

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Taught by Bruce Bickel

Session: November 30, 2012

Heavenly Father, we are reminded that we are here today as a result of the old rugged cross. Father, as I think of leadership, I think the two most profound leadership statements ever made were, first of all, "It is finished," which meant that Christ has accomplished our salvation, not made it possible, but actually accomplished it, and secondly, "Follow me." Father, as we think about the cross today, we thank you that it is finished, our salvation is finished, and that we can follow you because of your marvelous, gracious regeneration of our lost souls. Father, you tell us that we are to use our time wisely because the days are evil, and so we pray, Lord, that we would use this time wisely, that we've come to sit at your feet, that you'd be pleased, once again, to open our eyes that we might behold you more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen.

We're continuing our study on the Sermon on the Mount. We're coming to Matthew 7, the last chapter 5, 6 and 7, so I'd invite you to open your Bibles and follow along as I read Matthew 7. I'll be reading from the English Standard Version. Let us hear the Word of the Lord.

Audience Member: Thanks be to God.

¹"Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. ⁶Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. ⁷Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! ¹²So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. ¹³Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. ¹⁵Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. ²¹Not 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.' ²⁴Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷And the rain fell, and the floods

came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. ²⁸And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Audience Members: Thanks be to God.

The handout I gave to you guys, lesson 15, let me describe it for you so you'll understand what we're doing. The first page is really sort of an overview of all of chapter 7. Basically, chapter 7 summarizes the Sermon on the Mount and our responsibilities to trust God in the following areas. First of all what it is we need, we are to learn to trust him and how we need the things that he provides for us. Then he summarizes how to treat other people, and then how to live as a kingdom citizen.

In chapter 7, he also teaches us the kingdom principles of true judgment. We're going to look, today, and the next couple of weeks, it'll probably take us the rest of this month to go through chapter 7, to really look at understanding the difference between judging other people and being discerning. Often times, we have a tendency to say, “Well the Scripture says don't judge anything,” so we just take our hands off and we don't draw any lines in the sand, and people get away with whatever they want. That's not the spirit behind Matthew 7. We'll get into that and understand the whole section on true judgment.

We look at our responsibilities in the first 12 verses. We'll see our responsibilities to the saved, to ourselves, to the ungodly and to the Lord. We'll take a look at that, and then we'll do that as a quick overview, and then we'll go into greater detail. As you'll see on the next page on the handout, we'll look at the issues of true judgment.

With that in mind, let's just take a quick overview of chapter 7 of the book of Matthew. First of all, in the first 12 verses, Jesus gives us an exhortation about our responsibilities to the saved. You'll see that in verses 1 and 2. We are not to harshly judge other believers. The word “judge” there does not mean evaluate. It means have a critical spirit. The idea here is you and I are not to look other believers with a critical spirit. In other words, we are not the ones who have the right to check their motives. You and I have never been given the ministry of motivational checking. At the same time, we're told to be discerning. We'll go into greater detail on this in a moment. The issue here is don't have a critical spirit against another believer. You've got to be discerning.

Secondly, our responsibility to ourselves. We are to harshly judge ourselves. If you're going to judge anyone, judge yourself. But don't judge other people. In other words, be discerning about yourself just as much as you are discerning about other people, but if you're going to judge somebody harshly, judge yourself, not other people.

You've heard me say over the years, when you study the Scripture, you don't go banging people over the head with the Scripture. If you're going to bang somebody over the head with the Scripture, bang yourself. That's where it starts. We'll get into this in greater detail.

Then we see our responsibilities to the ungodly. You'll see that in Matthew 7:6. We are not to give holy things to depraved people. We've got to be discerning. In other words, Jesus makes it very clear you don't throw your pearls before swine. Sometimes you and I have to be discerning about who we speak to

about the Gospel of Christ with because of their potential response. You've got to be discerning to know your audience somewhat. We'll go into greater detail of this. Often times, you hear people say, "Well I'm just going to do this and go do that, regardless of what they say."

