

**Text:** Matthew 7:21-8

**Message:** The Most Frightening Words



## Read

In your group, read the passage out loud, with each person reading a verse.

## Head: Grasping the Text

*Goal: To grasp the theological concepts and historical context of Paul's letter.*

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1. **The Verbal Profession:** Why do these individuals call Jesus "Lord, Lord"? What does the repetition of the title suggest about their outward level of devotion? How do you describe this kind of person Jesus is describing?
2. **The "Spiritual Resume":** List the specific activities the people mention in verse 22. Are these "bad" things? Why is it significant that even miraculous works aren't the criteria for entry into the kingdom? What's the difference between the outward aspects of a spiritual resume and the inward aspects of seeking Jesus?
3. **The Standard:** According to verse 21, what is the prerequisite for entering the kingdom of heaven? (Other helpful passages that explain God's will: 1 John 5:13, 1 Thess. 4:13, 5:18, 1 Pet. 2:15, Heb. 10:36).
4. **The Defining Word:** In verse 23, Jesus uses the word "**knew**" (from the Greek *ginōskō*, which means to learn to know a person through direct personal experience, implying a continuity of relationship). How does this type of "knowing" differ from simply knowing facts about someone? What is Jesus stressing?

## Heart: Grasping the Internal Transformation

*Goal: To reflect on the inner motivations, affections, emotions, etc., as they relate to being a disciple.*

5. In what way does the frightening statement from 7:23 convict, encourage, or challenge you? How does it feel to hear Jesus say, "I never knew you"? Does this spark fear, or does it drive you to seek a deeper, more intimate connection with Him?

6. **Identity vs. Activity:** Do you ever find yourself "auditioning" for God's approval or offering him your spiritual resume to gain his favor or acceptance? Do you feel more secure in your relationship with Him because of what you *do* or because of who He is and the grace he offers? (Read Eph. 2:8-9)
7. **The "Lord, Lord" Trap:** We all have an innate tendency to want to "show God we got what it takes." In what areas of your life (your service, your giving, your prayer life, your family) are you most tempted to build a resume to prove your worth to God or others?

### Hands: Grasping Your Next Step

*Goal: To move from hearing the Word to living it out. What temptation must I avoid? A promise to claim? An example to follow? A command to obey? A person to move toward? A new discipline to develop that will help you love God with your heart, soul, mind, strength, and to love others?)*

8. Jesus promises "rest for your souls" for those who take on his easy yoke and light burden. (Matt 11:29-30). What parts of your spiritual life feel heavy and exhausting right now? What's one step you can take to begin to shift your focus from \*performing for\* Jesus to \*receiving from\* Jesus and experience more of Christ's rest in these specific areas?
9. Authenticity happens when our hearts and actions are aligned. Where might there be a disconnect in your life between what you profess with your mouth and what your actions reveal about your heart? What is one small step you can take this week to invite Jesus to transform that area from the inside out?