

# Superficial Faith

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John Chapter 2 and we will read verse 23 to 25 “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover during the feast, many believed in his name beholding his signs which he was doing. But Jesus on His part was not entrusting Himself to them, for he knew all men and because he did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.” And I want us to talk this morning about this whole subject of superficial faith or what you might call shallow faith. Superficial means right on the surface. And there is such a thing as faith that is not saving faith it is a superficial faith. It is a shallow faith.

And so first of all notice from these verses the possibility of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and still being lost in your sins. The possibility of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and still going to hell. Now that is a shocking statement. Why do I say that? Well look at John 2:23, it says, “when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover during the feast many believed in His name.” They believed in His name. “But Jesus on His part was not entrusting Himself to them.” And this word ‘entrusting’ in the New American Standard is the very same word ‘believe.’ And I think the King James Bible has ‘commit.’ What does the ESV say? Jesus was not what? Jesus was not entrusting. But it is the very same word. You could say many believed in His name but Jesus on His part did not believe in them. Or you could say many entrusted themselves to His name, but He did not entrust Himself to them. He did not commit Himself to them. And so the question is not “Have I trusted Jesus ultimately?” The question is “Has He trusted me? Has he entrusted Himself to me?”

So why would Jesus not entrust himself or commit himself to these people? Well, let me ask you, why would he not? Sam said we would have questions during this time and I’m going to ask you questions. Is that the way you do it? I ask you questions. Why would Jesus not entrust Himself? It tells us right here. \*Man answers\* “He knew all the hearts of men.” Alright. He knew the hearts of men. So in order words, when it says that they trusted Him, they believed in His name; There was something lacking in that entrusting, that believing. And he knew their hearts. He knew what was in them. He knew the kind of faith that they had was not the real genuine faith. It was something that was shallow, it was on the surface. They believed in His name, but He knew their hearts and He did not commit Himself to them.

You know, it is one thing for me to say, “I know the Queen of England,” and it is another thing for her to say — I mean I could go to the Gates of Buckingham Palace or whatever and say, “I know the Queen.” That is not going to get you through the door. If she said she knows me that is something different. It is amazing in Galatians 4, it says “Now that you have come to know God”, Paul says that, “now that have come to know God,” then he stops, “or rather that you have come to be known by God.” Isn’t that something? To be known by God. And that is the same kind of thing. So the Lord did not entrust Himself to them because He knew their hearts.

Now notice it is not that they weren’t sincere. A man can be. I mean, Nicodemus is an example. He comes up here in the next chapter right away. He was sincere. A man can be sincere in one sense and be as insincere and

dishonest and so much unreality in his heart, he does not even know what he is doing a lot of times. People that come forward in these mass meetings, they are not deliberating trying to deceive anybody, but they don't even know what they are doing many times. So that's what we are talking about here. We are not talking about a lack of sincerity, at least on the surface. And this is a great mistake of many well-meaning counselors or so-called "soul winners". They think that if the guy is just sincere and he just bows his head and prays a prayer then God will hear him. Well, that may or may not be the case. Here in John 2, these people believed in His name, He didn't commit Himself to them. Many of these mass meetings where people go forward or where many times you get somebody to pray a prayer. They are sincere. They mean it as best they can, but is this same kind of thing here. They believe in one sense but is a superficial type faith. Sincere but shallow.

The problem is if you get a person stirred up in their emotions, you can get them to make some kind of decision. Many times you can do that. You can do that especially with children. You can take children and you say, "You don't want to go to hell, do you?" and, "Don't you want to be with mom and dad?" You play on that awhile you can get them to pray a prayer. See, the praying that prayer or "trusting" Jesus doesn't do anything. There has to be the reality of the Holy Spirit in that. And so what you have in our day is multitudes of people making professions of faith. Over in Romania, I've gone over there several times with the Heart Cry organization. There are so many people, I mean, American evangelists go over and they say we led 10,000 to the Lord! And when you total it all up it is more than the population of Romania. There is something wrong there! And so this thing of using and playing on the emotions and getting people to pray a prayer and make a decision.