You see, you've got to realize that the message we have of the Gospel of Christ is a treasure. You've got to be discerning where you give it away. That doesn't mean that you're afraid or you're flippant. It does mean you're discerning. You see, the whole thing about chapter 7 of Matthew is you're discerning. One of the great fallacies of the church in America today is we've lost discernment. We're not very discerning, and that's because we've taken this imbalance of Matthew 7 and say, "Oh, we can't judge anything."

Well first of all, brothers, we need to know this. Scripture has already prejudged everything. It's already been prejudged by the Scripture so there's nothing left for us to judge. What we can do is discerningly point out, but you and I are not discerningly judging people because we don't have a critical spirit. But the Scripture has already prejudged everything.

***Don:** Yeah, Bruce, just a couple of things. It used to be that in America, the favorite verse of people was John 3:16, "For God so loved the world the he gave his only begotten Son." Now it's Matthew 7:1, "Judge not lest ye be judged." Very interesting because of what you said, the lack of understanding of that verse. If people would realize, even in verse 6, for example, Jesus said, he calls people dogs...*

Exactly.

***Don:** ...he called people swine. Is that a judgment? Yes. We're to discern, ..be warned against false profits. Is that a judgment? Yeah. Whatever Jesus means there, it doesn't mean no judgment whatsoever, of anything.*

Well said. That's well said. That's what we need to understand. We've just taken this umbrella statement of 7:1, "Do not judge lest ye be judged," and said, "Oh therefore I can't point out anybody's faults." That's not the whole point. The issue here is the critical spirit. It's how you go about doing it. I'm going to show you verses where there's obvious things that [UNCLEAR] said, "Don't do that!" He says, "Kick the man out of the church." What's that? That's discernment. That's judgment. We've got to understand the context of this, because it is such a great fallacy. We've just taken this totally out of context and use it as an excuse, "Oh, I've got to be kind and gentle and..." Yes, you need to be kind and gentle, but you also need to be discerning. That's the thing I hope that we can learn over the next several weeks. How do we discover a sense of discernment back into the church, into our spiritual lives?

We see our responsibilities to the saved, our responsibilities to ourselves and a responsibility to the ungodly. In other words, we are not to give holy things to depraved people. We are not to give holy things to depraved people. We'll go into greater detail and find out what that means.

Then we see our responsibilities to the Lord. You'll see that in verses 7-11. First of all, the command is we are to diligently seek God's will. We've talked about that before, about the difference between his revealed will and his secret will. The secret will are things you're never going to find out because they are?

***Audience Members:** Secret.*

Secret. Quit looking for them. Spend time finding out the revealed things. They're in the Scripture. We've gone through those six things that are the revealed will of God—that you're saved, that you're sanctified, you're spirit led, you're submissive, you're suffering and you're saying thanks. Those are the six issues of God's revealed will. That's the same will for everybody here in this room. We'll go into greater detail on that, but that's what we need to understand. There's a difference between the secret things of God, as we're told in Deuteronomy 29:29, and the revealed things of God.

When Jesus is talking about seeking the will of God, he's talking about the revealed things. He's talking about God's revealed will. That's where we find that in the Scripture. So no, you will not find out what job you should take. That's secret. But you'll find out how you should act if you take this job. That's revealed. You'll see that's part of your sanctification. It's part of your submissiveness. It's part of your suffering. Those are all elements of God's revealed will. We'll get into this in greater detail.

Secondly, the confidence is this. He promises to reveal his will if we ask for it. We'll get into, "What does this mean? You mean I can ask for God to reveal his will to me?" Yes. But you've got to understand the right context. We need to understand that when we use the phrase that I pray in Jesus' name, we're not just adding a little appendage to our prayer to make it legitimate, to impress God.

