

Matthew 7:21-23

“I never knew you”

Introduction

1. Two common mistakes in reading the Bible

- a. We observe and interpret but fail to apply.
- b. We apply before we observe and interpret.

2. Two examples

- a. **2 Chronicles 7:13-14** “¹³ If I shut up the heaven so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, ¹⁴ and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” (In this passage the covenant nation of ancient Israel (not America) is in view and especially in the context of God’s discipline.)
- b. **Mark 1:14-15** “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of (KJ has “the kingdom of”) God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel.**”” (What were people expected to believe? And how does this square with **Gal.1:12-17**? “¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but {I received it} through a revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³ For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it; ¹⁴ and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. ¹⁵ But when He who had set me apart, {even} from my mother’s womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.”

We might compare and contrast two emphases with the following chart.

<i>The Gospel according to Jesus</i>	<i>The Gospel according to Paul</i>
(expressed in Matthew, Mark, and Luke)	(expressed in the letters of Paul & Peter and to some extent the Gospel of John)
Repentance is the emphasis	Faith is the emphasis
Holiness and faithfulness are key	Grace and faith are key
Saving the body	Saving the soul
Our walk	Christ’s work
Preached to the Jews	Preached to the world
Centered on the Kingdom	Centered on the Cross &

	Resurrection
The realm is the millennial kingdom of Israel's future hope	The realm is the mystery kingdom of this present age
The teaching of Jesus in the Gospels	The teaching about Jesus in the Epistles
Discipleship	Justification

3. All Scripture is written for us but not to us or about us.

Context

1. We are addressing the identification of true and false prophets.
2. Jesus authenticity as one who speaks for God is at stake.

Text

Matthew 7

“²¹ Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*’”

Observations

1. “many will say” – this experience will effect many people.
2. “to Me in that day” – Jesus will stand in the place of God as the Judge.
3. “have we not” – This will seem unfair to the ones rejected.
4. The accused will claim that they had done great things but this does not mean that they had in deed done them.
5. “I never knew you” – Being religious, zealous for God, and spiritually powerful is not the issue.
6. “practice lawlessness” – the accused are condemned as outlaws not convicts.

Who speaks for God?

1. The religious Leaders who practice lawlessness and are not known by God?
2. Jesus who does God's will and fulfills the Law as God's Son?
 - **Matt.5** “¹⁷ Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” “²⁰ unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”
 - **John 8** ³⁸ “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.”. . . ⁴⁷ “He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.”

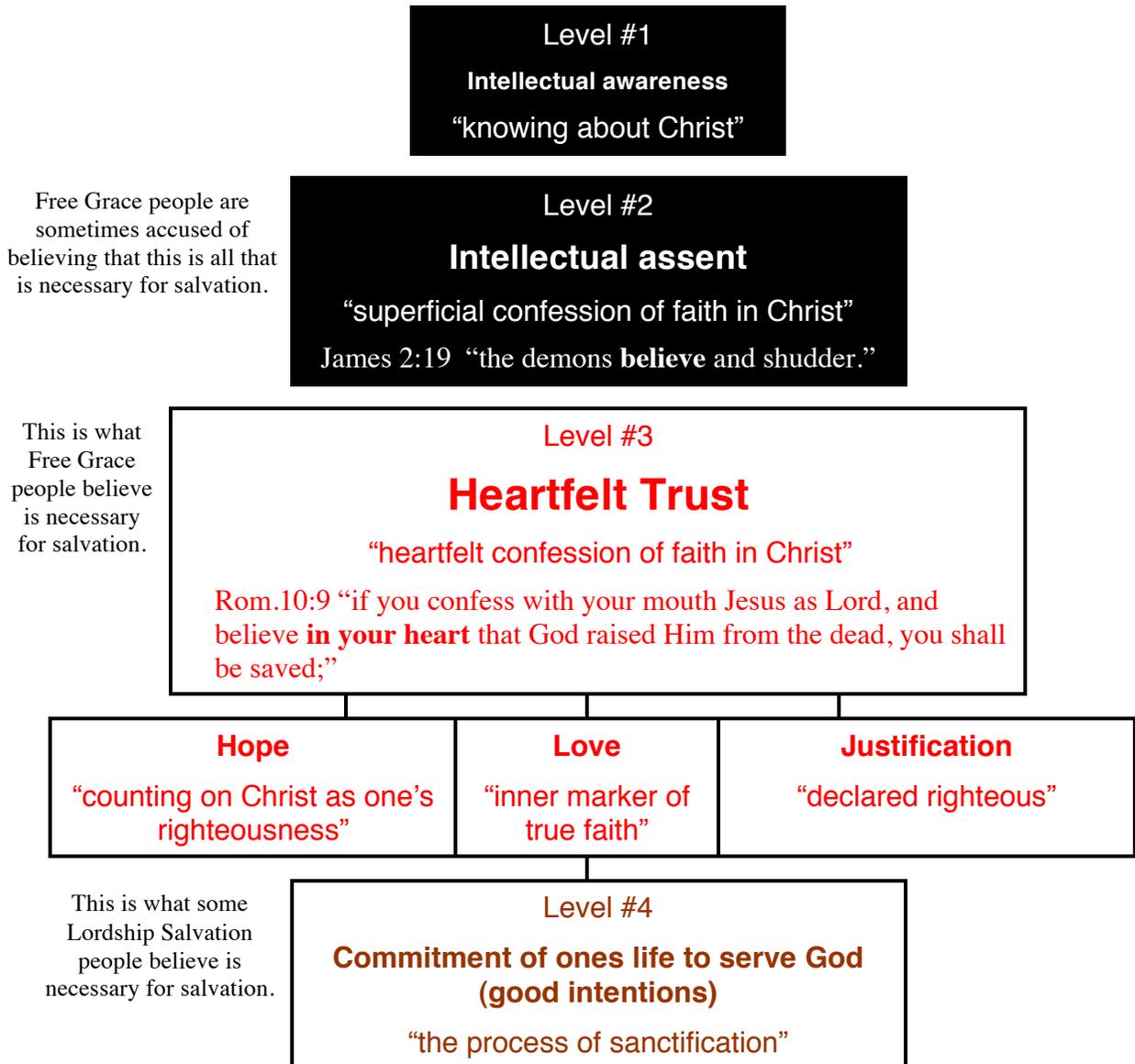
Is this passage directly applicable to Christians today?