I have never been able to verify this quote, but the story was told that Spurgeon used to have his counseling time on Tuesday afternoons. And after he left, one of the men that followed him started doing it the Sunday after the meeting. And one of the old deacons came and he said, "Why are you doing this?" He said, "Well I believe in striking while the iron is hot." In other words, while the emotions are stirred try to get people to do something. And the deacon replied, "Mr. Spurgeon believed that if God heated the iron it would stay hot until Tuesday afternoon." You don't have to play on emotion. You don't have to do that! and when we really believe that, when we really see that trusting God to work in people's lives. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, one night he was preaching, I think, it was a Sunday evening and there was a fellow a well-known drunk who was attending the meetings. And the fellow was weeping the whole meeting. Lloyd-Jones went to the back after it was over to greet the people that were leaving and the thought went through his mind, "Should I say something to this fellow or not?" And he decided he wouldn't. The fellow left the building. The next day, Lloyd-Jones was walking across a bridge and he met this man coming to him. The fellow said, "Dr. Lloyd-Jones, if you would have asked me last night I would have become a Christian." And he said, "Well come now. Let's come to the office and we could talk" And he said, "No no I don't want to do it today but if you asked me last night." Now, you see what that is? It's not real. It's emotion. It is being stirred. This happens all the time.

My own wife went forward in one of these big meetings and "accepted" Jesus and was preparing to be a missionary in New Guinea and came to see that she was lost. So that is what we are talking about. When John Wesley came over to America he said, "I came here to convert the Indians but who is going to convert me?"

Alright. So there's the possibility of superficial faith, believing on Jesus and still being lost in sin. But notice too here, superficial faith is not only possible it is very common. It says 'many' believed in His name—many. You

remember the Lord Jesus? He said, "Strive to enter by the narrow gate. Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life. Not many go in there. Few there will be that find it. Broad is the way that leads to destruction. Many go in that gate. He is not talking about... A lot of people have the idea He is talking there of the broad gate that it is talking about other religions and people like Hitler and that type of thing. No, the whole thing is talking about professing Christianity because he says many and few. Many will say to me Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in Your name and in Your name cast out demons and in Your name do many miracles. These are professing Christians. And so the broad gate and the narrow gate or narrow way are within professing Christianity. Beloved, think of this, the vast vast majority of professing Christians down through the ages, people that go by the name Christian, the vast majority of them had nothing but superficial faith. They grew up in a church or something you know. Or they made some kind of shallow profession and then they go on living their lives in sin. The vast majority of people who say they are Christians are not real Christians. So it is a warning to us.

What else? Well notice also that the terminology, as far as the terminology is concerned, it is describing Christians. It is Christian terminology. Now, this is a big one. But it says many believed in his name. You remember back in chapter 1, "To those who received Him, to as many as received Him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. The very same phrase exactly in the Greek. So you read back here in John 1:12, "As many as received Him, even those who believe in His name." He said that's a true Christian. That is a true Christian. Then you get over to chapter 2 and you see many believed in His name. You say, "They must be true Christians. That's Christian terminology." But the fact is the Bible often uses Christian terminology to describe people on the basis of their profession of faith or their outward appearance; but it doesn't mean that they are true Christians and that really helps us as we begin to look at the Scripture.

Now, I want to show you a few places right here in the book of John where we see that. In John chapter 8:30, "As He spoke these things many came to believe in Him." "Well," you say, "they got converted. They are Christians." Well, let's read on. "Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, if you abide or continue in My word then you are truly disciples of Mine and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. They answered him in verse 33, "We are Abraham's offspring." Verse 34, "Jesus answered them..." and then verse 39 "they answered and said to Him." Do you follow? There is a discussion going on here. Now these people had believed in His name, they had believed in Him. And they are answering back and forth and as you get down to verse 42, "Jesus said to them..." and then verse 44, "you are of your father the devil." So here He has people that believe in Him, and they get into a discussion and He ends up saying your father is the devil. Now do you see this, the word "believe" doesn't necessarily mean that they were true Christians. It means that there was some kind of faith involved, some kind of believing involved and it was a superficial faith. And He ends up saying, "you are of your father the devil."