When you make a prayer and you say, "I ask this in Jesus' name," basically what you're basically saying is this. Whenever you use the words "name of God," you're talking about all the attributes, the characteristics or the nature of God completely. When you say, "I pray in Jesus' name," you're saying that my prayer is consistent with the character, the nature and the attributes of the person and work of Christ. That's what you're saying when you say, "In Jesus' name." You're basically saying this practically, "The prayer that I just said is consistent with Christ's nature. It's consistent with his character. It's consistent with his attributes, and it would be the same verbiage, the same prayer that Jesus would have prayed, if he were in my shoes, right now, in this situation in my life." That's what it means when you say, "I pray in Jesus' name."

Look how flippantly we just say a prayer and just say, "In Jesus' name," because we think that's going to make it legitimate. You see, we need understand what it means to seek his will. What are we looking for? What does it mean to ask correctly? You see, there's an incorrect way to ask and a correct way to ask. We need to understand what that means. We'll go into greater detail on all of this.

Lastly, the comparison. Notice the comparison you'll see in verses 9-11, "If we being sinful can give good gifts to our children, how much more will our gracious Heavenly Father impart of his children good gifts?" You see, there's a contrast. If you think that you and I can do good things for our children, just think what God can do for his children. That's why I appreciated so much, The Old Rugged Cross, because it just reminded me of that wonderful gift. The reason you and I are here is because of the gift of the old rugged cross. You see, that's why we're here, because it is finished. He didn't make your salvation possible; He accomplished it. You're here because of a past-tense event in your life where the Holy Spirit was pleased to apply something that occurred in past-tense reality. That was the accomplishment of your salvation at the cross.

We see the great confidence that we can understand how much more he is going to give us, because if we are sinful and depraved, and we do good things, just think what he can do, who is perfect, who's

absolutely glorious. You see, that's what he's going to do. We need to understand the confidence that we have as believers.

Then lastly, we'll get into our responsibilities to the world. You'll see that in verse 12. We're to treat others as we would want them to treat us. As Don mentioned, years ago, the number one verse was John 3:16. In recent years, in recent decades, it's become 7:1, "Do not judge, let's ye be judged." When I was at the Christian Bookseller's Convention several years ago, with John MacArthur and R. C. Sproul and a couple of other brothers, we were walking through the audience looking at all the booths and all the things that were being shackled and being showed off at this Christian Booksellers' Convention. You had, I mean, it was so trite. You had mints, "New Testamints." You had mints with Bible verses on them. Does that make my breath better? Then you had bars of soap in the shape of a cross, and it says, "Wash your sins away." We were must walking through there just grieving. Now and then, there were some books being sold. There's all sorts of stuff. They had t-shirts with Jesus doing a push-up with a cross on his back. Just trite stuff. It just reminded me of the temple and all the... Jesus going in and getting rid of all the trash at the temple.

We went and around and started asking people, "What's your favorite Bible verse?" Just kind of broke up and did that. We came back. Do you know what the number one verse was this? No, it was this, "God helps those who help themselves." {LAUGHTER} That's what they said was the number one Bible verse. I spent the last 12 years looking for it. {LAUGHTER} Can't find it. I can't find it. But that's what the Christian community was saying, "God helps those who help themselves. That's my favorite verse. My life is built upon that principle." Forgive us, Lord, but our life is built upon the old rugged cross. It's Christ and Him crucified.

Bill: *I found it. {LAUGHTER} It's part of Greek mythology. [UNCLEAR]...*

Oh, okay. Well certainly not biblical theology. We've gone from John 3:16 to 7:1, now to God helps those who help themselves. I wonder what will be next.

Tom: *It's like that old hymn, "My faith is based on nothing less than Scofield's notes and Scripture press." {LAUGHTER}*

That's pretty good.

Don: *How about the 16 wise ones? I know where in the Bible you can have 16 wives—for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer. {LAUGHTER}*

Okay, back... {LAUGHTER} Whoa! We talked about being discerning. {LAUGHTER}

Well let's go back and take some of this apart. That was just the overview of what we're going to look at over the next couple of weeks. That would be your first page. Let's go to true judgment. That's what we want to look at in the spirit of Matthew 7. We need to understand a little bit of the history of this. The Scribes and the Pharisees were guilty of exercising what I would call a false judgment—about themselves, about other people, and even about the Lord himself. Through their false righteousness, helped them to encourage this false judgment.

