

Most Christians Won't Make It to Heaven — Here's the Terrifying Reason

By System Import | Sermon | March 14, 2026

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It is the most terrifying verse in the entire Bible. It isn't a verse about hellfire, demons, or the end of the world. It is a verse spoken by Jesus Himself to a group of people who are confident, religious, and active in ministry. They are people who call Him "Lord." They are people who have done miracles, prophesied, and cast out demons in His name. They are people who fully expect to walk through the gates of heaven. And Jesus looks at them—not with a smile, but with a gaze of absolute finality—and says seven words that should make every single one of us tremble: "I never knew you. Away from me."

This is the great deception. This is the terrifying reason so many who identify as "Christians" are walking on a broad road that leads to destruction, all while holding a Bible in their hands. We have created a culture of "easy belief," where raising a hand, signing a card, or attending a service is equated with salvation. But Jesus warned us that the gate is narrow. He warned us that "many" will try to enter and will not be able. The terrifying reason isn't that God is cruel; it's that we have redefined what it means to know Him. We have traded relationship for religion. And before we dive in, if this message is already stirring something in you, hit the subscribe button and stay connected to God's Word daily, because we need to make sure our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, not just on a church membership roll.

We are going to walk through the hard truth today. This is not a message to make you doubt your salvation if you are truly His; it is a message to wake you up if you are sleepwalking toward a cliff. We are going to look at the difference between "knowing about" Jesus and "knowing" Jesus. We are going to expose the idols of cultural Christianity. And most importantly, we are going to look at the biblical evidence of a true, saving faith so that you can have full assurance that when you stand before Him, you will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and not, "Depart from me."

Number 1: The "Lord, Lord" Delusion Matthew 7:21-23

The core of this terrifying reality is found in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" Matthew 7:21. The repetition of "Lord, Lord" implies intimacy and passion. These people aren't atheists. They aren't casual observers. They are enthusiastic. They claim Jesus as their Master. But their claim is one-sided.

The delusion here is believing that verbal profession equals spiritual possession. We live in a world that says, "If you say you are a Christian, you are." But Jesus says that saying the right words is not the ticket. You can say the Sinner's Prayer a thousand times, but if there is no surrender of the

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will, there is no salvation. The terrifying reason many won't make it is that they have a "lip service" faith. They want Jesus as their Savior to save them from hell, but they refuse Him as their Lord to rule their lives.

Jesus clarifies that the entry requirement is "doing the will of my Father." This doesn't mean we earn salvation by works. It means that true salvation always produces a life that desires to obey God. If your life is characterized by willful, unrepentant disobedience—if you are sleeping with your girlfriend, cheating in your business, harboring hatred, and ignoring the poor, all while singing "Lord, Lord" on Sunday—you are living in the delusion Jesus warned about. Grace is not a license to sin; it is the power to obey. The scary truth is that many "Christians" are actually rebels in disguise.

Number 2: The Lack of Transformation The New Creation Test

The second reason is the absence of a changed life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 states, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" Salvation is not just a legal transaction where your record is wiped clean; it is a resurrection. It is a supernatural event where a dead spirit comes to life. If you have truly met the Living God, you cannot remain the same. It is spiritually impossible.

Yet, many people in the church look exactly like the world. They talk like the world, watch what the world watches, date like the world, and spend their money like the world. There is no distinction. The "old" has not gone, and the "new" has not come. They have added Jesus as an accessory to their life, like a new app on their phone, but they have not allowed Him to rewrite the operating system.

If there has been no change in your desires, no change in your affections, no change in your reaction to sin, then you must ask yourself if you have been born again. A Christian isn't perfect, but a Christian is different. A pig returns to the mud because it is a pig. A sheep may fall into the mud, but it hates it and wants to get out because it is a sheep. If you love the mud of sin, if you are comfortable there, if you have no conviction, the terrifying reality is that your nature may never have been changed. You might be a "fan" of Jesus, but not a follower.

Number 3: The Danger of "Cultural Christianity"

We often confuse our heritage with our heart. Many people believe they are Christians because they were born in a "Christian country," grew up in a Christian home, or were baptized as infants. They treat Christianity like a ethnicity or a political affiliation. They assume they are "in" because

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they aren't Buddhists, Muslims, or Atheists. But God has no grandchildren; He only has children. You cannot inherit salvation from your parents.

This "Cultural Christianity" is the wide gate Jesus warned about. It is a social club with a steeple. It demands nothing. It allows you to feel moral without being holy. It allows you to feel safe without being saved. The terrifying reason many won't make it is that they are trusting in their traditions rather than in a personal, broken, and desperate need for Christ. They are inoculated with just enough "religion" to make them immune to the true Gospel.

Jesus told Nicodemus, a religious leader who had the right heritage and the right position, "You must be born again" John 3:7. Being a "good person" isn't enough. Being a "church member" isn't enough. Unless the Spirit of God has personally regenerated your heart, all your religious culture is just a fancy road to destruction. We must move from a faith we inherited to a faith we inhabit.