We see the same thing in Matthew 13. Jesus tells the parable of a sower that went out to sow and remember it says that there was one that received the word immediately with joy. You see that happens sometimes. People receive the word immediately with joy. Maybe we ought to turn to Matthew 13:20. "The one on whom the seed was sown in the rocky places this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy yet he has no firm root in himself but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word immediately he falls away. And then I think maybe it's in Luke's passage it says, "he believes for a while." There is such a thing

as believing for a while. And you've seen people say, "You know he received it with joy. I know he got saved. Look at how joyful he was!" No, you don't know that, until you see the fruit, the reality, the perseverance. And so, it says here that immediately he receives it with joy and immediately he falls away when the problems come. How is that? Well, the more shallow a thing is, it's a superficial faith. The more shallow you plant something the faster it comes up. And I like to see people struggling and agonizing, you know, fighting before they get converted. It doesn't mean you can't be converted, you know, in a day. But sometimes it's a good sign when you see people doing that because they're really realizing that this is going to cost me everything to be a Christian. But when somebody quickly receives the word, many times they quickly fall away. Why? No depth of earth, no root, it's superficial surface, you see.

Alright. Let's look at another one. 2 Peter 2:20. We'll start in right there, it says "For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now that sounds real doesn't it? These people have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Sounds real. If they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state is become worse for them than the first. It would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. So if you had just read that you would say, "Look, they escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of Christ and they knew these holy things and then turned away: they lost their salvation. But you have to read the next verse to see how Peter views these people. He says in verse 22, "It happened to them according to the true proverb, a dog returns to his vomit." People who had never been changed on the inside. You see? The pig, the sow after washing returns to wallowing in the mire. So even though Peter describes them using these Christian words, he's not thinking of them as true Christians. I mean, if some brother, some Christian you know turned away, would you say that it's just a dog going back to his vomit? You wouldn't say that about a true believer. So you understand how Peter views these people? They make a superficial profession. They're described according to their appearance.

Well, let me give you one more then we will talk about it. Acts 8:13. This is talking about Simon the sorcerer. It says in verse 13, "even Simon himself believed." There is that word "he believed". "And after being baptized he continued on with Philip." So he believed, he was baptized, he continued on. "And as he observed signs and great miracles taking place..." same thing we saw in John 2, he was continually amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem..." (then it goes on and tells about them praying and laying hands) verse 18, "and when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed by the laying on of the apostles hands he offered them money saying, 'I want that'. Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you.'" He is going to perish. "Because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money. You have no part or portion in this matter for your heart is not right before God. Therefore, repent of this wickedness of yours and pray to the Lord that if possible the intention of your heart may be forgiven." Here is another example of superficial faith. He believed, he was baptized. Why? Well, he wanted power. And he saw these signs and wonders and so on.

Now let me just say this, don't be shaken when you see people that seem to appear to be believers fall away. That's what we're talking about. This is very practical, very helpful. Now, Paul talks about that. You remember Hymenaeus and Philetus in 2 Timothy? They turned away from the faith. He says it upset the faith of some people. You see these guys turning away, it bothers you. I think that's why Jesus warned the disciples ahead of time. He

said one of you is going to betray me. I don't think Judas had two horns and a tail. And they didn't know, when Jesus said "one of you is going to betray me." They didn't all turn around and look at Judas. Maybe he was the most winsome and lovable disciple of any of them. And it tore him up to see Judas turn away. But the Lord wants them to know that he knows all about it ahead of time. And so Paul says Hymenaeus and Philetus have turned away. It's upsetting the faith of some. But he said, "Nevertheless the firm foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows those who are His. And let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Okay, it's possible to have superficial faith. Now, you read passages like Hebrews 6, it says "It's impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come..." and so on. You don't just try to explain that away and say, "Well that's— they were made partakers of the Holy Spirit." Some people say that just means they were going along side with. Well, the problem is a little earlier in Hebrews it says, "Jesus became a partaker of flesh and blood." You see 'partaker' means He really was a true man. And you can go on down right through that passage. The terminology is Christian terminology. We don't have to fight that. The problem is that the bible often uses Christian terminology to describe people according to their profession or their appearance. Where ever it says in Hebrews 'holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling'; people read that and say, "I know one thing. Everybody in the book of Hebrews was a true Christian." No. Same way if I address you as brethren, that doesn't mean that I believe every one of you is converted. You see that's Biblical terminology. So don't get tripped up when it says, "If you see a brother committing a sin unto death..." What's that mean? It means somebody in the church. It doesn't mean where they really stand with God. You don't know that for sure. In one way of looking at it, all of us here today are professing Christians.