What is the basis of false judgment? It's false righteousness. It's thinking that your righteousness is of your own doing. It's when you have a basis of a wrong righteousness syndrome, then you're going to have a wrong judgment syndrome, because one feeds the other. When you and I understand what it means to be justified by faith alone, and you're given credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ, you now have a different platform for judgment. That's the spirit of Matthew 7. The error of, the fallacy of the Pharisees was they had a false sense of righteousness, and that's what produced in them a false sense of judgment.

This explains why our Lord really closed this important Sermon on the Mount with a discussion on true judgment, upon discernment. That's what we'll discuss in these different judgments as we look at it.

The first one is this. Our judgment of ourselves. That will be verses 1-5 of Matthew 7. The first principle is that we begin with ourselves. Jesus did not forbid us to judge others, for careful discrimination is essential in the Christian life. Christian love is not blind. Look at Philippians 1:9-10. Christian love is not blind. It's discerning. The person who believes all that he hears and accepts everything who claims to be spiritual and experience confusion will [UNCLEAR] spiritual loss. In other words, you've got to be discerning about who do you listen to.

We're going to go, later on, in a couple of weeks, and go through John 10, where Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice and they recognize me." One of the great indications of your own spiritual maturity is this, brothers. Who do you listen to? Do you recognize the true false, the true voice from the false voice? Or do you just agree with anything that comes down the pike?

So many people say, "Have you read this book or that book?" I say, "No, why would I?" "Because it sold four million copies." Well, you know what the number two best-selling book in the world is? It's Mein Kampf, next to the Bible. Does that mean I go read Hitler's book just because it's popular? You see, that's the mentality we have in the Christian circle. We've got to be discerning. We've got to start with ourselves.

Anyone who believes everything that comes down the pike, or agrees with everything they hear, is going to be very, very frustrated and have tremendous spiritual loss in their lives. Therefore, we do judge others, but not with a critical spirit, but with a discerning spirit. We start with judging ourselves first of all.

Let me just show some examples of judgment. When I use the word judgment, I'm not saying a critical spirit; I'm talking about a wise discernment. That's what we're talking about. If you want to look for the word judgment here, it means a wise discernment. Let's just look at a couple of examples to help us understand that Matthew 7:1 does not mean that we're not discerning.

Let's go to Matthew 18:15, and we'll put all this in the right context. I want you to understand, first of all, about what we mean by wise discernment. Go to Matthew 18:15, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone." What have you done there? You've been discerning. A brother has sinned against me, I recognize that, I don't go with a critical spirit, I go with a spirit of reconciliation. But I go talk to him about it. That's a judgment. That's a wise discernment. You just don't let it go by. You and I have got to exercise wise discernment.

How about Philippians 3:2, “Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.” That’s a warning. You’ve got to be discerning. You’re judging something. No, I’m not going to do that, because my wise discernment says that’s not going to be healthy for me. It’s not consistent with God’s will in my life. Therefore, I’m discerningly saying no, I’m not going to do that. You’ve got to look out for it. That’s a rather strong judgment there with the use of that word, “look out.” He’s not just saying let everything go by. Don’t judge that. He’s saying be discerning.

Another example might be 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” What’s he talking about? He’s talking about judgment. He’s talking about wise discernment. Not with a critical spirit. You see, you’ve got to judge yourself first. You’ve also got to exercise wise discernment.

Where do we exercise wise discernment? It’s first of all by judging ourselves. It starts with looking at ourselves. That’s where you learn how to do it. You practice it on yourself. Then you have the right spirit and take it to someone else. Don’t get this idea that you and I are not to be judging or to be evaluating or to exercise wise judgment. We certainly are.