Number 4: The Idol of Self The Rich Young Ruler

There is a story in the Gospels that should stop us in our tracks. The Rich Young Ruler comes to Jesus and asks, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" He is moral. He has kept the commandments. He is eager. Jesus looks at him and loves him. But then Jesus puts His finger on the one thing that the man loved more than God: his money. Jesus says, "Sell everything you have and give to the poor... Then come, follow me." The man walked away sad.

Why wouldn't he make it to heaven? Not because being rich is a sin, but because his money was his god. He wanted Jesus, but he wanted his idol more. He wanted to add Jesus to his life, but he wasn't willing to dethrone himself. The terrifying reason many won't make it is that they are practicing idolatry. They have a "Jesus + Something" faith. Jesus + my career. Jesus + my political party. Jesus + my sexual freedom.

But Jesus demands to be Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. He said, "Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" Luke 14:33. This doesn't mean you have to be poor; it means you have to be surrendered. If there is anything in your life you are not willing to walk away from if Jesus asked you to—a relationship, a habit, a dream—then that thing is your master. And you cannot serve two masters. Many will miss heaven because they held onto their idol with one hand while reaching for Jesus with the other.

Number 5: The Absence of Fruit The Vine and the Branches

Jesus gave us the ultimate diagnostic test for a true believer in John 15. He said, "I am the vine; you are the branches... Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away... and they are

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burned." He also said in Matthew 7:20, "By their fruit you will recognize them." True faith always, without exception, produces fruit.

What is the fruit? It is the Fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. It is also the fruit of good works, of loving others, of sharing the Gospel. If you look at a tree and it has no apples, you eventually have to conclude it is not an apple tree, no matter what the sign on it says.

The terrifying reason many won't make it is that they are barren. They have "faith," but it is a dead faith James 2:17. They have correct theology, but no love. They attend church, but they don't serve anyone. They claim to know God, but they are mean, bitter, gossip-filled, and impatient. They have the leaves of religion but no fruit of the Spirit. Jesus cursed the fig tree that had leaves but no fruit. A profession of faith without the production of fruit is a sign of spiritual death. If this message inspires you, don't forget to subscribe for more Bible insights every week.

Number 6: Unforgiveness The Hidden Blockage

This is one of the most sobering warnings Jesus ever gave, and it is often ignored. In the Lord's Prayer, and immediately after it, Jesus states a conditional reality: "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" Matthew 6:14-15.

Read that again. Jesus is saying that a heart that refuses to forgive is a heart that has not truly received forgiveness. You cannot be a container of God's grace if you put a lid on it and refuse to pour it out to others. There are many people who believe they are saved, yet they harbor deep, seething bitterness, hatred, and unforgiveness toward a parent, an ex-spouse, or a former friend. They hold onto that grudge like a treasure.

The terrifying reason they might not make it is that their unforgiveness proves they do not understand the Gospel. The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant Matthew 18 makes this clear: the servant who was forgiven a massive debt but refused to forgive a small debt was thrown into prison. If we can look at the cross—where Jesus forgave us an infinite debt—and then turn to our brother and say, "I will never forgive you," we are proving that the cross has not melted our hearts. Unforgiveness is a spiritual cancer that can block your entry into the Kingdom.

Number 7: Knowing About Him vs. Knowing Him

Finally, we return to Jesus's words: "I never knew you." The Greek word for "knew" here is *ginosko*. It implies a deep, intimate, experiential relationship. It is the same word used for the intimacy

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between a husband and a wife. Jesus isn't saying, "I didn't know who you were." He is saying, "We never had a relationship. We never had intimacy."

The terrifying reason most won't make it is that they know about Jesus, but they don't know Him. They know the facts of the Bible. They know the doctrines. They know the songs. But they never spend time in His presence. They don't hear His voice. They don't talk to Him unless they need something. They treat Jesus like a celebrity they follow on Instagram—they know all the stats, but they've never met.

Eternal life is defined in John 17:3: "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Salvation is not a ticket to heaven; it is a marriage to Jesus. If you arrive at the wedding feast but you've never spoken to the Groom, you are not the Bride. The people Jesus turns away are the ones who did things in His name but never spent time in His presence. They were busy workers, but they were spiritual strangers.

Conclusion

This is a heavy word, but it is a necessary one. The path to life is narrow, and few find it. But the good news is that the gate is still open today.

If you are reading this and your heart is pounding, if you realize you have been relying on your heritage, your works, or a "Lord, Lord" profession without a changed life—there is hope. You can cross from death to life right now.

It starts with honesty. Stop pretending. Come to Jesus and say, "Lord, I have been playing games. I have been religious, but I haven't been Yours. Today, I surrender. I give you my heart, not just my Sunday mornings. I ask You to change me from the inside out."

Don't let the terrifying reality of Matthew 7 be your future. Make your calling and election sure. Seek Him while He may be found. Because when you truly know Him, and He knows you, there is no fear in judgment—only the joy of finally seeing the One you have loved all along.

Before you go, make sure to subscribe, like this video, and share it with someone who needs encouragement today. And join us next time as we uncover another powerful truth from God's Word. long-break