

Superficial Christianity

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[0 : 00] He is risen. He is risen indeed. I always get a response for that. It's always great. Like you're being listened to or something. Now we were singing that one song and I noticed over here, nobody's clapping over here.

Everybody's clapping. It's like, what's going on here? It's trying to have a revival breakout over here. I used to sit over here. I moved over there and I might move back over here if there's a revival going on.

Frozen chosen on this side. Frozen chosen, no. Chosen but not frozen. We're going to talk about that. I could have called the message that. Let me start over.

Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 6. I've been walking through the Gospel of Luke. And in Chapter 6, Luke records for us Jesus' sermon on the plain. He came down from the mountain after praying all night, choosing his 12 apostles. And then people gathered to him as he came down on the mountain on the plain and he did some healing.

[1 : 12] And then he preached to them this sermon that Luke records for us in Luke Chapter 6, beginning at verse 20. In verses 20 to 26, we looked at that a few weeks ago, Jesus gives blessings and woes.

And then in verses 27 through 36, the heart of his sermon, he talks about how we treat our enemies, how we love our enemies.

And then as we have looked at last week and this week, from verse 37 to the end of Chapter 6, is Jesus' application.

He gets to the heart of what we do with what he has said. So, I want to read.

I'm not going to read the whole sermon. I want to read from verse 41 in Luke Chapter 6. And if you're able, please stand as I read from Luke Chapter 6, beginning of verse 41.

[2 : 20] Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, Brother, let me take the speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye?

You hypocrite. First, take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit. For each tree is known by its fruit.

For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person, out of the good treasure of his heart, produces good.

And the evil person, out of the evil treasure, produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks.

[3 : 35] Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like.

He is like a man building a house who digs and digs deeper and lays the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it because it had been well built.

But the one who hears and does not do my words is like the man who built a house on the ground without a foundation.

And when the stream broke against it, immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.

[4 : 36] So read his words. Let us ask for understanding. Father, we pray that you would open our hearts and our minds today. As Jesus says, the heart is the issue.

Our actions and our words flow from our heart. What fills our heart. And so, Father, as we hear Jesus' words, we feel convicted.

We need new hearts. So show us that today. Make his words clear as they were on that day. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. So this is Easter. One of the most significant Christian days of the year. We rejoice in Christ's victory over sin and death. Yet.

[5 : 43] How many Christians even bother to ponder this day? I'm delighted to see many guests here today.

Delighted to see many of our members here today. But how can it be that so many who are Christians do not even ponder this day?

See, the Christian world, the Christian world, in my perspective, seems full of superficiality. And of course, I speak to myself in that as well. I am not above superficiality.

I can be that. But I'm speaking to a consistent superficiality. And it seems more than ever. There's always been hypocrisy, pretension, and falseness, and empty words.

But it seems lately, of late, it's more and more. Here's an easy measure. Those who call themselves Christians in this nation, who gather in church regularly, according to the Gallup poll, 10 years ago was 48%.

[7 : 04] 48% of those who considered themselves Christians gathered regularly. since COVID, it has dropped to 30%.

In fact, since COVID, one in three have dropped out completely. In other words, they don't even come on Easter.

It's stunning, isn't it? I mean, the statistic of 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 48%. That's stunning. Only half of those who call themselves professing Christians, evangelical Christians, don't gather with the church the very thing that Christ established by His death.

See, He did not just, frozen, chosen. He didn't, He didn't choose us and frees us. He chose us and made us alive. He chose us and died for us and changed us from the inside out.

And that shows. And one of our deepest commitments that Jesus calls us to is to love one another. It's His one new commandment.

[8 : 26] Love one another as I have loved you. That's how they'll know you're my disciples. And how do I love one another if I'm not with one another? Right?

How, that Jesus didn't even conceive that. The church is called the called out ones, called to gather. I'm not going to pick on that issue. It's just, I think it's just one measure of the superficiality that exists today.