You say, "Well, what about the apostle Paul? What if he came preaching a different gospel?" What does he say? Though we or an angel from heaven preach something different let him be accursed. So Paul is saying even if the angel Moroni appears to you, don't listen to him. But he's also saying (isn't this amazing), 'if I come back next year and I am saying something different don't listen to me either.' Though we or an angel from heaven. Do you see that? So we don't put confidence in any man. Ultimately your confidence is in God and that He knows those that are His and He is going to take care of them. And Jesus said that about the disciples, "Of those whom You have given me I lost not one." That's why He came down from heaven. "I came down from heaven, remember what it says in John 6? He says, "If anyone come to Me I will in no wise cast out." That means if you're in here, He's not going to kick you out if you're in His fold, if you're a true believer. Why will He not kick them out? Why will he not cast them out? He says, "I came down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me." I came down here to accomplish something. That's why I won't kick out any believer. I came down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. What is it Lord? "This is the will of Him who sent me: of those that He has given Me I lose not one." I came down here to accomplish the salvation of my people. And I'm not going to lose one of them.

Now you are going to see lots of people who profess and who on the surface look real; and they fall away. But he says I want you to know the foundation of God stands sure. God is not going to lose one of His people. And let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. If your claiming to be a Christian, act like one. Depart from iniquity.

Alright, it's possible to have superficial faith. So the question is: "How do I know if my faith is real or not?"

How do I know if I have real faith or just superficial faith?” What are the marks of superficial faith? Now I want to talk here in the time we have about three of them. First of all, superficial faith is based on a misunderstanding or misapprehension; a lack of comprehension of what is really being offered. Alright. People have this idea they want to get something. I’ll accept Jesus so I can get something.

And in this case in John 2, what was that? What were they looking at when they believed on Jesus? They were looking at these signs and wonders, and they are taken up with that. They thought they were being offered bread and circuses and a carnal Messiah. You know, the Jews had this idea that when the Messiah came, He’s going to tread down the powers of Rome and he’s going to establish a political kingdom and so on. They weren’t looking for some Messiah that was going to die on the cross and save them from their sins. They were looking for a Messiah that was going to bring them political and physical blessing. It’s an example of superficial faith. They don’t understand what is being offered.

Now, you see that right through the gospel of John. Think of the woman at the well in John 4. What about the woman at the well? She says sir give me this water. What? Do you remember this? Jesus offered her living water. Sir, give me this water so that I won’t have to come all the way out here to this well and draw it. She misunderstood. So she is apparently asking for salvation, but it is clear she doesn’t understand what is being offered. He says, “If you knew the gift of God and Who is speaking to you, you would ask Me and I would give you living water.” “Sir, give it to me.” Well, it is obvious she does not understand what she is asking for. Now, you see the same thing a little later in John in chapter 6. Maybe we ought to turn to this. In John 6, just to lay the background, he has done this miracle of multiplying the loaves and in verse 14, “When therefore the people saw the sign which he performed they said, ‘this is of a truth the prophet who is to come into the world.’ Jesus, therefore, perceiving that they were intending to come and take him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.” They are ready to make Him a king, but their kind of king.

You get down to verse 26, “Jesus answered them, ‘Truly truly I say to you you seek me not because you saw signs.’” That is, really understood what the signs meant. “But because you ate of the loaves and were filled.” So He talks about the bread that comes down out of heaven and so on and He is the true bread. Look at verse 34, “They said therefore to Him, ‘Lord evermore give us this bread.’” We want that bread of life. We want that bread of life. They are saying the same thing as the woman at the well. And how does He respond to them? Well, He goes on and tells them that they don’t understand and that they don’t truly believe. “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” In verse 36, “I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe...” And he goes on and talks to them about true faith. So people misunderstand what is being offered and they think they can get something. They “accept” Jesus in order to get something. Simon in Acts 8 was an example. Simon believed and was baptized and wanted power. These people they said we want this bread. They didn’t understand what they were talking about. The woman at the well give me this water. She doesn’t know what she is saying. And so this leads to superficial faith.

