

Fruit!

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 March 2016

Preacher: Cory Brock

[0 : 00] Well, this is the end of the sermon on the mount. We've been doing a series on this sermon. It's the greatest sermon that was ever preached. And the ending is important, as was the beginning.

Jesus doesn't end his sermons the way we normally end our sermons. When I end a sermon, I usually try to end with an emphasis on as much hope as possible. And Jesus doesn't do that here. He ends with the words, I don't know you, you worker of lawlessness. Get away from me. This is partially because the great hope, the resurrection is in the future. It's something still on the horizon of history when Jesus preaches this sermon. And secondly, because the whole sermon has been about this in part. It's been about two paths. A path to destruction, a path to being cut down and thrown into the fire, and a path to life. Path to destruction, path to life. And the way he titles those on the path to destruction at the end of our passage is that he calls them workers of lawlessness, workers of lawlessness. Now we're celebrating the Lord's Supper tonight, and this passage can do a number on your assurance. This text is hard-hitting. Jesus comes to us tonight swinging for the fences of our heart. I just realized that's a baseball metaphor, so maybe you didn't catch it. But look, this is a text that can shake you to the core. So here we go. We dive in.

I want to ask three questions. Who are these workers of lawlessness? Why are they workers of lawlessness? And the question that the text begs from us, am I one of them? So first, who are these workers of lawlessness? If you come with me to verse 22, you'll see that Jesus identifies them in a number of ways. The first thing that these workers of lawlessness do is they say, Lord, Lord. They say, Lord, Lord. Now this is only the second time in the book of Matthew that Jesus has been called Lord. The first time was in Matthew 3.3 by John the Baptist, and there he was quoting Isaiah 40 verse 3 that says, prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight the pass. In other words, he's quoting from Isaiah. And in Isaiah, if you flipped in an English Bible to Isaiah, you would see that the word Lord there would be in all capitals, L-O-R-D, capital letters. And that's because the word Lord there is Yahweh, the name God gave himself. So look, the first thing to notice is this. They're saying Yahweh, Yahweh, Lord, Lord. They think Jesus is God. Okay? They think Jesus is God. The second thing to notice about this is when people say Lord in Greek, which is what this text was written in, they say, kyrios, kyrios. And one of the sayings of the time in the ancient Near East and the Roman

Empire was Kaiser Kyrios. Caesar is Lord. And so when they're saying Lord, Lord, they're saying something that Jesus is more than Caesar. And we know that because finally they repeated Lord, Lord.

[3 : 43] And in Hebrew, in this culture, the way you want to emphasize something is you say it more than once. So you remember back to, I think I said this before, but in Genesis 2, when God says, do not eat of the tree or you will surely die. It literally says, or you will die, die, die.

Right? In the original language there. Or in Isaiah 6, God is the thrice holy, the holy, holy, holy. You are the holiest is what it means. Right? So here we have people who say, Jesus, you're God, you're more divine than Caesar, you're truly the Lord. The second thing it says is that when they say Lord, Lord, they say this, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not cast out demons in your name? And did we not do many mighty works in your name? Look, these people are doing ministry. Did we not prophesy your name? Did we not cast out demons? We did tons of stuff for you. We're doing ministry. And guess what? It's working. It's successful ministry. We tried to cast out demons and we did cast out demons. And then the threefold repetition of in your name. We did it in your name, in your name, in your name. No one comes to the Father except in his name. Look, in the ancient Near East, when you come in somebody's name, you come as an emissary to the king, for the king. I come in the name of the king. In your name, in your name, in your name, the name of the king I

come. We said to you, Lord, Lord, you are God. We did ministry for you. And we did it saying you're the king. And Jesus says, I don't know you. Get out of my sight.

Depart from me, you worker of lawlessness. How does that make you feel? Is there anything scarier than not being known? Than hearing someone say, I don't know you. It's like hearing it from a spouse. You think you deserve it. Tolkien, like many things, he understood this fear that we have of not being known. And in across his books, he speaks often of the shadow. Gandalf talks about the shadow deep in the ancient chasm of old, where a darkness dwells that no one knows. Or when you put on the ring, you enter into a land of shadows. You see that on the movies even when Frodo puts the ring on and everything becomes like a shadow. The great kings of old, they become ringwraiths, shadows, they're called when they put the rings on. Not being known for Tolkien is like falling into a chasm like a deep, dark, shadowy pit. It's not being seen. It's not being loved. It's not being related to. Look, we are beings born for relationship. And to hear from God himself, I do not know you is to truly be in the shadows. It is at least possible to be engaged in the activities of the kingdom of God, but not to be known as a member of that kingdom. To not have your name written in the great scroll. It's possible to be around the furniture of the kingdom of God, the gospel and the church and the activities. But standing in the shadows. How busy we can be with ministry and not be known by God. So we know something of what kind of stuff these guys did and who they are, maybe through that. But why, secondly, the question we're left with is why?