Now I personally, as pastor, I personally believe God intended, He always intends things, doesn't He? He intended COVID to do some pruning. in the church.

I really believe that. So, Jesus speaks to this, what I've called superficial Christianity in His message.

These final words that we come to are part of a larger sermon. And as I was thinking this week, thinking back of this whole sermon, there's a lot there.

[9 : 36] How do you, what do you call this whole sermon? He talks about blessings and woes. He talks about loving our enemies. Then He talks about evaluating ourselves, right, and building on a rock.

He's got all these images. How do you, what do you call that whole thing? Well, I landed on humble peculiarity.

Now you gotta think about it. So, in His introduction, His message had three parts. First, He talks about who we are.

We have a distinct, peculiar identity with Christ. That's why we're blessed. Blessed are those who are poor. Blessed are those who hunger. Blessed are those who weep.

Blessed are those who are persecuted on account of Christ. They're particular kind of people. And they're blessed because they stand out from the world. And then in the heart of His sermon, He talked about how we treat our enemies.

[10 : 37] And that's quite peculiar. We love our enemies. We do good to our enemies. We bless them when they curse us. We turn the other cheek.

We don't take them to court. We forgive. We let it go. Why? What makes us so peculiar that way? What makes us go against everything in our nature to strike back?

What makes us do that is that we're children of God. Because we act like our Father. That's how God treats us. I was an enemy of God and yet He loved me.

I hated God and yet He did good to me. I cursed God and yet He blessed me. See? So we act like our Father. And now He concludes His message. How do we apply these words? So from verse 37 on He gives us these images. So let's look at the final measure that Jesus gives. [11:45] He's dealing with an honest application. And as He talks about in verse 43 through 45 two kinds of trees fruit trees and then in verses 46 through 49 He talks about two kinds of builders. In both He's talking about two kinds of people. And so these two applications reveal the kind of person I am. Okay? They reveal and so He's giving us pictures but He's also applying those pictures. Okay? So let's see if we can follow what He does. Two tests. So the first test is more general. Verses 43 to 45 He's going to talk about these two trees. These good and bad trees. These fruit trees. Right? So let me put it this way. Our first general application is this. Our words and actions reveal what fills our heart. Okay? That's what He's getting at. [12:45] A tree is known by its fruit. And the root that our fruit comes from is our heart. Our words and our actions reveal what fills our heart. So He's going to give three points to this. Verse 43 He's going to illustrate it with this picture. Verse 44 He's going to explain that picture. And verse 45 He's going to apply it. Okay? So His illustration verse 43 is fruit trees. Verse 43 No good tree bears bad fruit nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit. So picture fruit trees. Good healthy tree will not bear bad fruit consistently. You might find a rotten apple on there every once in a while because the birds have hammered at it or whatever or you left it on the tree too long I don't know. But generally a good tree shows good fruit. Right? It's what they do. Rotten trees don't produce good fruit. [13:46] They can. They're rotten. They don't have the ability to do that. Then He explains it in verse 44. Why? For each tree is known by its fruit. That's how you know what a tree is. When you see apples on a tree you go that's a pear tree. Right? That's a fig tree. No. You know it's an apple tree because it has apples. You know it's a grapevine because it has grapes. Et cetera. Right? It's simple. Simple explanation. Trees only produce according to their nature. They're known by their fruit. So you can't find figs on a thorn bush. You can't find grapes on a bramble bush. Right? It's just that's trees known by its fruit. So what's His point? Right? Nice picture. Nice illustration. What's the point? How does that apply to us? Verse 45. So just like a tree and the fruit a good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good and the evil person out of the evil treasure produces evil. [14:54] For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. There's this application. What's this picture about? Each person does and acts from what is the treasure of their heart? What you store up in your heart. In fact, the word treasure in Greek is the word thesaurus. Anybody heard of that? Thesaurus? What's a thesaurus? Speak with a lisp. What's a thesaurus? What do you find in a thesaurus? In that one of those? Words and words and words. Yeah, synonyms. Yeah, I use that all the time. I need another word. I keep using the same word. So I right click on the thing and my computer says, oh, here's all the synonyms and here's a whole list and if you want more, click on this one and there's 80,000 words you could look at. Well, not quite 80,000. So what's stored up? So it's a treasury, treasury of words. So our heart is also a treasure. We fill things into our heart. [15:55] Our heart is what moves our words and our actions. Because in the Bible, now in our culture, heart means what? We say somebody's, we love you from the heart. What do we mean? Feelings. I have affection, right? But in the Bible, the word heart means thoughts and intentions. Soul is what we're talking about. When the Bible talks about soul, that's your feelings. That's your deep emotions. But heart is about thoughts and intentions. Okay? And that's why Jesus talks about it all the time. What I think about and what I intend, that's the root of me. So, his final application at the end of verse 45, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

