

CONVERSION: A study of the Sermon on the Mount

Jesus changes everything for the one who believes to live in Him.

INTRO In this series we are walking through the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel. **CONVERSION** means we look and listen to the One who is our Lord, remember His righteousness He has put on us in salvation, and convert our lives by faith to walk in obedience with Him. Today's topic is no exception. I implore you to listen today to all that will be said.

CONVERSION: Known by Jesus – Intimacy over Familiarity

Matthew 7:21-23

MPS: A life of obedience to Jesus distinguishes the real Christ-follower by intimacy over familiarity with Him.

OBJ: Every person can know they are known by God by **three-fold pattern of gospel-fueled intimacy with God.**

READ Matthew 7:21–23

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.' **Matt 7:21-23**

ILLUS Monday evening we were driving into Springfield for dinner. Traffic was stop-and-go congested. The car in front of us suddenly slammed on their brakes and instantly stopped in a near vertical position. I immediately slammed on my brakes. Then it caught my attention. In the rearview mirror I noticed the car approaching from behind me had not yet braked. I froze. Having no place to go I braced for impact. The barking tires grew louder as the car performed that nose-diving, jack-hammer motion in its final approach. As the car filled the rear-view mirror, I could see the eyes of the lady driver growing bigger in my mirror. Finally, the cars ahead of us moved and I hit the gas. But in that moment, I was paralyzed by the situation, wondering how bad it would be as I waited for impact.

Matthew stuns the reader with his record of Jesus' words. "Could this be true? If so, how?" "What does this mean?" These verses are so serious that they (should) cause us to stop and ask, "Is there any way any of these words are true of me?"

APPL I want to pose one, defining question and ask each person to consider. **Do you walk by faith in obedience to Jesus to build intimacy in your relationship with Him? Or, are you satisfied with your familiarity to Him, with the Bible and knowing 'enough' about Him / having enough of Him in your life to calm your sense of guilt? Would you describe your relationship with God as "intimate" or merely "familiar"?**

TRANS I want you to stop and consider your relationship with Christ as we work through this passage. Jesus makes three startling statements about what it means to have a relationship with Him.

First, Jesus says that not everyone who claims to know God does, but only those who do God's will. (.21) Jesus tells us that not everyone who thinks they know God actually does; not everyone who considers themselves a Christian, who speak and act like they are saved will be welcomed in by Him. **Only those who "do God's will" enter His eternal Kingdom.**

ILLUS Annual Physical I had my annual, medical check-up a couple of weeks ago. I confess, I do not like going to the doctor. And it has nothing to do with the people personally. I actually like them very much. I don't like it because it reminds me how fragile life really is. I don't like it, but I do it to hold an accountability on the true, fragile nature of this life.

Jesus' words confront us for sober discernment, not necessarily in fear that causes question or doubt, but serves as a 'reality check' where we consider what we claim to believe against how we live, to see how closely they align. **If you claim to know God in any way, surely these words command your attention.**



TRANS Jesus explains more.

Second, there is a Day coming when each person will stand before Jesus to give account for their life, where many good claims and deeds will be convincingly offered to Jesus.(.22) Reasons will be presented and rationales provided by good deeds done, even strong and miraculous works. I would add other likely reasons this list will include, based on contemporary Christianity, “but God, I felt you.”, “I emoted to you.”, “I had an experience with you.” There are innumerable counterfeit ideas of what it means to be a Christ-follower. None satisfy God’s righteous and holy demand for entry into His eternal presence in Heaven.

What we must hear in this verse, though, is this. A “day” is coming when every person will stand before Jesus for a final account of life. On this day, it will not be the profession of one’s life but the possession of one’s life that matters, that which consumes you such that it controls you. Surely what you say is important, but it is not ultimate. What you hold as ultimate is determined by what you do. Your true belief is made known by how you act. **The one who does the will of God is the one who trusts in the work of God in Jesus Christ.**

TRANS Finally, we see what happens to all who are not known by Jesus.