Now, beloved, here is the point. This happens no matter how pure of a gospel you are preaching. Even the Lord Jesus. Perfect preaching of the gospel and you had people believing on Him for the wrong reasons. Superficial faith. But what we have in our day, is a gospel, it is designed to create superficial faith. I mean it is like, do you want financial prosperity? Or—how do they put it—financial freedom? You want prosperity? Well, come to Jesus. Do you want to be healed? Who doesn’t want to be healed? Or some of them are more subtle. Don’t you want to be

free from that addiction? Well, yeah, you want to be free from that addiction, but that is not the reason to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ so that you can feel better about yourself and that you are not such a bum. I mean it is the way things are presented. It's man centered. All that you could have if you "accepted" Jesus. I mean we had a billboard one time where I live. It was at Christmas time. It said, "Jesus. For the man who has everything." So in other words, you got it all made, but now you need to have this cherry on top that really rounds it all out and finish out your life. You have it all going really good, but you just need Jesus to just finish it off. That's not the way it is. We are wretched, miserable, naked. We got nothing. We are desperate, helpless, and we desperately need Christ as our everything. There are open invitations like, "I mean, you don't want to go to hell, do you?" There is a right aspect to that, but who wants to go to hell? Nobody wants to go to hell. See? And people believe on Jesus in a carnal way not because they understand that hell is separation from the One who is altogether lovely, but because they want a fire escape. Do you want to have peace? Do you want to be happy? Don't you want peace? Don't you want to get out of your troubles? Yeah, I'm tired of not having peace. I want to come up there and accept Jesus so I can get peace and then go ahead and live my life. Do you want a happy marriage? You know, your marriage is a mess. You could have a happy marriage if you came to Jesus.

There was a well-known campus minister who came to our school. It was probably more than 20 years ago. The title of his message: Maximum Sex. That is for college students. What is this going to do? This will draw a crowd. This is the way, you know, if you really want to have maximum sex then you need to be a Christian. Can you imagine this? This is holding out carnal things to get people to "accept" Jesus specifically to create superficial faith and have men think that they are saved so they can go to hell now thinking they are saved rather than to go to hell knowingly rebellious against God. I mean it is amazing. Everything is centered around man. Everything is geared to create superficial faith to get something from God. And what is it? You accept Jesus so that you can get the thing that you really wanted. And that is one thing God won't do. He will not be a means to an end. He is the end. He is not going to be a cog in the wheel to get you to your real god! He is God! And He says, "I will be their God and they shall be My people." I insist on that. You want God to save you? Well, He is going to be your God in order to save you. "Well, I want You to save me but I don't want You to be my God." Do you realize how stupid that is? I mean this is just basic.

One of the hardest situations to counsel is marriage counseling where you got people that are lost. It is so hard because they are wanting... I had a fellow come to me one time, a guy I used to work with, a motorcycle guy, rough guy, he came there to talk to me sobbing. He said, "I want to become a Christian." And I started talking to him a little bit and what was happening his wife was leaving him. And I finally said, "Well, you know, I don't think you really want to become a Christian. I think you want your wife back." He said, "Yeah that's right." Now, you see, I could have led him in a prayer and got him to do it. And you know what happens when you do that? Jesus said you try to put new wine in an old wine skin. What happens? The skin bursts and what does it say? Two things: the skin is ruined and the wine falls on the ground. So what happens is you come to that person and you say, "You know you can be saved," and he says, "I tried that." The skin is ruined. And what else? The wine is spilled on the ground. What does that mean? People look at him and say, "Oh that guy said he was a Christian. He went right back into sin. He said he was a Christian. The gospel doesn't amount to anything." You see?

so it's important that we don't lead people in these false prayers for false motives. Like I said, if someone

is in marriage counseling and they are saying they want to become a Christian, it's difficult to get things around to where they are wanting God for God's sake and not wanting God in order to get their wife back or whatever. You girls, if you want to guarantee superficial faith in some guy, just spend a lot of time being real nice to him, and "sharing" the gospel with him, and be sure and tell him now I can't marry you unless you become a Christian. And guess what will happen? He will "become" a Christian for a week or two or a month or until he gets married. This thing is serious, isn't it?

