

## Counterfeit Disciples

John 2:23-25

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Let's turn in our Bibles to the Gospel according to St. John, chapter number 2, this morning. I'd like us to consider together verse 23 to verse 25. John chapter number 2, verse 23 to verse number 25.

Now, when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. Let us pray.

As we have just sung, Lord, so we pray that You would speak to us, O God. That You would, Lord, at this moment, see fit, Lord God, to send forth the Holy Spirit with the grace of conviction, Lord, to open the eyes of our understanding, to draw us nearer to the Lord Jesus Christ, to magnify Him, and to humble us, so that we might see ourselves for who we really are before You, and might know fully more of that mercy which is to be found in Christ Jesus our Lord. I pray that You would empower me by the Holy Spirit and fill me, Lord, that as I speak, that I would speak, Lord God, so as to strengthen Your church, so that it will result in the edification of the body of Christ, and that it would lead to the benefit of Your people and the glory of Your name. So I ask Your help and strength in Jesus' name, Amen.

Well, last week we began a series on discipleship, and we sought to answer the question, "What is a disciple?" What is a disciple, and we considered what the meaning of a disciple is, and essentially what we also recognized that not all disciples are true Christians. We have cases like Judas in the scripture and others, but we also learned that every Christian is a true disciple, and that you cannot separate the two in that you may, for example, come believe on Christ but not follow after Christ. And we considered how these two things are incompatible in this scripture, and that a disciple of Jesus Christ, a true disciple of Jesus Christ, is a true Christian who does follow after his master and his Savior, and as we continue through the series of what is a disciple, I thought about this text as an important place to continue from, and to talk about a topic that is solemn, have solemn spoken about but even very sober, and that is the reality of counterfeit dis-

ciples.

Counterfeit disciples, we considered that question or we consider that, should I say, statement that not every disciple, not every disciple's a true Christian, but every true Christian is a disciple. And so then we understand then, then how do I know that I am NOT a counterfeit disciple, or how do I know that, to be able to discern that in my own life as it were.

Now why should we address such a topic? Why should such a topic of such solemnity and sobriety be considered? Shouldn't we just all be happy and go on our way without examining ourselves in any form? Well, the Bible teaches us quite the opposite and teaches us of the importance of self-examination because Matthew chapter 7, verse 21 to 23, which we are all familiar with, which says many will say to me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? Have we not cast out devils, have we not done many wonderful works?" Then Jesus said, "I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of iniquity or workers of lawlessness." That text of Scripture hasn't had past fulfillment; that text of Scripture regards the day of judgment that is yet to come, and if you read the Word of God, in particular the Gospels, and in particular Matthew chapter 13, you will find that the age in which we now live is made up of mixture in the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven, as was read to us today, goes forth in the preaching of the gospel, but as Jesus said, "Take heed how you hear," or "how you hear the word of the Lord," because in Matthew chapter 13, it teaches us that this mixture will continue to the coming of Christ. The mixture includes goats among the sheep, it includes tares among the wheat, it includes bad fish among the good fish, that all get dragged into the kingdom through the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, yet will have their final sorting and sifting at the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So what's important for us to realize that while we live here and now, it is incumbent upon us as professing Christians to mark our profession, to consider our discipleship, are we truly of the number among those who are the sheep of God? Are we truly those that follow in the ways of our master, or are we one that will receive a surprise on the day of judgment?

Now the problem of mixture in the kingdom is very deep; the problem with sheep and goats is that from a distance they may look quite similar, or wheat and tares, and good fish and bad fish, and what simply that reveals to us is that in the kingdom of God, there is a cohabitation, cohabitation among the disciples, if I could say, among the professors of Jesus Christ. There is a cohabitation and a likeness of an appearance, which makes self-examination a very, if I could say, stressful exercise to those who do not understand how to go about it, I could put it that way.