What are some of the reasons? Before we judge others, we must judge ourselves. Why is it? There are several reasons why we must judge ourselves. First of all, you’ll notice in Matthew 7:1—we shall be judged. The tense of this verb, judged, here in Matthew 7:1, signifies a once-for-all final judgment. If we first judge ourselves, then we are preparing for that final judgment when the Lord, when we face the Lord. This is talking about our final judgment. The Pharisees played God as they condemned other people, but they never considered that God would one day judge them or condemn them.

First of all, we understand this; that we are being judged, and we will be judged. That’s one of the reasons that we start with judging ourselves. We know this; that we will face a final judgment. That’s a motivation for us to examine ourselves in a moment by moment basis.

Then we are being judged. You’ll notice that in Matthew 7:2. The parallel passage is really Luke 6:37-38. Let’s turn to that. “³⁷Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.” Here we’re talking about God’s merciful treatment of us. You can understand... we need to realize that we are being judged. The way that we respond to other people, they’re going to respond back to us. Part of that will be their judgment of us.

We need to realize sometimes they’re going to say this statement, which you’ve heard, “Oh, you’re holier than thou.” Now that’s because they’re basically saying you’re not applying Matthew 7:1, “Because you’re judging me; you’re holier than thou.” Well you know what? They’re right. We are holier than thou. Not because of anything we’ve done, but because of our justification. That doesn’t mean you have this spirit of going out and exercising that with a sense of pride. It ought to be with a tremendous sense of humility.

Sometimes people remind us of we’re being judged when they make that statement, “Oh, you’re holier than thou. You’re judging me.” You see, that ought to be a warning to us to say, “Am I exercising wise discernment?” You see, because in reality, it may be that you are holier than them because of God’s

grace. That doesn't give you a sense of pride or ego. It ought to drive you to your knees with great humility, realizing the old rugged cross is because of that, and that it is finished.

We realize, first of all, not only is there going to be a final judgment, but we are in the process of always being judged and being reminded because how we use our wise discernment will come back to us.

Bill: *It should also be a check to yourself when you hear that to make sure that you first have judged yourself [UNCLEAR]...*

Amen! Say that again. That's really profound. We need to hear that. That's the whole point of why we need to judge ourselves first.

Bill: *I was saying when we hear those comments directed at us, that should be a reminder—have we checked ourselves first to make sure that we haven't taken the plank or avoided the plank in our own lives [UNCLEAR]...*

Excellent. That's why we start off by judging ourselves before we exercise wise judgment on other people. Where do you learn to exercise wise judgment? You learn it by examining yourself. That's where you learn it.

Don: *As far as examining yourself and discerning others, where do you draw the line? For example, I know people who say that they're Christians, but there's no, at least as I can see, no tangible fruit that I can see. They have no desire to go to church, they have no desire to know the Word, to fellowship with other believers, etc. They've been living in sin. After I've made sure that I haven't been a hypocrite and judged myself, where do you draw the line between discernment...what should I say to them? Should I say, "Oh, you're a Christian," or should I...what should I say? How do you draw that line?*

That is a tremendous question, and I think we'll get into that in the book of 1 John. I think one of the best questions you can ask, in that situation, is the simple question, "Tell me, who do you say Jesus is?" Just ask that question. Who do you say Jesus is? Tell me about his person and his work. Just ask that question. They're either going to give you some semblance of truth in that because they are regenerate, or they're going to be all over the place and reveal that perhaps they are not regenerate.

There's a difference between a person's profession of Christ and their confession of Christ. There's a difference. The word confess, homologeo, means to say the same thing as what somebody else has already said. The reason I ask the question, "Tell me, what do you say about the person and work of Christ of Christ?" is I want to see if they're agreeing with what the Scripture says about person and work of Christ. That's what I'm looking for. I just want to see, are they saying that Jesus is sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient in their own expression. They don't have to say the words that I would say, but I'm looking for that. I want to see do they really understand the person and the work of Christ. You see, that's the central issue. People have the Jesus of their own imagination or the Jesus of biblical revelation. So I ask that question.

The second thing is think is important to do is perhaps then take them to the book of 1 John where you see the seven tests of a true believer and the seven traits of a person who's been truly born again. Have them, or guide them, back into the Scripture to let the Scripture reveal whether or not they are. You and I

are not motive judgers. All we can do is take them back to the standard of excellence, which is in the Scripture and let the Scripture reveal that. You'll know by their fruit.

There's some evidence, sometimes we just don't know that. It's difficult to go around and pronounce somebody being a Christian. Notice the weakness of our evangelism. What do we do in our evangelism? After they've said the sinner's prayer, we ask them this question, "Where's Jesus?" "Oh, Jesus is in my heart." "Would Jesus lie? No. You're a Christian." It takes ten seconds. Is that true? It may be. It may be. Is that consistent with the Scripture? No. The Scripture says there's going to be evidence of increased righteousness in their life. You can't find that in ten seconds. It may take some time. There's a difference between the profession of Christ and the confession of Christ. I want to find out are they confessing, are they agreeing with what the Scripture says about the person and the work of Christ.

When I was working the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, sometimes somebody would say to me, "Is so and so a Christian? After he scored his touchdown, he genuflected. That means he's a Christian, right?" or whatever they were doing. You could same thing about a musician or a banker or anything else, so I shouldn't pick on athletes, but that's just my background.

They used to say, "Well, somebody's got to be a Christian." It's just that they wanted this person to be a Christian so bad because it made him feel better, "I really hope this guy, who's on my team, is a Christian because I feel much better about it." All I could say, honestly, was this, "He professes Christ, but I don't know if he confesses Christ." There's a difference. Professing means make a statement about. You see, sometimes people will make a statement about Christ, "Yeah. Christ. Good guy," whatever they want to make. That's a profession.

A confession says that Jesus is sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient. That's why the question I ask is this, "Tell me who do you say Jesus Christ is," because I'm looking to see if it's a profession—a good philosopher, a good teacher, a good moral leader, a good example. Or am I looking for the Savior of the world and God's only son. However they would say that. I'm looking for the difference between a profession and a confession. That's critical to understand.

Tom: *I think also in the current church in America, we focus too much on "are you in or are you out." Are you born again or are you a heathen? We don't say [UNCLEAR] raise up. The discipleship is almost forgotten. Someone can be a Christian, think he's a Christian, but be a babe and never mature, never grow, because he's not trained in the Word.*

Bob: *I just got to say I'm reminded again of another expression that you gave and I've taken some liberty with [UNCLEAR], but you talk about if you want to know the condition of your heart, listen to the words you say. What do you allow your eyes to see? Where do you spend your money? That's a good test as well.*

Those are all very good tests. One of the reasons I ask the question, "Tell me who do you say Jesus Christ is" is because I want to listen to their words. Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. You see, you're going to get a lot when you ask that question. It's a very simple question. But just listen. You're going to be revealed a great deal.

Bill: *The original question is what do you do with a person that says or XYZ? I think the latter part Matthew 7 here talks about this specifically, and that goes back to your point. We may not have enough information to judge.*

That's correct.

Bill: *But we know enough information to discern.*

Exactly.

Bill: *If we don't see fruit, we can discern, and then that should probably [UNCLEAR] are we now dealing with [UNCLEAR] at this point. We need to be very careful with your time because there may be a more profitable area that God wants you to be in as opposed to being in the area of dogs and swine. That's why he gives us seven to go through. He goes on to say that these branches are thrown into the fire, and he takes these people that say they know him and [UNCLEAR] saying, "Lord, Lord," which is some sign of intimacy, and saying [UNCLEAR] I don't know you at all.*

We ask this question, "Do you know Jesus?" Let me do it like the Southerners, "Do you know Jesus?" {LAUGHTER} Part of my prejudice comes in. Anybody who says that, you can't trust. {LAUGHTER} I'm sorry about that. We always ask this question, "Do you know Jesus?" The issue is this; not whether I know Jesus. Does Jesus know me? That's what he says in Matthew 7, "Some of you are going to say, 'Lord, Lord,' and I'll say I never knew you." The real question is don't say, "Do you know Jesus?" say "Does Jesus know you?" They're either going to understand what you mean, or you're going to blow them out of the water, and you might have a great discussion.