I mean it is big and the professing church goes along in blindness. I mean anybody that says they are a Christian— great, you know! It doesn't matter how they live. It doesn't matter if they continue. It doesn't matter if they have any spiritual understanding. That is what we are talking about here. Superficial faith "accepts" Jesus in order to get something else.

Secondly, it is not only based on a misunderstanding of what is being offered, it is based on a misapprehension of the One who is making the offer. People don't realize who the Lord Jesus is. They got a wrong idea of who He is. They think He is some kind of cosmic Santa Claus that exists to make them happy! And He isn't! He is God. He demands our allegiance. Luke 14:26, "If you love father and mother, you love son or daughter more than Me, you are not worthy of being My disciple." Think about that. I mean would Confucius say that? You know, you got to love me more than your father and mother. He wouldn't say something like that. The real Jesus... all things were created by Him and for Him.

I was talking to a girl one time and I said, "What is your understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ?" She said, "Well I feel sorry for Him." I said "What?" She said I feel sorry for Him. You realize the picture that has been painted? Here is poor Jesus, He is out here standing in the rain and the door doesn't have any handle on it. Won't you have mercy on Him and let Him come into your heart so He won't be out there standing in the rain? That is not the way it is. He says, "I am He who opens and no man shuts. I am He who shuts and no man opens." You remember Lydia? It says whose heart the Lord opened that she responded. He is well able to open hearts. He is not at our mercy. We are at His mercy. He is God seated on the throne.

It is something isn't it? It says men will cry out to the rocks and mountains saying, "Hide us from the wrath of the Lamb!" The Lamb! Hide us from the wrath of the Lamb. And it is an amazing thing that the One who will be our judge is the One who died for sinners. Isn't that amazing? No one can be saved by believing on a "Jesus" who is not the real Jesus. You got to have some kind of spiritual apprehension of it. The Lord is walking along with the disciples and He says, "Who do men say that I am?" "Well, some say You are John the Baptist, some say You are Elijah, some say You are one of the prophets." "Who do you say that I am?" Notice Peter didn't say, "Well, I believe, I think You are the Christ." He said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And what did Jesus say? "Blessed are you Simon Bar-jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed it to you but My Father who is in heaven." No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit! You can mouth the words but if you got that welling up in your heart Jesus is Lord. If I go to hell, Jesus is Lord! If you know that, if you got that knowledge in your heart, that did not come from around here, that came from God. The Father has revealed it to you. God who commanded light to shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. You have gotten a glimpse of who He is.

Superficial faith doesn't have a clue who Jesus really is. But if you see who He is, even a glimpse of who He

is, and you want to fall down and worship Him for who He is not for what you can get out of Him, but because He is worthy. If that is the case, you don't have superficial faith. God has given you a glimpse of the Lord Jesus.

Number three, this is the last one. Superficial faith is based on a misunderstanding or misapprehension of the cost involved. These people were following Jesus by the droves and in a little while they started to leave—and these people believed in His name. You know, a lot of them followed Him for awhile. And then they started getting this far away look in their eyes and they leave. You read a little further in John and it says they all started to turn away. Jesus said to the disciples, “Are you going to go away too?” They said, “Lord where are we going to go? You have the words of eternal life.” If there had been any other thing, if they hadn't seen who He was, they would have fallen away. But they knew who He was.

But superficial faith is based on a misunderstanding of the cost involved in being a Christian. Jesus says, “If anyone wishes to come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. It is going to cost your life to be a Christian. It really will. You try to hold on and the stronger you try to hold on you will die! He says you got to let go, you got to lose your life, and then you will find it. He says you will keep it to life eternal. He who saves his life shall lose it whoever loses his life shall keep it to life eternal. Luke 14, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters and yes even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. So, therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. People say well that is just talking about discipleship being a “super” Christian. Why did He say this? For what will a man be profited if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul. What is He talking about? Rewards? He is talking about being a real Christian.

