

“My Greatest Fear as a Pastor”

Matthew 7:21-23

Sunday, March 7, 2021

Introduction: I want to talk to you this morning about my greatest fear as a pastor.

- I think it may surprise you to know what it is.
- I think it will surprise you how it relates to you as well as it relates to me.

Picture three posts.

- Picture the first post as the word “what.”
- Picture the second post as the word “why.”
- Picture the third post as the word “how.”

Post one: What is my greatest fear as a pastor? **My greatest fear as a pastor is that I would not make clear what a person must do to go to heaven.**

Question: How could I do that?

1. In my sermons give assurance to non-believers.
2. In my one on one sharing with people give assurance to non-believers.
3. One day I will stand before God and be accountable for how I cared for souls (Hebrews 13:17).

Question: How could I do that?

1. Tell people that if they believe in God that one day they will go to heaven. The Bible says, “Even the demons believe there is a god” (James 2:19). Just believing there is a god will not get you to heaven.
2. Tell people that if they believe that Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood to pay their sin debt that one day they will go to heaven.
3. Tell people that if they ask Jesus to forgive them of their sins that one day they will go to heaven.

Application: You do have to believe in God to go to heaven. You do have to believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay your sin debt to go to heaven. You do have to ask God to forgive you of your sins to go to heaven. All this is true, but many people believe all three of these and according to the words of Jesus will not go to heaven.

T.S. This leads to the second post.

Post two: Why is this my greatest fear? It is my greatest fear because of the words of Jesus.

Text: Matthew 7:21-23

In this passage, Jesus mentions three groups that thought they were going to heaven who would hear Jesus say. "I never knew you."

The three groups:

1. **The proclaimers**—those who openly professed to be saved.

- Mentioned twice—called Lord! Lord! twice
- Made their profession public
- Been baptized
- Joined the church
- Always at church
- Always glad to give their salvation testimony
- Family members thought they were saved
- People at work thought they were saved.
- People at school thought they were saved.

2. **The Prophesiers**

- The preachers
- The teachers
- The ministers
- The missionaries
- The singers

3. **The Producers**

- Zealous
- Successful in God's work
- Busy in God's work
- Those who can't do enough

Question: Who will go to heaven?

Answer: Those who believe in God and believe that Jesus shed blood on the cross was payment for their sin debt and have asked God to forgive them of their sins and have repented of their sins.

- Faith without repentance is half the gospel.
- Preaching faith without repentance is preaching half the gospel.

illustration: In the first sermon Jesus preached as He began His public ministry He said, “Repent and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

Illustration: Preaching to a crowd Jesus said, “You will perish unless you repent of your sins and turn to God” (Luke 13:3).

Illustration: When Jesus sent the disciples out two by two, they preached that people should repent (Mark 6:12).

What is Repentance? The Greek word translated “repentance” is *Metanoeo*. Real repentance involves four things.

1. A heart-felt sorrow for sin
2. Turning from sins
3. A commitment to forsake sins
4. Turning to God.

Illustration: Sorrow for sin without forsaking sin is not repentance. It is worldly sorrow. The Bible says, “Worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death” (2 Cor. 7:10).

Illustration: Remorse, regret and guilt for past actions is not repentance. Judas is an example of this. The Bible says, “Judas was remorseful...brought the 30 pieces of silver ...said he had sinned...went out and hanged himself (Matthew 27:3).

Illustration: Billy Graham said, “You have to ask God to help you with repentance.”

T.S. This brings us to stake number three:

Post three: How does my greatest fear as a pastor relate to you? Have you repented of your sins?

- A heart-felt sorrow for your sins
- Turning from your sins
- Commitment to forsake your sins
- Turning to God

Invitation: This should be the greatest fear of every person who hears this sermon. Has there been a time when you repented of your sins and put your faith in the shed blood of Jesus to pay your sin debt?