But what we must realize first and foremost is that there is no perfect resolution to the problem of mixture in the kingdom of God; the perfect revolution, resolution will come when Jesus comes, and He will sort out and see if those who profess His name. Faithful evangelism might reduce the problem, might reduce the amount of false professions that we have today, but the essential problem is of a spiritual sort, it is a spiritual problem. And it's a problem with human nature as the Bible says to us that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it, and so this reality of mixture in the kingdom and in the day in which we live, still understanding that we're a part of this time of where there is mixture, this calls for need of self-examination, in fact. Exact self-examination is necessary. The mixture will exist and will continue to exist in Jesus's own disciples, there was one who did not really belong to Him. Even amongst the finest gospel preachers in the New Testament, the Apostles, they had those who were false disciples and false converts. And so we must realize that while we are yet here in this world, there is need for self-examination. The reality calls for it, but it doesn't call for it with a kind of psychological torment, so as to discover am I or am I not. God does not play games with His creatures. This we must be certain of. But rather as the Bible teaches us in 1st John 5:13, God desires that we might know that we have eternal life. In fact, He has dedicated an entire epistle to answer that question. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe in the name of the Son of God." And so God is concerned that His people will know where they stand before Him. In fact, that is important for Christians to know. Assurance of faith is an important grace that we should have. However, we must be very careful that our ultimate resting place is not in our assurance, but a 2nd Timothy chapter number 2, verse 19 says, "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands sure, having this seal: The Lord knows those who are His, and that everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Let us take courage that even though our assurance may fluctuate, God knows our hearts, even if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.

And so the way forward into this subject of counter discipleship and self-examination is not to examine all the false converts in the Bible and in the history of the church, the way forward, best way forward, is to consider the issue as a banker does when trying to determine false notes from true notes of false currency. A banker studies not all the false ones that come out because you can never keep up with all the false ones. They come up with new styles and the crooks always have their new strategies. But one thing the banker does is so familiarizes themselves with the true currency that so handles the notes that are true and are so familiar with it that no matter the kind of false that comes into the into the life of the bankers for

examination, they will be able to tell. A banker takes a note and because they're so familiar with the notes, they can detect true from false. They don't have to study all the false and work out, "Is this false?" and question every note, that would take a lifetime of trying to just work out things, but if they are familiar with the truth, they would know when they hold up the note into the lights, they will be able to discern whether or not that note is true or whether that note is false. And although we're going to consider this passage which talks about men's faulty faith, one thing we must be sure and what we will also consider is the marks of a true disciple, so that we might understand what God says about those who truly belong to Him, and strip our own minds of our own perhaps false ideas so that we can hold our lives up into the light of God's Word and understand where we stand as disciples of Jesus Christ.

In the text that was read this morning in John chapter number two, we are introduced to a group of people who believed on His name. These were those that were found out to be false disciples, but they were those nonetheless that professed and believed on His name. Look what it says in verse number 23, "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did." The key issue was that yes, they had faith, but there was a faulty faith that they had in the Lord, and how do we know that this was a faulty faith? Well, consider the response of Jesus in this passage. In verse 24 it says, "But Jesus did not commit Himself to them because He knew all men and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." And what this passage teaches us is that Jesus did not commit Himself to them because He knew the kind of faith that they professed, He knew their hearts. He understood exactly why it is that they believed on His name. He knew what was in the heart of man. He saw what we cannot see. Some have translated this passage as this, "Jesus was not entrusting Himself to them." In fact, the word "commit" is the same word translated as "believed" in verse 23. So these people believed in His name, but then it says, "But Jesus did not believe in their belief," we could say in a common vernacular as it were. He had no faith in their faith. That Jesus was not, did not commit Himself to them because He knew the kind of faith that they professed. He had no faith in their faith. So He did not commit Himself to them as master, as Savior, as Lord, because He knew what was in men's heart, and He needed not that anyone should testify to Him about man because He knew all men.

The omniscience eyes of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, could see right through what man cannot see, and He saw right into the heart of these professors and said, "I'm not going to commit Myself to them because I know all men." And so these people had a problem with their faith, but what was the problem with their faith? It just says that they believed on

Him, right? Means sure, they saw miracles, but they believed on Him. In this same chapter, in chapter 2, verse 11, His disciples saw miracles at the wedding of Cana when He turned water into wine, and they believed on Him, and it was fine. Why was it different here? Well, the difference is marked by the fact that Jesus knew something that we don't really know about them, but the hint that we get is this word, "When they saw the miracles which He did," or "when they were beholding the miracles which He did," they believed on Him, and what could be most likely the case for why these people had a faith which did not warrant the commitment of Christ to them, was that their faith was resting not in Messiah but in the miracles.