So, two applications here. First, the good person out of the, out of the treasure of his heart acts. So our actions come from our heart.

[16:59] But then he says also, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. So also our words. So, so two things there, right? So our actions show what our heart is and our words particularly show our heart.

Now, we can cover up our heart a lot, can't we? When I'm around certain people, I can kind of watch my words, right? I can fake it.

And I can, I can act on the outside all good and, and get the right. I can do those good things so that people will say, oh yeah, they're a good person. But Jesus is saying over time, what's going to consistently come out of your heart is who you really are.

And what consistently comes out of your mouth reveals who you really are in those moments of crisis. So, whew, feel good now?

Isn't that good news? Do you think Jesus is teaching that there's good people and there's bad people? Which are you? He's saying, you know who y'all are?

[18:15] Y'all bad people. How'd I go southern all of a sudden? I don't know. Bless your heart. Because if we're bless your heart, thank you very much.

We're getting, let's get a little gospel going here. Exactly. Bless your, and I understand, I'm from California so I didn't know that bless your heart means something else.

All right. That's coming from the heart too, isn't it? So what do we do with this? What if I want to be a good person but I still got bad stuff coming out?

What if when I'm in crisis, what if when I'm really angry, what if when I'm really stressed, what if when I'm really hurting, what comes out of my mouth reveals something I don't want to reveal?

What about then? How can I be a good tree? Well, so he said, you know, good trees don't produce rotten so I must not be a good tree if I produce rotten.

[19:26] What if I'm rotten? How do I do good? How do we bear good fruit? Is this about performance? No, Jesus isn't about external performance, is he?

That's his whole thing with the Pharisees. Oh, you look all pretty on the outside. You're all dressed up. You all do the right things. But on the inside, I know you're full of dead man's bones and hypocrisy and lies and deceit.

Paul himself said he was blameless according to the law, right? He kept the rules. But when Christ came and confronted him, what was he? Inside he was full of malice.

anger, hatred, violence when he persecuted the Christians. He loved doing that. Pulling them by their hair. That was his thing, man. After he was converted, he was so ashamed.

So, what do we do? So, what's the true tree? Well, here's, in the upper room in John 15, Jesus answers for us. Right?

[20:34] How do we be, how do we bear good fruit? That's the key. We don't produce it, we bear it. We can never produce it. John 15, Jesus says, I am the true vine.

He's the tree. He's the tree. I am the true vine, and my father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away.

Every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit. Bear fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I've spoken to you. Abide in me.

Here's the key. Abide in me. Remain in me. Draw strength from me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. For apart from me, you can do a little bit. Right? God helps those who help themselves, right?

[21:43] No, God helps those who can't do a thing. Apart from me, you can do nothing. Oh, you can do stuff, but it ain't nothing. It ain't nothing?

Is that another Southern? Where am I getting this stuff? Did you guys bring it back from Texas there? All right. And then he says, if anyone does not abide in me, he's thrown away.

