one examines the Scriptures, one learns what it is *to truly believe* on Him. Not all faith is saving faith. Faith must be of a saving kind. There are far fewer true believers than there are professing believers. Here in Matthew 7:22f the Lord Jesus confirmed this. He said,

²²On that day *many* will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

James wrote of some who had faith that was not saving faith. He wrote, “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?” (James 2:14). He was implying, “No, it cannot save him.” And we read of **Jesus** telling some that they needed to persevere in their faith, if they truly belonged to Him. “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples’” (John 8:31). And so, it is common when we speak of the faith that brings salvation that we refer to “true faith” or “saving faith.”

It is apparent that not all faith is saving faith. True faith, or saving faith, must prove itself to be true under examination by the Scriptures. Here in Matthew 7:21ff our Lord made it clear that *true Christians, true believers, are ones who order their lives according to the will of God*. Not everyone who believes that Jesus Christ is Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. Only the one who believes Him to be Lord and lives with Him as his Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. This is confirmed elsewhere in God’s Word in many places. We might cite a few verses:

1 John 2:17. “And the world is passing away along with its desires, but *whoever does the will of God abides forever.*”

Hebrews 10:36. “For you have need of endurance, so that *when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*”

1 Peter 4:1-5. “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ²*so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.* ³For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. ⁴With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; ⁵but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (1 Pet. 4:1)

True believers live according to the will of God. And so, *many nominal Christians will discover themselves to be condemned on the Day of Judgment*. Again, the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7.

³ This was from 2004.

<http://webferret.search.com/click?wf6,+%2BGeorge+%2BBarna+%2Bborn+%2Bagain+%2Bchristians+%2Bthey+%2Bhave+%2Bmade+%2Ba+%2Bpersonal+%2Bto+%2Bcommitment+%2BJesus+%2BChrist+%2Bthat+%2Bis+%2Bimportant+%2Bin+%2Btheir+%2Blife+%2Btoday.,www.barna.org%2Fbarna-update%2Farticle%2F5-barna-update%2F196-evangelism-is-most-effective-among-kids.,altavista,I>

²²“On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

The duplication of the words, “Lord, Lord,” indicates a sense of intimacy. Those who call on Him saying, “Lord, Lord” are asserting that they believe they know Him intimately and that they are known of Him.

Our Lord used this duplication expression elsewhere. The Lord Jesus one day asked some who followed Him, “Why do you call me ‘**Lord, Lord**,’ and not do what I tell you?” (Luke 6:46). As if to say, “Why do you claim to know Me as Lord but you do not show that you do by your obedience to Me?” We also read that our Lord used this expression in the *parable of the ten virgins*. Jesus said to His disciples:

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘**Lord, Lord**, open to us.’” (Matthew 25:1-11)

And then we read of this expression also in our Lord’s teaching found in Luke 13. There we read,

“And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. ²³Then one said to Him, “Lord, are there few who are saved?” And He said to them, ²⁴“Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘**Lord, Lord**, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ ²⁶then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ ²⁷But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ ²⁸There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. ²⁹They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. ³⁰And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.” (Luke 13:22-30)⁴

These nominal believers, that is, believers in name only, will have regarded themselves as servants or ministers of Jesus Christ. Our Lord says that they will protest their sentence of damnation, saying, “Did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?” They were preachers and claimed to perform miracles, being used by Him in His service. They claimed to know Him, but He will deny that He knew them. He will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

When Jesus said that they were “workers of lawlessness”, He was describing them as having lived according to their own will, not according to the will of God. They lived in a lawless manner; that is, the law of God did not rule their lives. True believers live according to God’s law under the rule of Jesus Christ, but these were “workers of lawlessness” (Greek: *anomia* from which we get the word, ‘antinomian’).

Jesus gives a word about *the responsibility of man to keep God’s law*. He will say to those who refuse to obey His Words, “Depart from Me.” We read in Matthew 7:21ff,

⁴ The word, “Lord”, is not duplicated in the ESV, but is in the KJV and the NKJV.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

We then may consider again the metaphor of the **wise man and the foolish man**. Luke 6:46 through 49 we read,

⁴⁶“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

Here we read of the comparison and contrast between two ways of living by those who have heard the teaching of Jesus Christ. Our Lord declared that you can either hear and do His Words, or hear and not do His words. Obedience that is born of faith is the issue. It is a foolish man who hears these words of Jesus and does not repent of sin, who fails to order his life according to the Word of God, the teaching of Jesus Christ. The destiny of everyone who hears the gospel will hinge on this matter. How have you responded to Jesus Christ and His claims upon your life? He is the crucified, risen, and enthroned Lord. The person who lives disregarding Him, will die in his sins and will be condemned by Him on the Day of Judgment.

May our Lord give each of us grace that we will look to Him each and every day, even as we reaffirm that He is Lord. May each of us strive to order our thinking and our actions so that they are in accordance with the will of God as we are directed and empowered by our King Jesus.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior,
Who alone is wise,
Be glory and majesty,
Dominion and power,
Both now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24f)