You see, the miracles as performed by Jesus were meant to point to Him being Messiah, so that they might believe in Him and trust in Him as a sufficient Savior for their sin, as their deliverer, as the one who would save His people from their sins, yet some only followed Jesus because they believe Jesus to be a miracle worker and felt that Jesus could benefit their lives on a physical level and not really understand their sin problem and need for Him. They did not discern that the reason that Jesus came into the world was to save sinners. What they thought was that this man has come to give us our best life now, as it were, and so they believed on that kind of a preacher. Who wouldn't, right? He's going to do us some good in life, isn't he? Going to take away our problems, make everything new, fresh. We're never going to have a struggle again, and so we'll follow Jesus so long as He makes our path one of roses. But Jesus, He said Himself, said, "Wide is the gate that leads to destruction. You see, the wide way's the comfortable way, many there be that go in that way, but narrow is the way that leads to life, and there are few that find it."

And so these disciples, these professors, as the text tells us, or infers, or implies, these were not people who had true faith. They were pursuing perhaps the benefits and the blessing, and their profession was misplaced. They were blinded by what they could be benefited from from this Savior in so much that they did not discern why Christ came into the world. And do not be surprised, the testimony of the scripture is furnished with examples of the same. Consider Simon the sorcerer under the preaching of Philip there at Samaria when the evangelist Philip went there and preached the gospel, says many believed on his name. Philip preached the gospel, did miracles among the people, many believed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as a result of his ministry. But Peter and John came to see what was happening there and to, as it were, affirm the ministry and what was happening there, and what happened was they saw Simon the sorcerer saw that through the laying on of hands of the Apostles that people received the Holy Spirit, and he said, "Give me this power also. Here's some money, let me buy this power also so that on whoever I lay my hands they might receive the Holy Spirit." And Simon Peter looked at Simon the sorcerer and

said to him, "Hey, listen, the gift of God can't be purchased with money. Your heart is not right in the sight of God," he said, "your money perish with you because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money." And Simon the sorcerer was confronted and exposed by Peter in so much that Peter said, "You are still yet in your sin. You are bound in iniquity." Simon the sorcerer said, "Pray for me that none of these bad things will happen to me." I thought it was amazing. Why, if a man was truly converted, why would he plead with another man to pray for him that he might be forgiven of his sins, that nothing bad will happen to him? If you know that forgiveness only comes through Jesus Christ, why would you be saying to Peter, "Hey, Peter, pray for me so this doesn't happen to me?" You should know exactly where to go for forgiveness of sins. You should know exactly where to go to have your bond of iniquity loosed. You should know exactly who to go to say you that you would not perish with your money. But instead, this man was exposed as one who was false because he sought the miracle once again and the power, not the Savior, or he sought the position of the Apostles and not the Savior Himself.

The same is true of the children of Israel. There was enthusiasm when they were delivered by the Lord out of Egypt with a mighty hand made bear. They saw the enemies destroyed by the Angel of Death, and they saw the Red Sea part, and as they went, they saw their enemies drowned in the Red Sea, and they went on their way rejoicing in a great victory that God had wrought for them in their salvation, and they were there following Moses, singing the praises with Moses and Miriam, the praises of God. Yet the Bible says to us in Hebrews that they did not all enter into His rest because of unbelief. In fact, the Bible teaches us in 1st Corinthians chapter 10, verse 1 to 13, it says that most of those that were there rescued out of Egypt, most of those were under the cloud, they passed through the sea, they were baptized unto Moses, that ate spiritual food, they drank the same spiritual drink, the Bible says that God was not well pleased with them, and in so much that they were overthrown in the wilderness, and Paul uses the example of these people to say that they never entered into the promised rest because of unbelief, and he says, "Therefore, to him that thinks he stands," he says it to a church, "take heed lest he fall."

I mentioned those that on the final day will stand before God, and they would look at the Savior and say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name?" and they will point to all the ministries that they had for God, all the great things that they had done in the name of Jesus Christ. But Jesus will profess to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity." And He's going to simply say, "It is he that does the will of my Father in heaven, that is those that are truly mine." Doing the will of the Father in heaven, I believe, is in the context, is the evidence of those who truly belong to the Savior, belong to the Savior as exemplified in the Sermon on the

Mount, which is finished in that last few pat, pat, last illustration of these men. But before that, Jesus has described those that are truly disciples of His, those that really do the will of the Father, those that have been really regenerated, those that truly know Him, and He knows them. And He says to these people, although you have done many wonderful things for me, you do not know me, and I do not know you, and therefore you will perish. Very sober, isn't it?

