

GOD CANNOT TOLERATE EVILDOERS

That's why the Father sent His Son -- Be among those who know the Father's will.

Matthew 7:15-23

TEXT: *Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*

In Jesus' name, fellow redeemed:

Don't you hate it when the ungodly world decides to lecture us in regard to matters of the Christian faith? Consider the word "tolerance." They imagine that being a Christian is to be a person of love. After all, the Bible does say, ***Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*** 1 Jn 4 Then they presume to teach us about love by equating "tolerance" with love. Sadly, many true Christians are often stymied by this false syllogism. We don't always know how to respond to that. But a good passage from Scripture to use in response is Deuteronomy 5:9 -- ***I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*** Have you ever tried to explain this Scripture in contrast to "God is love?" One of the best definitions of the word "jealous" is to "tolerate no rival." A God of love claims that He is intolerant of his rivals.

God sets before us a contradiction that is most important, for if God first says He is the essence of love, yet will not tolerate anyone who does not keep his commandments, then what hope is there for all of us have broken his commandments.

Well then, let's just turn to Jesus! Jesus loves sinners! He will save us! However, today's Gospel Lesson sets before us the same threat but in slightly different terms: ***Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*** It's clear, that from both the Father and the Son the truth is that GOD CANNOT TOLERATE EVILDOERS. That's why the Father sent His Son. Be among those who know the Father's will.

The first concern any one of us would have is that on Judgment Day, not everyone who claims to be a Christian will be saved. Jesus says: ***Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*** Are we really listening to what Jesus is saying? Not everyone who claims to be, thinks he is, or even points to his life and work, will go to heaven. This has to be a most sobering truth because who of us today do not make the same claims? I confess that Jesus is Lord and God. I "prophesy in His name." Or in today's terms, I support the Ministry of the Gospel, which is the preaching of the Gospel. And while the miracles of the "early Christian Church" are not being done in the same way today, we can certainly say that the Lord still performs miracles in less spectacular fashion among the members of his church. What if I were to think that I am going to go to heaven but then on Judgment Day be among those whom Jesus describes here with the frightening words: ***'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'***

If I would look at myself, even inwardly into the secrets of my own heart, I must despair. How will I ever know if I have done, or am doing, or have done sufficiently the will of our Lord's Heavenly Father? I am a pastor who "prophesies in Jesus' name." The Bible's word for "prophecy" is the same as today's word for preaching. I've not driven out any demons, but that's because I have never been confronted with any legitimate demon-possession to my knowledge. But with all my 38 years of ministry, what if there is something that I didn't do just as our Lord Jesus would have done it? What if I've neglected something? What about all those people whom I've failed to keep in the church or who have fallen away? Just because I'm a pastor does not give me a sure ticket to heaven! Jesus says no! And I do not want to be among those standing there to the

horrible words: ***'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*** Do you??

It was after he committed adultery and murder, after he came to his senses and repented publicly of his sins, that David wrote these words inspired by the Holy Spirit and recorded in that blessed Psalm 51 for us to read, memorize and pray: ***Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*** Ps 51 It was so that I and many others might stand in the presence of God Himself that the Father sent Jesus to be our brother in the flesh to pay for our sins fully and completely with his own precious blood. He who prays this prayer has God's promise sealed in the blood of Jesus that you will never be cast from his presence.

Believe Jesus' promise of forgiveness of sins and you will be among those who know and do His Heavenly Father's will.

Jesus warns: ***Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*** Now, what is the will of the Heavenly Father? Is it that we live holy lives according to ALL of God's commandments? Yes it is! For Jesus has taught us to pray: ***Hallowed be Thy Name!*** That is the FIRST THING Jesus teaches us to pray the Lord's Prayer!

Tell me, are those who call themselves Christians while living in this sinful behavior or that, even though the Bible calls it sinful, honest when they pray the Lord's Prayer while living in sin? Help me live a holy life, except for this sin or that. Can you pray the Lord's Prayer while bearing a grudge? If you are one who goes to church only on occasion, is God's will being done in your life as a Christian? What are the chances that should Judgment Day be on a Sunday we will witness hordes of people running to their respective churches pleading to get in, only to hear Jesus say: ***Away from me, you evildoers!'*** You never cared to come to me before, so why now!

Jesus warns us to be careful that we are not deceived. He says: ***Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*** It's not just the false prophets who lure so many away from repentance and faith, but it also reveals the hearts of those who say that they are Christians but are not. You don't have to judge their hearts: ***Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*** No good fruit grows from a dead tree, and a false heart cannot help but to reveal itself by its behavior.

God cannot tolerate evildoers and he will not because He is holy. To live with him in heaven we must become holy and as good as God Himself. That is the "will of the Heavenly Father." This is clearly written in Scripture: ***This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men-the testimony given in its proper time.*** 1 Tim 2. How can we do something for ourselves that's already been done for us in Jesus Christ? We cannot and we do not have to do anything for what has been done. But since it is ours by faith, only those with faith in Jesus will find that desire to repent of sin and to say thanks to God by producing what we often call the "good fruit of repentance." The heart of faith is that "tree" that lives and produces.

And since God cannot tolerate evildoers, don't be one! Through Jesus and the forgiveness of sins he won for you on the cross, you are declared holy and sinless. Also, let us all pray for the strength never to act like one! Amen