Beloved, God is determined, that He is going to be your God. That's what it means to be a Christian. That means it's going to cost you everything to be a Christian. He's going to be your God. And you can tell what a man's god is by what his thoughts go to whenever he has 5 minutes free time. Or whenever he is able to talk about something, you know. What does it go back to? I mean, I had a friend back when I was in high school and college that was into electrical engineering. He would study electrical engineering all day long and then when he went home at night he would make up experiments to do at home. That was his life. That was his god. Everything centered around that. That's all he thought about, all that he talked about. Now, it could be anything, it could be playing the piano, or it could be running. There are guys that run in their sleep, you know. It's their life. It can be anything. But here is the thing, if you worship something like that— if you worship running, the world won't get upset about that. They will talk about how great you are. But if you ever start to worship God, they will go wild. They will say you gone crazy. “All you do is talk about God! All you do is read that Bible!” You see what it is? Paul says for me to live is Christ. That's not a super Christian, that's a Christian.

You tell me if that is not true about you if you're a child of God? What would you have if you didn't have Christ? Nothing. You got no reason to live. For me to live is Christ. Superficial faith doesn't realize the cost, and so it has no true repentance, no sorrow for sin, no longing for holiness, and no hunger to know God. You know, in short, you could say God is not God to the person who has superficial faith. That's the way you could say it. He is not God to them.

You know the difference between true and false assurance is when you are troubled about your soul and

you get assurance: "I believe God has saved me." But here's the difference between true and false assurance: if you got false assurance you say, "I believe God has saved me, now I can forget about Him and go ahead and live my life!" True assurance says, "I believe God has saved me, now I have a lifetime of getting to know Him and follow Him!" You see the difference? That's the mark of true saving faith.

I'm about done. All this is why Jesus dealt with souls the way that He did. They believed in His name. He knew it wasn't real. What did He do? He did not entrust Himself to them. You know what would happen nowadays? Someone goes forward in a meeting, they "accept Jesus" and the well-meaning counselor affirms it. But what happened? Jesus doesn't entrust Himself to them. And the well-meaning counselor comes along and he says, "Now where is Jesus now? He said if you open the door, He would come in. Where is He now?" "I guess, He is in my heart." "Praise God, now you are saved!" They tried to entrust Jesus to them. And He hasn't entrusted Himself to them.

How did Jesus deal with souls? He says to the woman at the well, He says "if you knew who you were talking to, you would ask and I would give you living water". She said "I want that". "Sir give me this water". But He realizes that she does not realize what she is saying and so what does He do? He doesn't say bow your head and pray a prayer. He says "well, why don't you go and call your husband". You see, that is the one thing she didn't want to talk about. She had already had too many husbands and she was living with a guy right then. He brings up the "problem area" in order to move from the superficial to the real! And when you are talking to somebody and they say, "I want to be a Christian" and it's obvious that they don't even know what they are saying. You ask God to help you or you wait upon the Holy Spirit, or pray or whatever. Till God begins to dig down to where there is some reality and they start to see what they are saying. They start to see what you are saying. You see? That is why the Lord dealt with that woman that way. Now here is the rich young ruler. I have never had this happen. Sam, have you ever had this? You are walking along the street, a guy comes running up to you and falls on the ground and says "What must I do to have eternal life?" And you look at that and you say "This guy is a fake." That is basically what Jesus did. He said, "You know the commands." He said "I've done all that." You see, he was tossing around the word good much too freely. You are a good teacher. What good thing must I do. Jesus said there is nobody good but God. He was not saying I'm not God. He is saying you don't understand what goodness is. And Christ says "Keep those commands." He said "I've kept all of them from my youth up." "What do I lack?" He knew he lacked something. Well, one thing you lack go sell everything you have and give it to the poor and come follow me. That was his idol, you see. That was his god. That was his big problem. He did not say to the rich young ruler "Go call your wife." That wasn't his problem and he didn't say to that woman "Sell all you have." He is dealing with gods, you see? It's like in Egypt, God comes in he kills their gods. They worship the Nile. He turns the Nile into blood. You like frogs? You can have a lot of frogs. And people get upset when their gods start getting killed. Pharaoh says "Stay here in the land and worship." Moses says you are not going to like that because we are going to sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians. I used to think that meant the Egyptians abominated the things that the Israelites are going to sacrifice. That is not what it meant. The Egyptians worshipped the things that the Israelites were going to sacrifice and that is an abomination. You take men's gods and start killing and offering them to your God, they don't like that. And that's what happens in the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ, men's gods get killed and offered up and people don't like that. You got some brilliant guy who got his chance to go to MIT and he says "No I don't think I'm