Third, on Judgment Day when each person stands before Jesus to give account for their life, all who are not known by Jesus will be eternally cast away.(.23) In shocking contrast to their claim and profession, all who are not known by Jesus will be eternally cast away as a worker of lawlessness. “Workers of lawlessness” are those who would not be bothered by God’s holy Law and instead mitigated an agreement with God to do what they wanted to do, instead of what He said to do. The problem is that God never agreed to it. But they never bothered to ask him. Every deed and work done apart from Jesus Christ is meaningless in God’s divine economy because without Jesus it is lawlessness against His holy and righteous nature. All of it. All those who are not known by God are cast away into eternal punishment and torment. **The only people welcomed into God’s eternal Kingdom are NOT those claim to know God, but those who are known by God.**

Summary Jesus teaches that a time is coming when what you believe as determined by how you live will be perfectly and ultimately revealed. And based on that, you will either be welcomed into eternity with God or cast away into eternal punishment and torment based on what you truly believed. James 1:22 instructs, “*Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*” **No matter how comfortable or familiar you are with God, the only ones who are truly His are those who are known by Him.**

Claims about God and activity in God’s name are no substitute for relationship with God. Familiarity with God in any manner and to any extent is always a false substitute for intimacy with God through Jesus Christ. **Relationship with God and the question of eternal salvation is NOT whether you know God, but does God know you?**

A life of obedience to Jesus distinguishes the real Christ-follower by intimacy over familiarity with Him.

In Galatians Paul defines salvation in this way.

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods

⁹But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God. Gal 4:8-9a

Being known, intimacy with God is the essence of the Christian life.

TRANS What a privilege and joy, “to be known”. The cry of every heart is to be known! We want to be liked, loved for who we are. We want to be understood, to be sought after and appreciated. With our whole lives we long to be known. And no longing for this known-ness more than by the One for whom we were created, God. **The gospel proclaims that in Jesus, we are known by God.**

OBJ **Three-fold pattern of gospel-fueled intimacy with God** forms the practice of those known by God.

1. INVITATION by Revelation for Response.

The gospel declares God’s ultimate victory over Satan, death and sin by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.



Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. Rom 3:24c-25b

God put forth Jesus as a propitiation for our sin by offering Him up on the cross. This means God paid our sin debt by Jesus' blood to ransom us from our sin. The gospel proclaims Jesus as the only Savior from sin, one who took our place, bore our shame and condemnation, and died our death that He might give us His life. And He did this so that those who hear the gospel can trust and receive Jesus by faith. **When we hear and believe God's revelation in the gospel, "by faith" means we receive Jesus' sacrifice on the cross through repentance, giving up our sin to receive His forgiveness and cleansing.**

And Jesus, the One who IS the gospel, by His revelation and our response of faith, invites us to Him.

Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Matt 11:28

Do you want to be known by God? He has revealed His love for you in Jesus on the cross. He invites you to respond by placing your faith in Jesus. **Intimacy with God, being known by Him, begins with God's invitation by revelation of Himself for you to respond in faith to Jesus.**

TRANS And when you trust in Jesus, God brings you near to Himself.

2. ACCESS for communion in personal relationship.

The God who loves by invitation welcomes us into His presence. We who were created for Him but alienated from Him NOW have access to Him; we are reconciled to the Father through Jesus Christ.

in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him. Eph 3:12

God comes near and makes a way to bring us close to Himself. And our access to God through Jesus Christ is our boldness and confidence in knowing and being known by God. Being in God's presence is not merely the place we run when troubles or problems arise. This is our eternal dwelling place. God's presence is the place in which we reside, where we remain to abide in Jesus for righteousness to form within us.