See, the superficial Christians who say they're Christians but do not abide in him, are not related to him, are not drawing from him, he throws away.

Like a branch and withers, and the branches are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, though, if you are remaining in me, if you're attached to me, connected to me like a branch on a vine, and my words are abiding in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

There's that prayer promise, right? Ask whatever you wish, it will be done. So I can ask for a Lamborghini, right? Well, would I be considerate, would I, if I'm really abiding in him and he's abiding in me, do you think I'll be concerned about a Lamborghini?

[23 : 00] I don't think so. I think I'll have higher goals, don't you? And then he says, by this, by this abiding, by this is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to me, my disciples, that's how we prove it.

We prove that we have good fruit coming, not because we produce it, but because we bear it, because we're attached to the vine that produces it through us.

We're just bearing it. The love, the joy, the peace, the patience, the kindness, all of that comes from him, not us. So bearing fruit is proof of a true Christian and we only bear fruit by connecting to the vine, by relying on him.

So our first application, our words and actions reveal what fills our heart. So our pondering for ourselves is what fills my heart, what's coming out.

If I'm a believer, what do I do? If I'm a believer and I see rotten coming out, what do I do? Psalm 139, 23 and 24, something like that.

[24 : 24] Right? Search me, O Lord, and see if there's anything rotten in me. Search me, right? Search me, see me. If I got a log in my eye, I can't see. So search me, Lord, so I can get that out of there and I can abide in you.

If you're not a believer, if you're not connected to Jesus, if you don't know him, what do you do? Ask him to change you. Ask him to give you a new heart like David did, creating me a clean heart, O God.

Right? Renewing me a right spirit. Sustain me with a willing spirit. That's what we pray. There's a second application.

So he goes from the picture of two trees, two kinds of people in the picture of trees. Now he goes to the picture of a foundation and builders, two kinds of builders.

Right? And this is a more specific test. This is an application that is the end of his sermon.

Everything he says now boils down to this. Do you listen to me?

[25 : 33] Okay. But then do you do what I have said? Lots of people can listen. We can sit in church all our lives and we can hear what Jesus said and never do it.

So what does he say? Verse 46. Why do you call me Lord, Lord? And not do what I tell you. Hey, that's, he's getting right to the point. The specific application is this.

Our faith obedience. So he's talking about do what I say, right? That's obedience. Obedience. Shall I give an obedience sermon?

Whip you with the shoulds. Is that what he's talking about? Now he's talking about heart stuff, right? So he's not just talking about outward obedience. So what the New Testament calls it is the obedience of faith.

It's the obedience of, it's faith that shows itself in obedience. Faith that works, James says, right? Faith without works is dead. It's super, it's not real. But real faith will show itself in works because it's real.

[26 : 44] It works. So our faith obedience to Christ is our security in the storms. Okay? Get this.

It is our, the obedience of our faith to Christ's words that is our security in the storms. That's what keeps us secure.

Let's see how he breaks it down. Verse 46, he gets right to the issue. Why do you address me as Lord, Lord? Now he's giving that double word, right? Lord, Lord.

So it's emphasizing who he is. It's emphasizing a person of respect and honor. And it implies a relationship. So the same words come in Matthew's recording of a different sermon Jesus gives up on the mountain.

And there he talks about why do you call me Lord, Lord? And then he, then he ends by, and he says, oh, we do all these things for you. We do, we preach sermons and we do miracles and we do prophesy and we do all these kind of things.

[27 : 55] And Jesus says, but I never what? I never knew you. I never knew you. I never had a relationship with you. I don't know you.

Which means you don't know me. You just use my word or you just use my name. So why do you address me as Lord, Lord?

Act as if you have a relationship with me and yet don't do what I say. See, so the issue is obedience.

It is obedience. The issue is acting on his words. It is, it is applying what he has to say. In fact, it is doing. This word do or doing or doer is in his sermon seven times.

