

THE NATURE OF A TRUE PROFESSION OF BELIEF

Matthew 7:7-23

Introduction: How can a person's spiritual condition/state be determined? Is it not exactly the same way that the value of other things is determined? How are different kinds of trees known? Is it not by certain characteristics such as the shape of their leaves and certainly by what is produced, the fruit? Therefore a person's true spiritual condition can be determined by what their lives are producing. It is what a person has done with his/her life that will be reviewed when one stands before God in judgment.

I. SOME ARE NOT TRUE TO WHAT THEY PROFESS.

1. Jesus pointed out that there are many who were deceiving themselves about the matter of religion.
 - God's Word is the test to compare one's "profession" to.
 - People can have much which bears a resemblance of "religion" while at the same time he/she is far from actually feeling/living what they profess to have.
 - One can say "*...Lord, Lord...*" professing to believe in Jesus, even with a lot of zeal and confidence but yet not have within him/herself that which proves a true relationship.
 - *Acts 8:13; John 6:70*
2. What effects does one's profession produce in his/her heart and life?
 - Is the will of God being done?
 - Is one living cheerfully, evenly, progressively as he/she walks with God as professed?
 - Does that person making a profession constantly set God before him/her, worshipping God in His/her Church with his/her family?
 - Does that one professing Faith act towards his/her neighbor as he/she might expect his/her neighbor to act toward him/her?
3. To judge one's profession as to whether it is true or not is related directly to how that person lives according to God's Word and shows scriptural evidence of being accepted by God.
 - One's faith is of no more value than it is revealed by how one lives.
 - If one "has no oil in his/her lamp, then no light can be shone to others" and he/she would be like the foolish virgins who were excluded from the wedding. (*Matthew 25:11-12*)

II. SOME DO NOT PROFESS TO BELIEVE IN ANYTHING

1. Some people deceive others and themselves in thinking that they have a true faith and there are others who point out the falseness of the faith of those who are pretending.
 - Those who point out the falseness of the faith of others do not pretend to have any faith or have any serious religious intentions.
2. If Jesus disapproves of those who make false professions of faith how much more does He disapprove of those who openly dishonor and despise Him.
 - Shall those who have never done anything for the Lord ever find favorable acceptance?
 - God's same rule of judgment is for both, the pretenders and the open non believers, all shall receive according to what each has done, whether it be good or evil.

III. SOME PROFESS TO BELIEVE AND PROVE IT BY THEIR WAY OF LIFE

1. Jesus very clearly stated that those who do the will of His Father shall enter into His Kingdom.
 - People who prove their profession by living it are extremely different from those who falsely profess to believe and those who openly declare their non belief.
 - People who are true believers do not parade their belief, are intent on living what they profess, and they do not boast of their "accomplishments" but rather are ashamed of their lack of doing their best all the time.
2. God knows who is sincere, true believers and who are not and it is God who will be the final judge, not those who think they are.

CONCLUSION:

1. It is a well know fact among pastors that of all the church membership of their church, only about 25% attend any given Sunday worship service, therefore 75% are absent.
 - Also well know is the fact that 20% of a church's congregation gives 80% of the church's financial needs (budget).
 - Where are the others who are not in attendance and who do not give? Are they true believers?
2. Jesus makes it very clear that it is better for one to have never professed to believe than for one to profess to believe but is not sincere, is not real, is not a true believer, is a pretender.
3. How does one tell a true believer then? By the way he/she lives his/her life. Is it one that is devoted to the Lord Jesus and is that person obedient to God's Word?