Why does Jesus dismiss them? Why does he say I don't know you? People who are doing ministry, people who are saying Lord, Lord, why are they workers of lawlessness, secondly? Well, to answer this, I think the thing we have to consider is what are the two ways, the two paths and the Sermon on the Mount? We've said the path of destruction, the path that's being talked about here. And there's also obviously the path of life. And look, this is the Sunday night crowd. This is the A team. You guys come out twice a day, right? You can articulate exactly what these two paths are. One path we could say is the right path. It's the path that looks to Christ and where Jesus says I am the way I am the truth. I am the life. He literally is the way his person is the way. He is the way to life. You know that you're here at church on Sunday night. You know that.

[9 : 39] And you know the other way is the way that says no to him. It's the way of the atheist. Jesus says as much in Matthew 10:33. He says, all who deny me before others, I will deny them to my father.

Right? This is the other path. It's the way of Cain, the way of Abel, the way of Esau, the way of Jacob, the way of Pontius Pilate, the way of Jesus, the way of the fallen angels, Satan himself, and the way of the angels that remained obedient. There are two ways, two paths, and they've been all over the sermon on the mountains. And look, we can see these two paths. We can notice them. People who pray, people who don't pray. People who give alms, people who don't give alms. People who give to the poor, people who don't give to the poor. Right? Well, come with me and look at these metaphors that Jesus has provided us. The false prophets, they come in sheep's clothing, but if they were to take that clothing off, inside they would be wolves. Right? So we have real sheep, and we have wolves that look like sheep. And then you will recognize them by their fruits. Verse 17, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but a diseased tree bears bad fruit. So now we have two trees.

There's real sheep and fake sheep. There's diseased trees and real trees, healthy trees. Right? And then even if you stretch down to what you might not have it if you don't have a Bible, but in verse 24, the passage for next week is the text about two houses built on two foundations. Right? We got two types of sheet, two types of trees, two types of houses with two types of foundations. It's just like this morning, Derek mentioned that we have 12 pillars, right? In St. Columbus, six of them actually go down into the bedrock and help support the foundation of the church. But here's the thing, before St. Columbus renovated, if I were to take any of you in there, you wouldn't know which ones were the six that went down into the bedrock by just looking at the pillars. Sheep, wolves and sheeps clothing look like sheep. And trees look like trees and houses look like houses. Look, here's the point. The workers of lawlessness in this text look like everybody else does. So it's not merely that we're talking about the path of destruction being the atheist way, the way that says no to Jesus. You can see that. You know what that looks like. Everybody can identify that. What Jesus is saying is this is a path of destruction that's not so identifiable on the surface. It looks like other things. It looks like everybody else does. You can't tell from their activities.

[13:08] They do ministry. They show up on Sundays. They say, Lord, Lord, they might even be Sunday night people. There's a difference and it's found in the repetition of one line. The first time he says this is in verse 16. You will recognize them by their fruits. You will recognize them by their fruits. They are doers of the word. Now, what does he mean by you will recognize them by their fruits? What does he mean by the fruits idea? Well, look, this word fruits is all wrapped up in two different mixed metaphors. So let's see if we can make it a little bit more concrete. I think to do that, we need to go back into the earlier parts of the sermon. This is the end of the sermon and we can understand a bit what he's talking about by going back into the earlier parts. Look,

Jesus uses this phrase workers of lawlessness for a group of people one other time in the gospels. In 2328, he says to the scribes and Pharisees, so you are you outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. So look, here's what Jesus is saying. I've already identified for you what this path of destruction looks like. It's people that are around the furniture of the kingdom of God, but they're not in the kingdom of God. I've already identified it. I've already identified it for you. He says in the introduction of the sermon, chapter 5 verse 20, you want to be a member of the kingdom of God. You want the kingdom of God, your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. He's talking about the scribes and Pharisees. These are the ones he's putting forward as the models of the path of destruction that he's talking about in the future in the kingdom of God. Look, in chapter 6, he literally gives us a taxonomy of what he's saying. Don't give like the Pharisees. He said, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogue and in the streets that they may be praised by others.

Secondly, don't pray like the Pharisees. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogue and at the street corners that they may be seen by others. They don't fast like Pharisees. When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They just figure their faces that they're fasting may be seen by others. When your religion is shaped by being seen by others, then you bear fruit like a diseased tree. That's the path of destruction. Religion with the motivation of being acknowledged by everybody else means that it's not being acknowledged by God. Look, here's the great error that's being made. When they come to Jesus and Jesus dismisses them and they say, Lord, Lord, there's there's one verb to catch hold of. Did we not? Did we not? Did we not? You see? Lord, did we not do it? Do we not do this stuff for you?