Judas was one of those, will be one of those. He was one who did many wonderful things for the Lord, did he not? But he will stand before God on the final day, and he will hear the words, "I never knew you; depart from me, you worker of iniquity." But the Bible doesn't say there only be a few that hear those words like Judas. The Bible says that many will say to me in that day, and beyond that, in the same passage in Luke chapter 6, verse 46, He says these words concerning the same people, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Essentially, your profession of faith means very little in light of your failed obedience and commitment to me. That your failure to do the will of the Father which in heaven testifies to your profession that it was and is not of God. It is not of a saving sort of faith.

The people that I'm describing to you are those who trade Jesus as Judas for whatever they fancy most. It could be 30 pieces of silver. It could be they could throw away Jesus because they got the bad end of the stick. "How could God do such a thing to me or allow me to go through such an issue in my life? Therefore, I don't want this God." It could be for a pursuit of wealth, it could be for the pursuit of worldliness like Demas who forsook Paul, who forsook the Lord, having loved this present world. But it's these people that at one point in their lives they thought that they loved Jesus, but when that love was put to the test with something else, it gained their attention over the Lord in so much that it took them away finally from the Lord. Of course, a Christian struggles and battles with our affections. If you don't understand that, then I wonder whether even you're a Christian yourself. The struggle, the war against the flesh and the spirit is real. Our affections are always being tugged in different directions as to the things of this world or the things of Christ. But what marks out a true disciple from a false is that he gets up and follows Christ. He does not forsake Christ. He forsakes all that he has to win Christ, as Paul did there in Philippians.

And so this had a problem with their faith, but the problem of their faith testified in the reality that they would not continue on with the Lord as furnished by those other examples of scripture. But let us consider briefly now some of the marks of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. And the best place to go, and if you would like to turn there, let's go there together, it's in 1st John. And in 1st John, I'm just going to bring out a few, there are

many marks of those that belong to Christ, and not just in 1st John, but I want us just to consider a few in 1st John. And in 1st John chapter number five, verse number 13, John explains the purpose of this epistle. In the face of false teachers and what was the early stages of Gnosticism and the distortion of the person and work of Christ which resulted in bad behavior of many, but he says here, and look at verse number 12, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." And John says, "I've written these things for the very purpose that you may have an assurance of faith, that you might have an assurance as those that profess to believe in Jesus, that you might know, you might know that you have eternal life. This is not some hidden secret that you may never discover this side of eternity; this is something that the Lord desires His people to know." And how are we to know this? Well, look at 1st John 4, verse 7 and 8. Here is a passage that talks about love as the mark of those who believe in Jesus. It says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." Very plain, isn't it? God is love. Love is of God. He who does not love does not know God. Why? For God is love. And here John simply says that if you don't have love for God, love for the brethren, love for others, then it testifies to the fact that you don't know God. What is he saying here? What is simply saying here is this, that if you have experienced the love of God in Christ Jesus the Lord, what should be true of you is an outflow of the love which you have tasted. If you have tasted of a love that you do not deserve, the matchless love of Jesus dying for sin and bearing our sins in His own body on the cross, and you have tasted of that, the overflow of that should be love for others, and this should be a mark in your life, one who loves others. Matthew chapter 5, verse 44 says that love your enemies. It says, "Do good to those who curse you and those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." And He says this, that you may be the sons of your Father in heaven. The Father causes the rain to rise on the just and on the unjust, and we can't even bless those that persecute us. We want to repay everyone that crosses us. Here the Father gives to those who despise Him, give to those who do not bless Him, give to those who persecute His name, give to those who drag His name in the dirt. He gives the sun to rise, and He gives the rain to bless. And He says, "You can't do the same for your enemies?" If a Christian lives in bitterness, I say lives in bitterness, and he's not troubled by that bitterness so as to repent and turn from that bitterness, you can be almost certain that that person does not know God. "For love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." "By this all men know will know that we are our disciples by our love one for another."



