

An Awakening in the American Church (part 8)
Are You a True or a False Believer?
8.11.2019

Over the past 2 months, I've been addressing issues we face as Christians in America. I've been addressing the compromises that are keeping the church in America asleep while our nation is going into a moral freefall and quickly approaching a time of serious judgment.

Last week I asked the question - **Are you really walking with God?**

And last week, I mentioned what John Wesley termed *mental assent salvation*, when a person only mentally agrees with the Bible, but there is really no change of heart leading to a change in lifestyle.

Today I want to talk about true and false believers. Throughout America, there are churches with both committed believers, and those who say they are believers but really aren't.

Are you a true or a false believer?

There are six points to my comments today:

1. God's love for us is based on a foundation of justice.

Psalms 89:14 (NLT)

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.
Unfailing love and truth walk before you as attendants.

And over the last several weeks, I have mentioned that here in America, most people believe that God loves them, and because He loves them, regardless of how they live, they are going to heaven.

But, we have forgotten that although God is love, He is also pure and holy. The entire reason that Jesus Christ came as God in human form was so that He could

justly bear the penalty for our personal wrongdoing, and we would be acquitted of sin in the eyes of God.

God's love for us is based on His justice. God must be fair in all His dealings with us, and with His enemy Satan. If God could freely forgive us solely based on His love for us, then Satan could accuse Him of being unjust! And then Satan could accuse God of being imperfect and challenge His throne!

So, we cannot go to heaven only because God loves us. God has to also be just, and to be just, He must have a way to deal with our sin and disobedience. So in His love, God sent Christ, who justly paid the penalty for our personal sin.

Romans 5:6-9 (NLT)

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. (7) Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. (8) But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (9) And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.

Without Jesus, a person cannot go to heaven. Period.

John 14:6 (NLT)

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Wrong theology says: God loves you, period - but doesn't mention our sin and the need for repentance and faith in Christ as our sin substitute.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 (NLT)

Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. (2) These people are hypocrites and liars, and their consciences are dead.

2. Repentance is the difference between true and false believers today.

Many today say they are Christians and attend church, but their lifestyle never changed when they “accepted Christ.”

Repentance and faith in Christ will be shown by change!

Repentance

Greek - Metanoeo

A decision that results in a change of mind, which results in a change of purpose and action.

Acts 2:37-38 (NLT)

Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

(38) Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In repentance, we turn away from sin, and turn to Jesus for forgiveness.

We don’t pray because we feel bad about what we have done, and then just keep on doing the same things...

So, here are four questions we can ask ourselves:

1. Did your lifestyle change when you met Jesus, or have you simply continued on in the lifestyle you’ve been living?

If there is no change, then where is the repentance?

2. Are you seeking to walk with God in purity, or do you compromise because of the grace of God that forgives and cleanses sins?

3. Do you feel that no matter how you live you will go to heaven?

4. Have you had a time in your life that you really felt convicted of your personal sin, and you then repented of sin, and asked Jesus to cleanse you?

Romans 10:9-10 (NLT)

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (10) For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

3. A false believer's lifestyle has not changed.

A true believer has had a behavior change, or that person has not really met Jesus Christ and had their sins forgiven.

Matthew 7:13-14 (NLT)

You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. (14) But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

Matthew 7:15-23 (NLT)

Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. (16) You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? (17) A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. (18) A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. (19) So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. (20) Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions. (21) Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. (22) On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed

many miracles in your name.’ (23) But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

John 14:21-24 (NLT)

Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them. (22) Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?” (23) Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. (24) Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me.”

The difference between a true and a false Christian is that a true believer, though full of so many things that need to change, has a desire to change and to obey God.

A true believer has a tender conscience towards personal sin.

4. True and false believers will be together until Jesus comes.

So in churches all over America, and all over the world for that matter, there are people who say they are Christians, but their way of life betrays what they say they believe about Jesus.

Jesus called true believers **wheat**, and false believers **weeds**. Listen carefully to this parable:

Matthew 13:24-30 (NLT)

Here is another story Jesus told: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. (25) But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. (26) When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. (27) The farmer’s workers went to him and said, ‘Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?’ (28) ‘An enemy has

done this!' the farmer exclaimed. 'Should we pull out the weeds?' they asked. (29) 'No,' he replied, 'you'll uproot the wheat if you do. (30) Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.'"

And here is Jesus' explanation:

Matthew 13:36-43 (NLT)

Then, leaving the crowds outside, Jesus went into the house. His disciples said, "Please explain to us the story of the weeds in the field." (37) Jesus replied, "The Son of Man is the farmer who plants the good seed. (38) The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. (39) The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesters are the angels. (40) Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. (41) The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. (42) And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!"

In churches today, we have both the weeds and the wheat, the true believers and the false believers.

False believers say that they are Christians, but they don't seek to walk in purity and holiness before God. They have no conscience that resists sin.

They exploit the grace of God into a reason for living in an immoral, self-pleasing, prideful way.

5. The book of Jude is a clear warning for those living in a day where true and false believers are together.

Jude 1:1-23 (NLT)

This letter is from Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. I am writing to all who have been called by God the Father, who loves you and keeps you safe in the care of Jesus Christ. (2) May God give you more and more mercy, peace, and love. (3) Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people. (4) I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (5) So I want to remind you, though you already know these things, that Jesus first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, but later he destroyed those who did not remain faithful. (6) And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment. (7) And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment. (8) In the same way, these people—who claim authority from their dreams—live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at supernatural beings. (9) But even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, did not dare accuse the devil of blasphemy, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (This took place when Michael was arguing with the devil about Moses' body.) (10) But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. (11) What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they deceive people for money. And like Korah, they perish in their rebellion. (12) When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over the land without giving any rain. They are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots. (13) They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their shameful deeds. They are like wandering stars, doomed forever to blackest darkness. (14) Enoch, who lived in the seventh

generation after Adam, prophesied about these people. He said, "Listen! The Lord is coming with countless thousands of his holy ones (15) to execute judgment on the people of the world. He will convict every person of all the ungodly things they have done and for all the insults that ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (16) These people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want. (17) But you, my dear friends, must remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ predicted. (18) They told you that in the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires. (19) These people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God's Spirit in them. (20) But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, (21) and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love. (22) And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. (23) Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives.

6. True believers may struggle in many ways, but they have had a heart change, and deep within desire to do what is right.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Ephesians 4:17-24 (NLT)

With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. (18) Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. (19) They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful

pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. (20) But that isn't what you learned about Christ. (21) Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, (22) throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. (23) Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. (24) Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

Colossians 3:1-10 (NLT)

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. (2) Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. (3) For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. (4) And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. (5) So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. (6) Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. (7) You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. (8) But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. (9) Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. (10) Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.

Romans 12:2 (NIV) Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Action Points:

1. What does your lifestyle show about who you are right now?
2. According to the way you live, are you a weed or are you wheat?
3. What are the evidences in your life that you have had a heart change?