

10 THINGS YOU WISH JESUS NEVER SAID
WEEK 3: I REJECT THE RELIGIOUS AND WELCOME THE WAYWARD.

I. STRIKING, SCARY, AND SOLEMN SAYINGS: MATTHEW 7.21-23—NO MORE CARDBOARD CUT-OUT, TWO DIMENSIONAL JESUS.

- A. The Scandal of Jesus on attack against the good people (Luke 15.1-2, Matt. 21.31, 23.1ff). What do you think was the emotional response of the Pharisees as they heard statements like this? (This is like saying, “Rod Blagojevich gets it before you do!”)
- B. What does this description have in common with the older brother of Luke 15?
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
- C. How do you think the older brother reacted to the Father and how do you think those to whom Jesus commands to depart will react (Matt. 7.21-23)? Why?
- D. Is it more dangerous to be a younger brother or an older brother? Why?

II. FINDING AUTHENTIC FAITH—WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELIEVE?

- A. Seriousness of the Question.
- B. Five Indications of True Faith
1. *Attitude*—II Cor. 13.5—Am I willing to examine myself thoroughly or do I just assume and presume upon God’s grace? Am I ever truly convicted of sin? Do I have only a smug satisfaction in my faith (Phil. 3.7-11)? Do you believe God owes you? If we think we’re just fine, if we think that no one should question my faith, no one should question my relationship to the Lord, if we think we’re walking pretty tall and doing pretty well, if we think that everything is ok because I behave and I go to church often, then we’re moving away from God (I Peter 5.5).

“When a newspaper posed the question, “What’s wrong with the world?” the Catholic thinker G.K. Chesterton reputedly wrote a brief letter in response: ‘Dear Sirs: I am. Sincerely Yours, G.K. Chesterton.’” This is a man who is needy, who needs grace to live. Are we desperate for Jesus? **Ex:** Prayer Requests.

2. *Aim*—The Christian will have a new goal, a new end, a new horizon. The aim will not simply be to follow the rules or to get it right. Christianity will be more than a checklist of activities (Matthew 23.25-26). The question is not *are* we doing the right things but *why* are we.

Flannery O'Connor writes in *Wise Blood* of one of her characters, "There was a deep black wordless conviction in him that the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid sin." **Ex:** Why do we read the Bible? The Pharisees are living proof that there is a way to read the Bible that can kill you (John 5.39). Tozer: "The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts."

3. *Affections*—Is there a desire present, any real love for Christ? How does the older brother use His goodness/morality/religion? Read Luke 8.28. What is the difference between the behavior of this demon and that of a Christian? How would you tell the difference? We do this in relationships all the time. One check here is to ask ourselves what our emotional life is really like—do we have any joy or satisfaction in God? Are we always judging, angry, anxious?

"There may be a right opinion of God without either love or one right temper toward Him. Satan is proof of this." (Wesley) See also James 2.19

4. *Appetite*—Hungering/Thirsting after God, not just His gifts—Matthew 5.7, Is. 55.1, Ps. 37.4; II Cor. 4.4-6, Phil. 3.7-11, Heb. 11.6? Are we hungry or entitled?

"In the deep heart of the man was a shrine where none but God was worthy to come. Within Him was God; without, a thousand gifts which God has showered upon him. But sin has introduced complications and has made those very gifts of God a potential source of ruin to the soul." "Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended. God's gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution."

5. *Appearances*—Can't B.S. Jesus (Matt. 7.21-23) In the end, we can say, I did everything my parents asked me to do, I was always at church, I gave to the poor, I went to Christian school, I was a pastor/elder. Jesus will say, people respected you for those things and that was your reward. Are you just keeping up appearances?

"There are two ways to be your own Savior and Lord. One is by breaking all the moral laws and setting your own course, and one is by keeping all the moral laws and being very, very good." (Keller)

III. THE TRUE ELDER BROTHER

D. Bonhoeffer: "Costly grace is the hidden treasure in the field, for the sake of which people go and sell with joy everything they have. It is the costly pearl, for whose price the merchant sells all that he has; it is Christ's sovereignty, for the sake of which you tear out an eye if it causes you to stumble. It is the call of Jesus Christ which causes a disciple to leave his nets and follow him. Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which has to be asked for, the door at which one has to knock. It is costly, because it calls to discipleship; it is grace, because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly, because it costs people their lives; it is grace, because it thereby makes them live. It is costly, because it condemns sin; it is grace, because it justifies the sinner. Above all, grace is costly, because it was costly to God, because it costs God the life of God's Son and because nothing can be cheap to us which is costly to God. Above all, it is grace because the life of God's Son was not too costly for God to give in order to make us live. God did, indeed, give him up for us. Costly grace is the incarnation of God." John Newton:

*Our pleasure and our duty,
Though separate before,
Since we have seen His beauty,
Are joined to part no more.*