

SICK OF EVIL • Week 4: Hall Pass to Harm

Daily Briefing • Day 4 of 5 • Says Who?

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13

Sunday we read some genuinely scary passages out of 1 John and Titus about people who claim to know God while their actions say otherwise. Today we add one more, and then we run ourselves through the tests Scripture lays out. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I want to bring my actions into alignment with my words, and I want my actions to say that I know You, that I am a friend of God, that I love You, and I value the things that You value. Help me put to death my sin so that I'm not working against Your mission, and help me value what You value in practical and tangible means. I commit myself to You in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Some claims can be checked and some cannot. If you say you are a great cook, there is a way to find out. If you say you are a loyal friend, that gets verified over years. The claims nobody ever tests are the ones people repeat the longest, and church is full of people making those claims.

Sunday we read Titus 1:16, that some *"profess to know God, but they deny him by their works."* Here is one more that belongs in that same category. Jesus says, *"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"* (Matthew 7:21). The people He describes next were not casual religious people, they had a whole lot of activity to back up their claims. They prophesied, cast out demons, did mighty works, all in His name. And He tells them He never knew them.

So here is the uncomfortable part. There are three sentences people have been saying around American churches for decades, and Jesus attached a test to every one of them.

You say you "love God." Jesus says, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). You say you are a "friend of God." Jesus says, *"You are my friends if you do what I command you"* (John 15:14). You say you know God. John says, *"Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* (1 John 2:4). Three claims. Three tests. Same test, actually.

Now hear what this is not. This is not God saying He will be your friend only if you obey Him, like some insecure person setting conditions on a relationship. That would be a strange god and a stranger friendship. It is something else entirely.

Think about what you are actually claiming. If you genuinely love what Jesus did in rescuing you from your sin, and you have seen what sin actually costs people, then you value the same things He values. His entire life was aimed at people becoming what God made them to be and doing what God called them to do. He cares about your neighbor, and commands you to love your neighbor as yourself. So if you claim to love Him and know Him while actively working against the things He gave His life for, the claim gets strange on its own terms. Not because He set a condition, but because shared love produces shared values.

Which brings us back to where this whole series has been. If you are a new creation with a new heart and new desires, walking with God looks like something. Not perfection, just something different than a person tolerating sin that hurts themselves and those around them.

READ & MEDITATE

Matthew 7:21-23

"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. ²²On 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?’²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

1 John 1:6

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

Read Matthew 7:21-23 and notice what these people had going for them. Religious activity, and a lot of it. Then notice what Jesus says was missing. Then read 1 John 1:6 and notice the word practice at the end.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Three sentences church people have been saying for years: (1) “I love God.” (2) “I am a friend of God.” (3) “I know God.”

Which of the three do you say most often about yourself?

Now hold it against the test Jesus attached to it. Does your actual life over the last six months support the claim, or have you been saying words that cost you nothing and change nothing about your life?

Fill in the blank from Matthew 7:21:

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who _____ the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21)

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

The people in this passage had impressive religious activity, but that activity masked their disregard for what God asked of them. What does that one blank tell you about what Jesus was actually looking for instead?

This is not God setting conditions on friendship. It is that shared love produces shared values. If you claim to love someone but consistently do things they hate, that's a bizarre form of love.

If you genuinely love what Jesus did for you, and you have seen what sin costs people and does to society, would you expect to care about the same things He cares about? Where does your life show that you do, and where does it show you don't?

If you have been walking in darkness in some area, the reason matters, because different reasons need different fixes.

Is it that you don't actually know God's character or what He wants? That is a Bible problem, and it is fixable by seeing how God has revealed Himself in His Word.

Alternatively, is it that you concluded works don't matter since works don't save? Or that you know they matter but have not been walking in the power of the Spirit who lives in you? Or is it that you have been tolerating something you already know needs to be amputated? Name which one is actually true for you.

Jesus does not say these people did nothing; he lists a bunch of things they were doing. He says He never *knew* them, and when we tie this all together, that means they weren't walking according to his calling on their lives (remember 1 John 2:4).

Is there anything in your life you have been counting as proof you are fine with God that is really just religious activity?

What would change this week if you stopped defending the claim and started living like it were true? Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite 1 Corinthians 10:13 from memory:
