

## **“WHO AM I REALLY”**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I’ve just returned from our bike tour. It’s a special privilege, we cycle hard, meet some new people, eat well and there is a fair amount of social interaction. One of the people I spoke to told me how they are also a Christian, how they go to church on Sundays, how their parents also serve the Lord. I was blessed to speak to such a person. Then, one night, the drinking and partying was going to be heavy, so I left and went to bed. Sadly, the person I had spoken to didn’t, they stayed and partied – after all its just innocent fun isn’t it? Later that night, in an inebriated state, some of those partying went off and swam in a pond in their underwear. There were both men, and women.

As I pondered this situation, I couldn’t help but wonder how one could reconcile being a Christian who regularly attends church and openly confesses their Christianity with carnal behaviour including heavy drinking, carousing and whatever else takes place at a time such as this. My concern is that this is broadly accepted in Christian circles and probably even happens in this congregation. Is it okay to behave in such a manner as a Christian? Can we say that Jesus was accused of eating and drinking with sinners so its ok if we do the same? Let’s look at what Jesus had to say.

### **MESSAGE**

**Matthew 15:8** (NKJV) ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honour Me with their lips, But **their heart is far from Me.**

The real issue here today is about the condition of our heart! We can say all the right things, but our behaviour will reveal whether our heart belongs to Jesus. That’s why Solomon wrote in **Proverbs 4:23** (NLT) Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

A good test is to listen to what we are saying ALL the time, not just what we are saying around other Christians.

**Luke 6:43-49** (NKJV) “For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44 For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. 45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

***So my first questions to all of us here today are these:***

- ***Do we declare that we love Jesus, confessing Him publicly?***
- ***Does our behaviour change when we are not around other Christians?***

- ***If we were to assess the fruit of our life, would we find good treasure or evil treasure?***
- ***Do we pass the "words" test? They will reveal the state of our heart and reveal to whom our heart really belongs.***

### **LOSE IT!**

**Mark 8:35** (NKJV) For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

Worldly entertainment and behaviour, money, pride, acceptance and such are all examples of things that our carnal nature seeks after. The flesh desires this "life" and sometimes it can be a struggle to draw the line between what is acceptable for the believer, and what is not. The truth is that we do need to make sacrifices and crucify the flesh and its desires for the sake of knowing Jesus.

**Mark 8:36** (NKJV) For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Gain in this world is nothing compared to what awaits us in eternity. Let us rather be willing to give up on earthly pleasures and treasures so that we will have eternal life in Christ Jesus.

### **Challenge:**

- ***Are the desires of the carnal nature really worth risking our eternity for?***
- ***Is being popular worth it?***
- ***Have we slowly compromised more and more to the point that someone who doesn't know we are a Christian would not be able to identify us as a Christian?***

### **WHAT DOES JESUS EXPECT?**

**John 14:23** (NKJV) Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

Jesus wants us to obey Him by keeping His word!

He wants to bring His Father and make His home with us. We would be foolish to think that our compromised behaviour will result in a life where we abide in the Lord and He in us!

He wants us to live a solid rock type of life, and not the shaky life of compromise which causes all things to fall down around us!

## **JESUS HAS THE FINAL SAY!**

When we think we can live a watered-down, compromised Christian life, we make a huge mistake. **Here's one of the scariest things Jesus said:**

**Matthew 7:21-23** (NKJV) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

***Why would we live a compromised life when we have this powerful warning from Jesus Himself?***

- ***Can you imagine after living in compromise, thinking you are still okay for heaven, then hearing the terrible words, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"***
- ***We need to work out our salvation with fear and trembling – it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God!***

## **OBEYING JESUS VS. DISOBEYING HIM**

**Matthew 7:24-27** (NKJV) "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

We sang this song in Sunday school, "build your house on the rock". It truly is the only way. Follow what Jesus taught and you will stand, and your life will be secure, particularly on the day of Judgement.

But... if we choose to rebel, compromise and disobey, living according to our own standards of righteousness, we are not going to stand, **all we can expect is a great fall!**

***The choice is ours, what will we do with it? Are we rock builders of sand builders?***

## **THERE'S NO FOOLING JESUS**

There was once an Emperor from China who had no children and needed to choose a successor. Thousands of children from across the kingdom came to

the palace and were surprised when the Emperor exclaimed that he was going to choose one of them. He gave them all one seed. They were to go home to their villages, plant the seed in a pot and tend it for a year. When they returned in a year, the Emperor would judge their efforts and choose his successor.

There was a boy named Ling who received his seed and returned to his village. His mother helped him to choose a pot and put some soil into it. Ling watered his pot every day. Once a week, the children of the village would get together to compare their plants. After a few weeks, there were signs of life in all but Ling's pot. The weeks passed and Ling continued to water his pot every day.

After a few months, the pots really came to life. Some had trees starting to grow, some had flowers, and some had leafy shrubs, but poor Ling still had nothing growing in his pot, leading the other children to make fun of him.

Ling continued to water his pot every day. A year passed and it was time to return to the palace to show what had grown and decide on the new heir.

Ling was anxious as his pot still showed no signs of life. "What if they punish me? They won't know that I've watered it every day, they'll think that I'm lazy." His mother looked him in the eye and explained that whatever the consequences were, he had to return and show the Emperor his barren pot.

Ling and the other children entered the palace gates. By now, some of the plants were looking magnificent and the children were wondering which one the Emperor would choose.

Ling was embarrassed as other children looked at his lifeless pot and scoffed.

The Emperor came out and started to make his way through the crowd, looking at the many impressive trees, shrubs and flowers that were on display. The boys all puffed their chests out and tried to look as regal as possible, hoping that they would be chosen as the heir to the empire.

Then the Emperor came to Ling. He looked at the pot then he looked at Ling. "What happened here?" He asked. "I watered the pot every day, but nothing ever grew." Ling muttered nervously. The Emperor grumbled something to himself and moved on.

After a few hours, the Emperor finally finished his assessment. He stood in front of the children and congratulated them on their efforts.

"Clearly, some of you desperately want to be Emperor and would do anything to make that happen, but there is one boy that I would like to point out as he has come to me with nothing. Ling, come here please."

"Oh no," thought Ling. He slowly sauntered to the front of the group, holding his barren pot. The Emperor held up the pot for all to see and the other children laughed. Then the Emperor continued, "A year ago, I gave you all a seed. I told you to go away, plant the seed and return with your plant. The seeds that I gave you all were boiled until they were no longer viable and wouldn't grow, but I see before me thousands of plants and only one barren pot.

Integrity and courage are more important values for leadership than proud displays, so Ling here will be my heir."

Just like the boys couldn't fool the Emperor, we can't fool Jesus! God knows the state of our heart and He can see everything we do and hear all we say.

We need to live out our Christian lives in integrity if we ever want to enter God's kingdom!

## **CONCLUSION**

**Who are we really?** This morning we have been challenged about our Christian walk. Is it genuine or is it a compromised walk? Will it stand the test of time and bring us into God's kingdom, or will it crumble like a house built on the sand as Jesus says, "go away from Me, you worker of iniquity, I never knew you?" Are we genuine Christians or pseudo Christians?

I conclude this simple message with three more parables Jesus told:

**Matthew 13:44-47(NKJV)** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46 who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. 47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48 which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

The kingdom of Heaven is a treasure beyond price, it's worth crucifying all other desires for.

Many will ask Jesus to be their Lord and saviour, some will serve him with their whole heart, others will serve the Lord on their own terms, looking the part, but being far from Him in their hearts. When the separation comes, where will we be placed? **Today I challenge us to decide who we really are. Let us make sure our portion is with the just!**