going to go there. I'm going to go on the mission field." People go wild about that because education is their god. Other people have other gods. "Why would you give up this career to do that stupid stuff that you are doing now, out there preaching to people or whatever" You see? True worship involves sacrificing up the gods that the world worships. There is a story that I like a lot mainly because it is a true story. Up in the great lakes these eagles come down and grab ahold of a fish to take it to their young and sometimes they get ahold of a fish that is too big and so they got ahold of this big fish and they are flying back and they start getting weaker and weaker. Finally they go down into the water and they find a dead eagle on the shore holding onto a dead fish. All he would have to do is let go. Just let go of the fish. That is all you have to do. And that is this rich young ruler. He is holding onto this fish. What is it? His riches. Jesus said let go of that or it is going to drag you down into destruction and he wouldn't let go of it. He went away sorrowful. The woman at the well, she let go and she went rejoicing and telling other people about Jesus. Jesus did not commit himself to them. You know the glorious part of it? He does commit himself to those who really truly believe on him. He does. He commits Himself to you. Blessed assurance Jesus is mine. He's mine. He commits himself to you. Let me close off with a story. One of the college girls that used to come to our meetings she was faithfully there every time, to the college Bible study, and I thought she was a Christian. She gave evidence of that. She went home for the summer and came back in the fall and I began to ask her some questions about her summer and I began to realize this girl doesn't know the Lord at all. She wanted to be in the Peace Corps and when we talked to her about that she began to realize that the Peace Corps is not a Christian organization and so she wanted to be a missionary. I was talking to her about this whole thing and one night it seemed like God was— she didn't have any assurance and everything and it was obvious that she wasn't converted to me and we were talking to her there, my wife and I. I said "Jane first you want to be in the Peace Corps and then you want to be a missionary." Jane the philanthropist. (a person who seeks to promote the welfare of others) You want to go all around the world and do all these nice things for people. I said how about if you just give your life to God for whatever He wants you to do. She sat there awhile. Thought about it. Shook her head. She wanted to be a missionary more than she wanted to be a Christian. I have never seen that before but that happens too. So I told her the story about this big fish. I said you have got to let go of this idol. So a couple of weeks later she came back. Again, she said I still have no assurance. I said, well, you are going to have to let go of that fish. God is never going to hear you. And she said "Well, I have let go." And so I didn't try to lead her in a prayer or anything. I just told her "You get on God's doorstep and you cry out for mercy." If he doesn't have mercy on you, you will be the first person that he didn't save, who put themselves on his doorstep. The next morning, we got a knock on the door. Mona went to the door first. She is standing there with her arms out. She says "I'm saved! I'm saved!" What happened? She let go of the fish and Jesus committed himself to her. That's the difference between this superficial thing and the real thing. And God wants us, not only for ourselves, but for those around us that we see that are making professions of faith and those we are counseling with. I mean we have got to be careful and there is a time to pray with somebody and there is a time even to pray with them to pray a prayer with them. I don't think we ought to put the words in their mouth but there is a time. We need to be sensitive to what God is doing in their lives. There was another college girl one time came for counseling. We had talked through a lot of things. It seemed like God was there and He was real and He was dealing with her. I said "Will you say to the Lord, Lord Jesus by your grace I will trust you as my savior." I said are you able to do that honestly? She said yes I am. I said, I think you ought to pray something like

this. Lord Jesus by your grace I will and I do trust you as my savior and I ask you to make it real to me in Your time and in Your way. She prayed like that and then I prayed. We opened our eyes and she was beaming. She said he has already made it real. I mean Jesus committed himself to her. What an encouraging thing. Both of those girls have gone on with God. They are older women now, married. They are not older women but they are married now and they have continued on, followed on with the Lord. That is the way it is because Jesus said He would keep those who had committed their souls truly to Him.