The real issue is does Christ know me. Was I on his mind when he was on the cross? The old rugged cross. You see, that's the beauty of that statement, "It is finished." Your salvation has been accomplished, not just been made available. He accomplished it. Does Jesus really know me? What is the evidence of that? John 10, "I listen to his voice. I enter by the narrow way." There are all sorts of ways. Ask the question, and listen to the words, because that's going to reveal the condition of their heart.

Audience Member: *I want to take a step back here and move to what you talked about earlier with regard to hypocrisy.*

About what please?

Audience Member: *Hypocrisy. [UNCLEAR] I just kind of accept it, I think for the rest of my life, people can call me a hypocrite, because basically, I'm espousing things that I'm not living up to. Because I'm espousing those things doesn't mean that those things have less value; it means that I'm trying to hold myself to a higher standard.*

Correct.

Audience Member: *So people are like, "Oh, you're a hypocrite," and they think that ends the argument. I don't think that ends the argument.*

That begins it.

Audience Member: *Yeah. I'll own up to that. You bet I'm not [UNCLEAR]. That doesn't excuse anybody else [UNCLEAR]...gloss over that.*

Yeah, we do. Somebody says, "You're a hypocrite," say "Yes." Why do I join the church? Because I want to be around other hypocrites, so we can learn how not to be so hypocritical. You're absolutely right. I'm the biggest hypocrite I know because all the stuff that I spent all these years learning, I don't do it all. That means I'm a hypocrite. That's why you come to faith in Christ. You realize this; that's where you're trusting his salvation, your trusting his justification, not your own. You realize that he's given you credit for his sinless perfection and perfect obedience and not your own. You're trusting that in him, not yourself.

But yes, you see, that's why it starts with our examining ourselves because who are the biggest hypocrites we know? It's the Friday men's group, because we've been now for 17 years, we know much more than we did before. What that does is it's polishing this off. As we go through this, we've got to start with ourselves. That's why I'm really espousing this idea of learn to be wisely discerning by wisely discerning yourself. Examine yourself. Practice on yourself.

Sig: *We could call ourselves the Brave Hypocrites. {LAUGHTER}*

Privately. {LAUGHTER} We go public on that, people will take it out of context, like they do everything else.

Brian: *Where's sanctification in all of this?*

Sanctification—well, it goes justification, sanctification, glorification.

Brian: *Right. But...let me ask that better. Recently, positionally [UNCLEAR]...how can we...*

Don't ask how. And you can't ask why. {LAUGHTER} I cannot be your Holy Spirit, so don't ask me how. And don't ask me why. I don't have God's mind. Go ahead with your question. {LAUGHTER}

Brian: *[UNCLEAR] sitting here wondering, people profess faith, and we have to allow for sanctification [UNCLEAR] one person's starts is not where another person starts, so I don't want to misjudge. My guess is it goes into I have to be patient, relational, have deep conversations and not just try to pass judgment as quick and to truly have that time to discern [UNCLEAR].*

Discernment takes time. To be wisely discerning takes a lot of time. You just can't come to an instantaneous expression of evaluation immediately. Here's where sanctification fits in. Look at this. You go from left to right—justification, sanctification, glorification. The purpose of your salvation is glorification, not sanctification. The purpose of your salvation is glorification. That's everything you'll see in Romans 5, 6, 7 and 8. The purpose of salvation is glorification.

Justification is freedom from the penalty of the law, the penalty of sin. Justification is freedom from the penalty of sin. Sanctification is freedom from the power of sin. The Holy Spirit is our sanctifier. The

Holy Spirit does the sanctification process in us. That is something that he works in us. There's a difference between spirituality and maturity. We do not become more spiritual.

