

the wisdom and protective care of a father for his children, with love and grace in his heart, and he will take no rest.

God will employ his sovereign rule and unfathomable power over creation to redeem his own, and that's some of the best news you and I could ever have.

DAILY PRAYER POINTS

SUNDAY – There is a reason the Lord has brought you to this new week. Pray that He will shine brightly through you so that everyone that comes across you this week may know His presence in you and be blessed by your words and actions.

MONDAY – Thank God for the strength and ability to serve Him each day through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit. Pray that we'll all know God's blessing and strength in serving the Lord with joy and thankfulness.

TUESDAY – Do you feel like your encouragement has little effect on others? Ask God to use your words as an example to bear fruit in the lives of others. (Heb.10:24)

WEDNESDAY – Ask God to help Session and the Committee of Management as we prayerfully plan for the future of St Andrew's during an uncertain time within the PCQ and Australia, as a whole.

THURSDAY – Pray for **Margaret Petrofski & Henry, Tom and Lilly Wells.**

FRIDAY – Continue to pray for those in need of God's healing and comforting hand: Belinda Birch, Edith Collins, John Donnell, Kevin Petrofski Jr and Margaret Petrofski, and Dawn Robinson. **Pray also for blessings on those who can't get to church:** Audrey Armstrong, Del Finn, Carol Gillett, Joey Kelly, Gladys Marnock, Millie McCarthy, Heather McGaw, Marie McKee, Mavis Smith, and David Valentine.

SATURDAY – Give thanks that in all circumstances our Heavenly Father knows our needs and supplies them richly to us in His Son and His Spirit.

THE ANCHOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE ST ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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THE SCARIEST PASSAGE IN THE BIBLE

By **JUSTIN DILLEHAY**

CHRISTIANS MAY DISAGREE OVER WHAT CONSTITUTES THE SCARIEST PASSAGE IN THE BIBLE. BUT most would agree Jesus's concluding words in the Sermon on the Mount rank near the top.

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty

works in your name?” And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.” (Matt. 7:21–23)

It’s frightening to think about going to hell. It’s even more frightening to find out too late that you’re going to hell when you thought you were going to heaven. And still more frightening to think that not just a few, but “many” will have this experience. Some people think they’re Christians, they call Jesus “Lord,” they even do mighty works in his name—and yet they’re not truly saved and never were.

When reading this passage it can be tempting to throw up our hands: Who then can know if they’ll be saved? It sure seems like a huge gamble. You do your best to follow Jesus, but who knows whether you’ll get smacked down at the end.

But that’s not Jesus’s goal here. He’s not trying to confuse us or rob us of assurance. True, he doesn’t want us to be deceived, but neither does he want us to live in terror or uncertainty about our final state.

So let me offer two ways to maintain—and even build—assurance in the face of this frightening passage.

1. RECOGNIZE WHAT IT MEANS TO ‘DO THE FATHER’S WILL’



WHEN READING THIS PASSAGE IT CAN BE TEMPTING TO THROW UP OUR HANDS AND ASK WHO THEN CAN KNOW IF THEY’RE GOING TO BE SAVED? BUT THAT’S NOT JESUS’S GOAL HERE.

In verse 21, Jesus describes the one who will enter the kingdom as “the one who does the will of my Father.” But what exactly does that mean? Judging by the context, it must mean more than simply saying “Lord, Lord” and doing mighty works in Jesus’s name. So how can we know if we’re doing the Father’s will? And do we have to do it perfectly?

To see the answer, we should note that this is only the second time in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus has spoken of “entering the kingdom of heaven.” The

obedience to him; but the infants of members of the visible church are also to be baptized.

QUESTION 96.

What is the Lord’s supper?

- A. The Lord’s supper is a sacrament in which, by giving and receiving of bread and wine according to Christ’s command, his death is shown forth. Worthy receivers are made partakers of his body and blood by faith, not in a bodily or physical manner, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, with all his benefits.

FATHER OF SMALL THINGS.

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Matthew 10:29–31

Out of curiosity, I Googled how many birds die each day. The statistics are astounding. In America alone, 13.7 million birds fall to the ground each day. That’s five billion dead birds a year in just one country.¹

It’s a morbid number, but Jesus—the Author of life—declares that not a single bird falls without God’s involvement. What a picture of the detailed intensity of God’s sovereign governance over his creation.

What I find even more impressive is that God has such an intimate involvement with everything that happens in your life that he keeps an accurate accounting of the number of hairs on your head ... or, in some cases, lack thereof!

But there’s something more significant that you just can’t miss in this passage. Jesus identifies this sovereign one as “your Father.” This obliterates a distant, cold, impersonal view of God’s sovereignty. Instead, he rules with

MEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

TWO WEEKS ON... BIBLE READING PLAN

TWO WEEKS WITH MEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Called to lead his family, not as some sort of tyrant, instead, a man's leadership is modelled after Christ's leadership of His church. He leads by discerning the best interests of his family and pouring himself out for them. This headship is self-sacrificial.

WEEK 2 | ☐ Day 8, **2 Kings 18** - King Hezekiah under military siege. ☐ Day 9, **2 Kings 19** - Isaiah speaks God's word to King Hezekiah. ☐ Day 10, **2 Chronicles 34** - Josiah sets his nation back on course. ☐ Day 11, **Nehemiah 2** - Nehemiah courageously begins rebuilding a wall. ☐ Day 12, **Jeremiah 38** - Jeremiah, in prison, refuses to change his message. ☐ Day 13, **Daniel 1** - Daniel risks his life in captivity. ☐ Day 14, **Daniel 5** - Daniel's word to participants in a royal orgy.

WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

The Westminster catechisms begin with the language of glorifying and enjoying God. *These Standards exist to explain in doctrinal terms how Scripture directs us to glorify and enjoy God in all we think, do, and say.* - Burk Parsons

QUESTION 94.

What is baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament in which washing with water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, signifies and seals our grafting into Christ and our partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace and our engagement to be the Lord's.

QUESTION 95.

To whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to anyone outside of the visible church until they profess their faith in Christ and their

other is the Sermon's theme verse, Matthew 5:20: "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Comparing these two passages, we can say that "doing the Father's will" is parallel to possessing a greater righteousness. So by implication, Matthew 7:21-23 is describing those whose righteousness did not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Here's why this matters. When Jesus says our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees, he's not saying "Do what they did, only better." It's not that the Pharisees didn't try hard enough—it's that they were trying really hard at the wrong things. They were missing the point entirely, focusing on external behaviors to get people's praise while neglecting to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God (Mic. 6:8; Matt. 23:23).

The scribes and Pharisees didn't do the Father's will. Full-Stop. If you want to see how they treated God's commands, read Matthew 5:21-48. If you want to see how they fasted and prayed and gave alms, read Matthew 6:1-18. Their "righteousness" wasn't a sincere attempt to please God, which a fastidious Jesus then looked at and said, "Pretty good, but not quite good enough to enter the kingdom." It was a self-promoting pile of filthy rags (Isa. 64:6).

Doing the Father's will isn't just an external thing. The Pharisees looked clean on the outside, but they were filthy and lawless within (Matt. 23:25-26). What Jesus describes here is a righteousness that flows from a pure heart and a sincere faith (Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:5). It's fruit—fruit that's good because it grew on a good tree (Matt. 7:17). It's the kind of righteousness you can only practice when you've been born again through the Spirit of God and have thus (in one sense) entered the kingdom already (Matt. 5:3; John 3:3, 5).



JESUS ISN'T TELLING US TO OUT-PHARISEE THE PHARISEES, NOR IS HE SAYING WE HAVE TO KEEP THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT PERFECTLY IN ORDER TO BE SURE WE'RE TRUE CHRISTIANS.

Jesus isn't telling us to out-Pharisee the Pharisees, nor is he saying we must keep the Sermon on the Mount perfectly in order to be sure we're true Christians. On the contrary, according to the Sermon on the Mount, a true Christian is someone who continually prays, "Father, forgive me my debts" (Matt. 6:9-13; cf. 1 John 1:8-2:1). It's the Pharisee who thanks God that he's better than others. A true Christian prays, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 18:9-14).

The narrow path is for people who are poor in spirit, who mourn over their sin, and who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:3-6; 7:13-14). Those people will be satisfied—both now and especially later when Jesus consummates his kingdom.

Doing the Father's will, then, isn't some impossible standard. It can describe you, and you can know it describes you. And if you're a true Christian, it will describe you—imperfectly, yes, but increasingly. For the true Christian, the question is not "Am I perfect?" (Christ's imputed righteousness has already met that need), but "Do I know Jesus?" Or better still, "Does Jesus know me?"

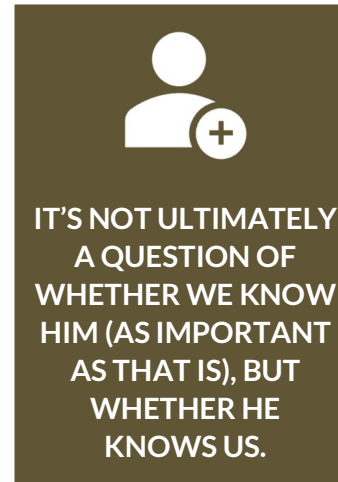


Which leads to the second point.

2. RECOGNIZE THE PRIMARY 'KNOWER' HERE

Throughout most of my life, I read verse 23 as though Jesus were saying, "Depart from me, because you never knew me" (i.e., you were never truly saved). That's true, but it's actually not what the verse says. Instead Jesus says, "I never knew you." It's not ultimately a question of whether we know him (as important as that is), but whether he knows us.

I'm reminded of a great scene, in C. S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, between Edmund and Eustace. Hearing Edmund speak of his experiences with Aslan, the unknowing Eustace inquires, "But who is Aslan? Do you know him?" To which Edmund responds, "Well—he knows me. . . . He is the great Lion, the son of the Emperor-beyond-the-Sea, who saved me and saved Narnia."



Did Edmund know Aslan? Of course. But when asked whether he did, Edmund was thinking less about his own erudition and more about how Aslan had loved him and given himself for him on the Stone Table while he was still a traitor. He knew Aslan, yes; but only because Aslan first knew him (Gal. 4:9; 1 Cor. 8:3; cf. 1 John 4:19).

So it is with us and Christ. Do I know him? Well, he knows me.

Does he know you? Are you the kind of person Jesus is going to meet as an old friend

on the last day? I ask because there are actually going to be people like that. People whom Jesus is going to look at and say, "Hello, John. It's good to finally meet you face to face. I've always enjoyed our conversations, and I've never stopped interceding for you. I know you went through a lot for my sake. You weren't ashamed of me—and I want you to know I'm not ashamed of you either. Welcome home, brother. I look forward to continuing our friendship throughout all eternity."

We don't have to live in terror of the final day. We can be preparing for it. Because for those known by Jesus, the final day won't be some huge disruption. It'll simply be a heightened continuation of the relationship we already enjoy with him now, by faith.

So let's examine ourselves and ask not only "Do I know Jesus?" but "Does Jesus know me?" Let's live in such way that he'll not be ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters on that day. And let's not be deceived, because this is too good to miss.



GIFTS AND OFFERINGS
Bank: Bendigo Bank
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BSB Number: 633000