Love our enemies and we do good to them, right? We treat others the way we want them, the way we do to others, the way we want them to do to us, et cetera, et cetera.

[29 : 05] He's using this word doing. You do. And then notice the impact, whether I, not just that I listen, but do I act on his words makes a difference when the storms come.

Right? So verse 48, well, verse 47, everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I'll show you what he's like.

He is like a man building a house who digs and digs deeper and lays a foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it because it had been well built.

The storm comes. The difference between doing Jesus' words or not is shown when the storms come. Right?

Verse 48, the one who does, who hears my word and does not do them, he's like the man who built a house on the ground without a foundation when the stream broke. So here comes the storm again. When the flood comes against it, immediately fell and the ruin of the house was great.

[30 : 16] Same storm comes on both people. Two kinds of people. Those that can withstand the storm and those that do not.

when the storm comes. Everybody experiences storms, don't we? They come when they come.

They come, what are they? They're trials, they're adversity, they're times of sorrow, they're times of persecution, times of hardship, whatever it is.

It's stuff that comes because life happens and those storms test who we really are. And if the storm crushes us, what does that show?

I'm not founded. I'm not built on the rock. So Jesus' application is these two builders. The key is how they build and what's the difference of how they build?

What's the picture? One builds on what? The rock. The other one builds on the ground without a foundation, right? One who ignores the word.

[31 : 26] In other words, right? 49. One who hears and does not do. He's the one that just kind of ignores my word and builds his life the way he wants to build it.

On the ground, on the earth, just however, not founded, not secure, no stability, no permanency. So when the storm comes, I collapse and fall. We've seen pictures, haven't we, in California?

Houses that weren't on foundations? They slide down into the ocean, they slide down into the... I lived in California, okay? So I know, my buddy built a house on the hill of Oakland and it was all dirt underneath.

He had to drive down 30 feet, I believe, to hit bedrock and tie that in. And in California, you not only have to build on a foundation, but you have to bolt to the foundation because there's these things called earthquakes and they come and even if you're on the foundation, what happens with the earthquake?

Well, there goes my foundation, right? You got to bolt the house to the foundation. So my buddy, if the storm comes, he'll be 30 feet up in the air, but the house will still be standing.

[32 : 42] That's a picture. Verse 48, interesting, the way Jesus describes it. Verse 48, the man building the house, he gives these three descriptions. He digs.

Now, our translation, my translation has who dug deep, but what Jesus actually said was two different verbs there. He dug and then he digs deeper and then he builds on the rock.

Why does he dig deeper? Because sometimes you have to dig deep to find the rock to get the solid foundation. That's doing the words of Jesus.

So let's look at what that looks like. Verse 47, the one who's coming, he keeps coming to me, he keeps hearing my words and he keeps doing my words.

He's the one building his house, digging, digging deeper and laying on the foundation. So what do you think digging and digging deeper refers to in terms of acting on his words?

[33 : 49] What is that? I'm asking a question. Next week, we do the review discussion. This week, it's supposed to be just me. But I am open to reflection on this.

If I'm digging, how do I dig? What if I'm a new learner in Jesus? What if I'm trying to figure out what this is? Remember how Jesus told parables and what would the disciples do?

They'd tell a parable and later on, they'd come and they'd go what? Hey, what's that mean? I don't got a clue. I don't understand. But they're digging. They're saying, Jesus, explain that to me.

I don't get it. Explain it to me. Which is how, by the way, he separated the true disciples and false disciples. Those that came and sought me and sought to learn are the real disciples.

Those that are on the outside are not. Yeah, so we dig. We keep seeking. We're digging. We're seeking. And we're learning. And we're asking questions. And we're digging deeper.

[34 : 47] That's why we spend time in the, walking through the scriptures. We're digging. And we're digging deeper. What does it mean? How do I understand that? How do I live by that? So let me give you a picture.

Or let me give you an example. In Psalm 18 is one of the Psalms of David. So how does this digging deeper look? So how did David do it?