Spirituality is a definitive statement about the person and work of Christ. It's an absolute. There's one absolute, and that is the person and work of Christ. That is spirituality. Worshiping a tree and jumping up and down at the moon is not spirituality, even though people will say it is. Spirituality is defined by the person and work of Christ. That's an absolute. You and I do not become more spiritual; we become more mature. Maturity is less of me and more of Christ. That's a process that goes through your life. That's what the Holy Spirit does in you.

That's why you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you. That's Romans 6 and 7. When you're justified, the Holy Spirit is given to you. He becomes the sanctifier. He does the work of sanctification in you. What happens is that it produces us to be more like Christ and less like ourselves. That's what we call maturity. We realize this; that spirituality is an absolute. I don't become more spiritual. I become more mature. I will become more spiritual at my glorification, when I am free from the presence of sin. That's what glorification is. That's why the goal of salvation is not eternal life. The goal of salvation is your personal glorification.

Bill: *1 Corinthians 1:30 and Hebrews 10:10 say Jesus is our sanctification. It's all [UNCLEAR] the main subject. I think there's a problem, in what I call legalistic circles. It's the other side of the coin here. The people say, "I don't judge, but I'm very proud to be a fruit inspector."*

That's true. People say, "I'm proud to be a fruit inspector." Well that right there, you're falling into judgment. That's that critical spirit again. That's legalism.

Bill: *I think I want to get back to Brian's comment, and Bill's comment, and say yes, but. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ for all intents and purposes here, saying that he will complete the good work he's done in you. Nevertheless, we still need to take a look at all the Scriptural passages that talk about our human responsibility. What is the will of God? We talked about the secret will of God and the [UNCLEAR] will of God. We can clearly go to 1 Thessalonians 4:3 and what is the will of God according to Scripture? The will of God is to be sanctified.*

That's it. That's revealed.

Bill: *By definition, that has some kind of human component and instruction saying this is where you're needing to be. The other aspect at the tail end of Matthew 7 that we're about ready to go to at some point a year from now {LAUGHTER} [UNCLEAR] action motivated [UNCLEAR]. There are things that are a human response. We are told to not. We are told to see. [UNCLEAR] just happening; we are by definition actively involved in the process because of the active verbs in [UNCLEAR].*

I think a summary statement is found in Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13) Christ doesn't do it in me; I do it through him. You see, I do it through Christ. That's where we do it. The sanctification—we have responsibility. You have to teach the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man equally powerfully at the same time because we have responsibilities. That's why Jesus says in John 14, "If you love me, you'll obey." That's a responsibility I have as part of the process of the Holy Spirit.

Where are you going to get the motivation to obey? That's the work of the Holy Spirit. I don't decide to do that myself. I have to put some skin and bones on that, and I have to apply what the Holy Spirit's generating me to do, and that is to want to obey; therefore, I've got to obey. There's a cooperation if you want to say that, but really, the generating force is the Holy Spirit does that. You and I have a responsibility to exercise that. The sanctifying work is done by the Holy Spirit.

Tom: I think, in Hebrews, when he's talking to the Hebrews who are not growing in Christ, who are kind of just not maturing, in Hebrews 5:13, he says, "You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a child. Solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."

Let the word of God dwell in you richly. (Colossians 3:16) Brian, that's your process of sanctification. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly. The Holy Spirit will do that. We've got to break it up, guys. We'll pick this up next week. You can see we're going to be on this for a while {LAUGHTER}, which is fine, because it's so critical that understand the difference between a critical judgmental spirit and having wise discernment. That's what we've got to figure out. How does the Scripture teach us to be that kind of a man. It starts with yourself. Practice wise discernment against yourself before you go do that to other people. Let's pray.

Father, this is such powerful stuff because it's so contrary to our human nature and our human pride. We think that we are the standard of excellence. We think that we've got everything down. Remind us, Lord, that our thoughts are not like yours, and your actions are not like ours. Father, help us be humbled by the significance of your sinless perfection and perfect obedience. Thank you for the reminder that the reason that we are here today is because of the old rugged cross. All the Brave Men said...Amen!!