1. How is this to be harmonized with the imputed righteousness of faith?
2. How holy does a person have to be? See chapter 5-6

3. Are there false professions of faith today? Yes and we should be skeptical of public confessions that are not accompanied by water baptism and a changed life direction.
4. What is the meaning of “practicing lawlessness?” It is best understood as the posture of anyone who understands the moral demands of God in such a way that the Law’s intended purpose in breaking our spirit so that we hunger for the Grace of God in Christ is not accomplished. The kingdom is for spiritual convicts not spiritual outlaws.

How are we to understand the relationship between justification by faith and obedience to the Law?

There are degrees or levels of Christian knowledge (St. Augustine) and commitment. The point of dispute is with respect to a distinction between Level #3 and #4. Does true saving faith require a level #4 or #5 commitment (The Lordship Salvation view), or is level #3 all that is required (Free Grace view)?



Other Lordship
Salvation people
believe this is necessary
for salvation.



- True faith is more than intellectual awareness or assent.
- True faith does not take the form of faithfulness.
- True faith always produces inner fruit (hope and love).
- True faith normally produces outer fruit (faithfulness).

Concluding propositions

1. If one is to call on Christ to save from the penalty of sin, one is confessing and submitting to Christ as Master or Lord of at least one very important area of life — the soul’s need for a substitutionary sacrifice and an imputed righteousness before a holy God.
2. Saving faith is not just a shallow intellectual confession of impersonal facts; it is a deep and genuine commitment to center one’s hope in Christ.
3. It is possible for a person to make a false (superficial) profession of faith and actually believe that he or she is a Christian when in fact they are not.
4. The preeminent term by which salvation is received (in the Biblical record) is “faith” or “belief.” Our “faithfulness”, “obedience” or “works” are not the issue in the gospel of grace.
5. “Repentance” that leads to salvation is to be understood as turning from one’s self-sufficiency to a commitment that Jesus is the Redeemer Christ. The notion of having to successfully turn from every known sin in order to be saved is not a part of the gospel message.
2. Justification (declared righteous by faith) and sanctification (progressively demonstrating righteous behavior) should not be mixed even though the later flows out of the former.
3. Repentance that leads to eternal life is distinct from “good works” but is the basis of and for the purpose of “good works.”

Acts 26:19-20 “¹⁹ Consequently, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but {kept} declaring both to those of Damascus first, and {also} at Jerusalem and {then} throughout all the region of Judea, and {even} to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, **performing deeds appropriate to repentance.**”

I Thess.1:9 “For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,”

8. It is possible for a genuine Christian to be “carnal” or live as though he or she was not a Christian. But this state is unnatural and normally is temporary.

9. To insist on a complete submission to God's will in every area of life (before one can call themselves a Christian) is contrary to Biblical testimony and human experience.
10. If it is true that "we are not saved by our good works", it must also be true that we are not saved by our good intentions. What saves us is not our works or our intentions but the work of Christ and our transfer of trust in anything and everything else to trust in him.
11. The best illustration of saving faith and faithfulness might be marriage. When a man and a woman go to the alter and make a marriage covenant vow it is expected that they then live as husband and wife. It would be technically possible for them to be truly married and yet not live as though they were married but this would be most unusual. On the other hand it is quite possible that they would not live out their marriage vows perfectly. There would be times when they would act selfishly and perhaps even unfaithfully but they would still be married. So it is in our relationship with Christ. At Baptism we enter into a covenant relationship with Christ. It is expected that we will also follow him as disciples but we will not do so perfectly. There may be times when we are quite rebellious to the point of acting as though we were not following Him at all. We might still however be true believers.

(For more information go to apptoteach.org theology file #713)