[16:57] We did this stuff. We did this stuff. We did this stuff. Because of what we did, we did, we did. Now we ought to get, get, get. For your righteousness to exceed that of the Pharisees, the point Jesus is making is you've got to stop trying to save yourself with doing stuff. You're doing and you're doing and you're doing, but you're missing it. You're missing the point that it's you who's doing the stuff that you think is going to get you in to the kingdom and you can't. Look, ultimately, it's a denial of a relationship. Yet you've done a lot of stuff, but we don't have a relationship. When he, when he says, I do not know you, the verb that he uses there to know, he has a Matthew, the writer, he has a lot of options in Greek to use the verb to know. Now in English, unfortunately, we don't have very many options. We just say, we know things. I know that there's a rug on the floor, just like I know that there's people in the front row just in a different way.

I know Jesus Christ, but I have to use the same word to say that all those things you see, but in Greek they don't. He could have used this word, asthesi-ni, which means literally to see things, to look out and say, I know there's a rug on the floor. I asthesi-ni that there's a rug on the floor, right? But he doesn't say that. He says instead, I do not genosco you. In other words, I do asthesi-ni you. I do see you. I know what you did. I see it. I know it, but I don't know you.

See the difference? In other words, I'm not yours and you're not mine. We're not betrothed.

There's a reason why the Bible uses the verb to know when it refers to sexual relationships throughout. He's talking about a word for intense relation, intimacy, right? I don't know you. You see. So thirdly and finally, the question of discernment that the text is asking us, am I one of these people? You can't walk away without answering this question.

Has the gospel really come in? Is being part of the Sunday night crowd masking the fact that you just don't really actually care about Jesus Christ? Do you come instead because you know what you need and you know that you don't have it? Look, here's how you know. Here's assurance right here. We go back to the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. Three statements Jesus makes, three lines.

[20 : 29] Blessed are the poor in spirit. Are you bankrupt of righteousness? Do you know that? Are you bankrupt of righteousness? Are you seeking radical repentance for what you cannot be? Are you poor in spirit? It's giving up on the I'm a good guy, I'm a good gal narrative. We're all good people in here. We're middle class. We got our stuff together. But we're not good people. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Repentance. Repentance. Blessed are those secondly who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

The man who, a woman who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, hungers and thirsts for it as a person who knows their poor in spirit. So they don't look to themselves to find it. Look, if you run back to the Sermon on the Mount, you'll see this. Jesus has said, if you want to enter into the kingdom of God, your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. And then he goes on this path. You must not lust, be angry, have broken relationships, make promises that you break, seek revenge, hold grudges or hate your enemies. On top of that, you must have perfect prayer that never seeks to be seen by anyone else in any haughty fashion. You must fast without telling anyone. And you must give to the poor out of the goodness of your heart. You need somebody else's righteousness. You see, that's the point of the taxonomy. You're not that person. I'm not that person.

If you want the kingdom of heaven, the righteousness you need is somewhere else. So do you repent and do you look outside yourself for your hope? And the thirdly and final, blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Look, here's the fruit of the healthy tree. Blessed are the merciful.

The fruit of a living tree is mercy. You show mercy more and more because you know how much mercy you've been shown. In the acknowledgement of your need of another's righteousness, it starts to slowly seep in from your head to your toes, through your heart, and it just makes you into a person's ever so slowly that loves to be merciful to people who don't deserve it. And kind and loving. Loving people in this hangs the law and the prophets. Jesus tells us. Look, Paul has said this on our morning sermon series in Ephesians 1. When he says, I'm praying for you, there's two reasons why he says he's praying for you. Because you have faith in something that is not you, Jesus Christ. And secondly, because you love the saints. There it is. That's the healthy tree. Look, here's some assurance for you. You can operate your entire life within the walls, the furniture of the church setting with pharisaical righteousness. Doing, doing, doing in order to get, get, get. And you can be told in the end, I do not know you. You are not named. You're not known. But Peter, our favorite apostle steps into a courtyard at the end of Jesus life and a little girl comes up to him and she says, aren't you one of his boys? Don't you know this man? And he says, I do not know him. Betrayal, treason. Peter did not cry, Lord, Lord. He said, I don't know you. And then a couple days after the resurrection, Jesus invites Peter to have breakfast on the beach. And he says to him, you are the one who said that you did not know me. And by the power of my resurrection, I say to you, but I know you. Jesus Christ's death and resurrection is powerful enough for all of us who realize how many times we've said to him, I don't know you. When we look to that, to him in repentance for that sin, for him to say, it's okay. I knew you when I was hanging on that tree.

And I now know you by the resurrected power of the kingdom of God. Jesus says tonight, the right question to ask as you come to partake of the Lord's supper is not this, am I worthy? No.

[26 : 24] Instead, it's do I come repenting? And if you do, come eat my body, drink my blood, feast with me in inauguration of the kingdom of God. Let's pray. Father, we ask that you would make us awake to who we are, that we would not dance around the furniture of the kingdom without loving the king.

So we ask that your Holy Spirit will work in us to change us tonight, that we would come to the table repenting, repenting of our sins of this week, repenting of our sins of old, knowing that your forgiveness is sufficient for all. And we ask that we would look nowhere else but the resurrection power of the crucifixion one for our invitation to the banquet feast. We ask for this in Jesus name. Amen.