David talked about God being his rock. Right? How did he do that? Now we're all aware David had some major flaws.

Right? But for much of his life he was an extremely faithful man. He was truly a man of faith. So here's what he said.

Psalm 18. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer my God my rock in whom I take refuge.

[35 : 49] My shield and the horn of my salvation my stronghold. Who do you think God is to David? I mean he can't one word can't express it. I've got to use all these words.

My rock my fortress my deliverer my foundation my stronghold. All these pictures of security. I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised and I am saved from my enemies.

The cords of death encompass me. The torrents here come the floods the torrents the floods of destruction assailed me. The cords of Sheol the grave entangled me.

The snares of death confronted me. David thought he was going to die. And in my distress I called upon the Lord to my God I cried for help and from his temple he heard me.

And my cry to him reached his ears. Psalm 18 down to verse 16 he sent from on high and he took me.

[36 : 55] He drew me out of the many waters. There's a picture of that flood. He drew me out of the many waters. In the midst of all that flood he drew me out. He rescued came he came and drew me out.

He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me for they were too mighty for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity.

So he's not only got enemies opposing him but he's got another kind of calamity happening in his life. Another storm going on in the midst of my storm they just added to it in other words.

But the Lord was my support. He brought me into a broad place. He rescued me. Why? Watch this now. He rescued me. Why? Because he delighted in me.

Oh why does he delight in David? He explains that. The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness.

[38 : 01] Okay you Protestants are going to bristle at that aren't you? My righteousness? It's his righteousness right? He rescued me according to my righteousness?

Is David being pharisaical here? Listen carefully to him. According to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me for I have kept the ways of the Lord.

I have not acted wickedly. I have not wickedly departed from my God for his rules were before me and his statutes I did not put away from me. I was blameless before him and kept myself from guilt.

What's he saying? He's not saying that he earned that reward. He's not saying that he earned the righteousness. righteousness. He's saying that he lived a life in the obedience of faith.

That his faith worked. His faith was real. He had a real relationship with the Lord. Look at the way he describes the Lord. He knew the Lord.

[39 : 07] He walked with him. He knew him as his refuge and his shield and his fortress. This is not a man that's just kind of doing the duties. This is a man that's depending and trusting and relying and abiding.

He acted on the words of the Lord. He lived by the words. He dug and he dug deeper and he built this foundation on the Lord his rock. I mean as I said note who the Lord is to David.

His rock, his fortress, his deliverer, his refuge, his shield, his security, his stronghold. Okay, that's David. Is that who the Lord is to you and me?

Would this be your song too? The Lord is my rock, my shield, my fortress. I have depended on him so many times.

I have looked to him so many times. I've cried to him and pled with him for deliverance, for help, for security, for refuge.

[40 : 21] Is that you? Is he always your rock or is it only when you're in trouble? See, David's not crying out just because he's in trouble.

He's been doing that all his life. are you daily looking to him, daily relying on his strength, his leading?

Are you digging and then digging deeper? Do you know him? Do you have a relationship with him?

Is he yours? Not just a rock, but he's your rock. Are you building your life on the words of Jesus Christ, listening to those words, digging into those words, taking those words to heart, and then acting upon them as he leads you?

Our obedience of faith to Christ is our security in the storms of life. When the storms come, what holds me up is I am acting upon his words by faith.

[41 : 45] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for Jesus' words that dig into us. First, he exposes us, Father, we're those that don't want to love our enemy.

We are those that quickly judge others. We look at the speck in someone else's eye and we ignore our own log. And Jesus exposes us as we're not good trees.

Our only chance of bearing good fruit is by abiding and clinging to Jesus. God's love to hear and hear and walk away or do we hear and dig and listen and learn and apply it.

So help us today, Father, be those true disciples. disciples. I pray that you speak to every heart here today, not me, but you. Through Jesus' words speak.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.