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, Rom 5:2

As we respond to the gospel by placing our faith in Jesus, we remain in God's presence to commune with Him in personal relationship. Our relational knowledge of God expands, strengthens and deepens as we release self to Him and He pervades to saturate more deeply into our heart, mind, spirit and soul. **Access for communion is the place where relational intimacy with God begins to bud and grow.**

READ Hebrews 10:19–22

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ...²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Heb 10:19, 22

Access for communion is where we share our fears, insecurities, vulnerabilities, and pretenses, so we can be helped in our weakness and strengthened in our relationship. Access for communion is where we lay our burdens down, cast off our sins that so easily entangle, where we remain and abide to receive the power of God in direct response to conquer the sinfulness of our life; where we put ourselves off to put Christ on; where we become less so He can become more in us; where we die to self so He can live in us. **Access for communion is where we throw off the insufficiency of self to hear from God and receive the full sufficiency of Jesus Christ for us.**

ILLUS Like the four-year-old who, just after being bathed and feeling good, streaks from the bathroom shedding towel to enter the family room stark naked and declare, "Hello family, I am here!" And father / mother laughs, and throws arms open to receive her/him, far more glad that he came than he is that he has to come. | And, like the toddler that crawls into mother's / father's lap before bed and says, "read to me." **The longing we have for our Creator is satisfied as God has given us access for communion by our Savior, Jesus Christ.**



Access for communion is when we run into God's presence fully confident of being washed and cleansed from sin! It anchors our lives in God through Jesus, His love, His truth and His glory! Intimacy is not for a few, but for all who come into the inner chamber where God abides. God comes near to all who draw near to Him. [God gives access for communion so relational intimacy can bud and grow within all those who come near to Him.](#)

[Are you addressing the longing of your soul 'to be known' by running to the One who formed you to know Him? Intimacy with God buds and grows by His access for communion in personal relationship with Jesus when we remain and abide.](#)

TRANS Intimacy that buds by access for communion always move toward fulfillment in obedience.

3. OBEDIENCE for the glory of redeeming love.

If you want to understand God's Word and know God's Will, you must be a "doer" of God's Word. God's grace enflames the affections to fuel the heart with courage and strength to walk in obedience to Jesus' commands. God's command to Joshua, "*be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you.*"(Joshua 1:7a) is not a summons of some personal, inner force, but a command to trust God's power regardless of the accusation within or opposition on the outside. [Obedience is where you experience God's power working through you.](#)

[For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. 1 John 5:3](#)

Yes, you can act in ways that have "*the appearance of godliness*" without having a true relationship with Jesus. But when you live this way, you always deny God's power in your life that produces His righteousness within you.(2 Tim 3:5)

Obedience is far more than merely adherence to rules and regulations, or participation in rituals and rites. It is the full expression of our faith and relationship with Jesus. He is Lord. His commands give life, produce joy, provide strength, and bear fruit in keeping with righteousness. Obedience always precedes full intimacy. [Obedience is the posture of full surrender for our heart and life before King Jesus, Lord of all.](#)

As long as you rebel and fail to walk in obedience to Jesus' commands, you will never have confidence and strength in Him, and you will lack assurance in your relationship with Him because you are denying the full culmination of intimacy with God that comes only through obedience, the power of his righteousness. [Faith claimed without obedience forms false familiarity with Jesus that deceives.](#)

The purity of true, saving faith is not familiarity but intimacy with Jesus; you know Him and He knows you because you walk by Holy Spirit at all times, in all circumstances. ANYTHING short of obedience by faith is counterfeit Christianity, claiming to know God, but NOT being known by God'. [Obedience is the action that demonstrates our love for God by faith in Jesus.](#)

Saying "Lord, Lord" without doing what He says is a condemnation on the soul! Participating in Christianity, being familiar with the church, going through the motions, et al, proves nothing in and of itself. [Obedience to Jesus is the distinguishing characteristic for the true follower of Jesus.](#)

[A life of obedience to Jesus distinguishes the real Christ-follower by intimacy over familiarity with Him.](#)

[Intimacy with God through Jesus Christ is the only way to rest confident that your eternity with God is secure.](#)

On THAT Day what will you hear Jesus say to YOU? Does Jesus know your name?