But secondly, another thing is obedience. Look at chapter 2 of this same epistle, verse number 3. It says in chapter 2, verse number 3, "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." I love the plainness of John, doesn't let us question anything here. It's okay, love, examine yourself. Is there love? All right, here's another thing, obedience. Do you keep the commandments of God? It amazes me how many people that profess to know Jesus Christ hate the restriction of laws and rules. We just want to be free. And God sets us free. You know what God sets us free to do? To serve Him, to love Him, to obey Him, because that's the very thing that we could not do prior to knowing Him. And so John says here that if those that believe that salvation leads to licentiousness, where they can live the way that they please, let them be sure and understand that they do not know God. Those that hate law and rule and governance, those that hate God's Word that tells them to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Him, you can be sure that they do not know Him. They do not know Him. They don't know Him. It's amazing how many people follow Jesus up until the point where Jesus asks them to do something that they don't want to do, and then they walked away from Him. And I think the problem in the Christian church today is that there is an entertainment and a social and a religious entertainment of the goats, I think as Spurgeon said, rather than the feeding of the sheep. And perhaps to say something and call men to repentance and ask people to examine themselves and to bring people to the place where they must be commanded to follow Christ and to leave their sin and to break up with that relationship that dishonored them, and then they walk away from Him. Commanded to follow Christ and to leave their sin and to break up with that relationship that dishonors God or to break up that relationship of fornication or to part with pornography or to pursue God and to leave your anger and leave your bitterness and to take up your cross and follow Jesus Christ, and the Christian says, "No, I don't want that kind of Christianity. I want to go to a place where my ears are going to be tickled, I'm going to feel comfortable." Well, the Bible says if you don't want to keep God's commandments, don't deceive yourself. You don't know Him. You don't know Him.

1st John chapter 3, verse number 6, talks about a power that should be overseen in the lives of those that truly know the Lord. 1st John chapter 3, verse 6, "Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him." Verse 7, "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifest, that He might destroy the works of the devil." And here's the lesson: God did not send His Son into the world in vain. Meaning, Jesus was sent into the world to destroy the works of the devil. His cross does not only forgive those who believe on His name, but it delivers those from the power of sin in their lives. And that sim-

ply means that those who know Jesus should not be marked by a practice of unrighteousness, but rather a practice of holiness and godliness. And once again, I'm not talking about struggling with sin and wrestling through those things, but we should fear when we're beset by sin. We should fear to flee to Christ for forgiveness, for mercy, and come to Him that He might raise us up and help us walk in His way. But the Bible is clear here that the power over sin is the work of regeneration in the heart, and the cross purchased that for all who believe on Jesus Christ. The cross purchased that for His people. And so when you have believed on Jesus Christ, not only should there be forgiveness, but there should be power, a new power, so that the life that you lived prior to your conversion should look different to the life that you live now.

And the final one for consideration is in chapter 2, verse 19. Chapter 2, verse 19, John says this, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be manifest that none of them were of us." John's saying is there's a group of people that existed in this fellowship at one point in time that no longer follow the Lord, and their leaving of the community of the Christian fellowship and their going after the world gives evidence that they were not truly ever of us. And so the final mark is the mark of perseverance, that is a perseverance of faith, where there are many people that profess Jesus today and no longer profess Jesus anymore. And I'm not talking about just people, even laymen in the church, I'm even talking about preachers. I'm talking about men that have stood in pulpits like I'm doing right now. And this is why it's a fearful thing to preach the Word of God, it's a fearful thing to, to, to hold fast the word of truth. Pray for me. Pray for those other men in the pulpits. Pray for one another, that God will help us, that we'll continue on in the glory of God. But many men have sinned and fallen and never returned. They no longer continue with the Lord and with His people. They don't continue in their confession, but neither do they continue in their adherence as disciples of Jesus Christ. And the Bible teaches us that there are many who fall away in that way. Paul says in 1st Corinthians 15, "I declare to you the gospel that which I've preached unto you, that which you have believed, by which that gospel you are also saved, if you hold fast that which I have preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain." Paul says, or the writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 10:39, "But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul."

I set before you this morning the marks of those that believe in Jesus, some of the marks, some of the categories that we should think about when we think about ourselves in light of the Word of God. And my friends, let it be so that we do not weaken or we do not undermine what the scripture teaches in our self-examination. It has been the very testimony of the godly

that have meant many false professors to Jesus. I had a case of this just a few years ago that encouraged my soul, someone who I was working with who said, who was working with spiritually trying to encourage him in their relationship, didn't know if they knew the Lord. But people started getting converted around them, and he started to observe their lives that they were bearing these kinds of fruits, this kind of love and affection for Jesus that he did not find present in his own life. And this brother, after four years of thinking he was converted, he said to me one day, "I need to meet up with you. I need to ask you a question. I don't know if I really know the Lord." "What's going on?" "I see these things." I said, "I'm not going to tell you if you're saved or not. That's not my business. I can't tell you that. But I'm going to tell you what God says about salvation in His Word, and you be the judge." And he went away that day from that place, went out into the bush or in the park, and he cried out to the Lord for mercy, and he's been saved since that day. And his life has testified to the fruits that are found here in the text of scripture. And you wonder, four years self-deceived? Yes. John Wesley, perhaps even longer. He was preaching a Christ that he did not know even. And it was a testimony of others that helped him to consider his way.

And so, dear Christian, as we consider these things, let us think soberly about the parable of the sower. That among those four soils, three of them received the word. Three of them. One by offense no longer pursued and continued, and it withered away. The other was choked by the cares of this world. One was snatched by the seed; it wasn't even really received into the ground of the heart of man. The last one fell on good soil. The Bible says that the man had good understanding, and it bore fruit in his life, some 30, some 60, some 100. And the marks of a perseverance were there because fruit doesn't come overnight, but the marks of perseverance were there. That the seed went in, sprung up, bore fruits, and testified to the reality that it was truly sown in righteousness by the grace of God and in such a way that led to saving faith in the sinner. The question comes to us then this morning: Do you bear the marks of a true disciple of Jesus Christ? If you do not, mark your profession this day.

Can you say with the hymn writer, "My faith has found a resting place, not in device nor creed; I trust the ever-living One, His wounds for me shall plead. I need no other argument, I need no other plea; it is enough that Jesus died, and that He died for me. Enough for me that Jesus came, He ends my fear and doubt; a sinful soul I come to Him, He'll never cast me out." You, the only hope we have is in Jesus's blood and righteousness, my friend. Our faith cannot rest in the sinking sand of mere miracles or in the sinking sand of the benefits that we might receive, or on the faith of our parents, or on the good deeds that we have done prior in our life, or perhaps the ministries that we are fulfilling this hour. Our faith must have a

more sure foundation, and it must rest surely in the blood of Jesus Christ. Mark your confession. Consider your way this morning, and I plead with you in love that you might come to know Jesus if you do not know Him, that you might be drawn out of the blindness of Satan who holds men captive, making them think that they are saved when they are not, and that you might be set free by the mercy of the Son of God.

Why did you come to Jesus? Was it the same reason that He came for you? "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." What is the nature of your faith? Is it mere intellectualism? Is it because you can deduce the truths of the gospel and relay them by, by, by, by statement at will? Is it because you know the Apostle's Creed that you think that you belong to Him? My friend, be not deceived. The faith that saves is the faith that bears fruit unto God. It does not just come with profession; it comes with power, and there must be a life of regeneration to give evidence to it. And you can quote the Bible back to front, growing up in a Christian home, but never have tasted of the grace of God. You may know to tell where to find, you may know to point the hungry to the Bread of Life, where you yourself have not yet eaten. You may tell others, "Here is drink," but if you drank yourself of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

Dear Christian, dear professor, if there is no conviction, conviction, if there is no contrition, if there is no change, if there is no charity, if there is no chastening, you can be certain that there has been no conversion. And some say, "I'm too scared to come out and say I don't know if I believe in Jesus because what will people think of me?" Don't worry about what people will think of you, my friend. It only matters what the Lord thinks of you. It only matters to know that you have your soul in the hand of a Savior that is merciful and mighty to save. To know that your sins are forgiven. Be not deceived, my friend, "Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" Therefore, examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. But you might say, "Josh, I have been through this, and even now as you're preaching, the Spirit is bearing witness to me that I belong to Jesus." Well, take courage, dear Christian, that your salvation is in the hands of one who never fails. Take courage, take courage, dear Christian, that you have believed in one who will bring you home. "For who shall lay any charge against God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, yea rather, He is risen from the dead and is seated on the right hand of God, and He makes intercession for us." So, for nothing shall separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord, my friend, not even your doubts will separate you from the grip of an almighty Savior. "For He who has begun a good work in you will perform it to the day of Jesus Christ." You can be sure that He will hold you fast because He loves you with an everlasting love. Let us bow before the Lord in prayer.