

# The Worst Words You'll Ever Hear

Matthew 7:21-23

## I. INTRODUCTION: I

I. 2 You see it all the time; lists of the “best” and the “worst.”

A. Such things are popular all the time, but especially around New Years.

(1) Top ten songs of the year, top ten movies of the year.

(2) Top news stories of the year, top weather events of the year.

B. These types of things are very popular on the internet.

(1) The best songs of the decade, or, the worst movies of all time. The best catches of the NFL. The worst political blunders of all time.

(2) These things dominate the web; there are lists for everything.

C. I admit that I sometimes get suck into looking at these lists.

(1) They often get my blood pressure up, because I don't agree with the choices.

(2) They are made up by the people who are basically trying to expose you to ads.

(3) I've also noticed that there is a “generational” difference in these lists; i.e., those making the lists demonstrate a bias towards a much younger generation than me!

D. So, just because a web site shouts, “The top ten movies of all time, doesn't mean it's true (At least not in “my book”!).

E. I began thinking of these things because the internet and news have been flooded over the past few days with these typical end of the year “best/worst/top/bottom of 2017” lists.

(1) \*\* It also reminded me of an old sermon of mine, “Saddest Words in the Bible.”

(2) I first preached it in Michigan (2008); and again here at Westside (6/15/2014).

(3) I borrowed the idea and title from Johnie Edwards.

(4) The lesson had eight main points and truly are some of the saddest words in the Bible:

☛ “Some mocked”: Acts 17:32 (response of the Athenians to Paul's preaching)

☛ “We will not walk therein”: Jer. 6:16 (response of the Jew's to the prophet Jeremiah's plea to obey the word of God)

☛ “Who concerning the truth have erred”: 2 Tim. 2:17-18 (descriptive of two men who said, “the resurrection is past already”)

☛ “Concerning the faith have made shipwreck”: 1 Tim. 1:19-20 (apostacy of some mentioned by Paul; incl. Hymenaeus and Alexander)

☛ “And the door was shut”: Matt. 25:10 (Fate of the five unprepared virgins)

☛ “Depart from Me”: Matt. 7:21-23; 25:41 (Jesus' words to the lost)

☛ “Go thy way for this time”: Acts 24:25 (Felix's response to Paul's preaching)

☛ “Almost thou persuadest me”: Acts 26:28 (Agrippa's response to Paul's preaching)

F. The sixth point in that lesson is taken from Matthew 25:41 and Matthew 7:21-23; the full quote from Matthew 7:21-23 goes like this: \*\*

“Not every one that saith unto me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have

we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?’ 23 And then will I profess unto them, ‘I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’” (KJV)

- G. **3** In this lesson I want to focus on the words Jesus will say to many people, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
- H. I propose these are **The Worst Words You’ll Ever Hear**. (Lesson not meant to be harsh or accusatory; simply a “reality check” for everyone, including me; Matt. 11:15).

## II. DISCUSSION:

### **They are the worst words you’ll ever hear, because of...**

#### I. **4** When they will be heard:

- A. In the previous verse (v. 22) Jesus says, “Many will say to Me in that day...”
- (1) On what day? Not just any day. Not just some day. “that day.”
  - (2) That day will be the very last day, the Day of Judgment; “the end” as Paul puts it in I Corinthians 15:24. That’s the day Jesus is discussing here.
- B. **\*\*** These are the worst words because they are spoken on the last day.
- (1) There is no more time to change. There is no time to make things right. The time for “do overs” is now over; completely, totally, forever!
  - (2) Perhaps if we had heard these words at the half-way point in our life, or even just a few weeks or months before “that day”; we could have made some adjustments, we could have repented, made the changes needed to avoid hearing these words.
- C. You see, life requires “navigation.” (**5** explain navigation in aviation)
- (1) In life we must chart a course; we do so whether we do it consciously or not!
  - (2) And, we must constantly monitor that course: **\*\***  
**I Thess. 5:6:** “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”  
**I Cor. 16:13:** “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”
  - (3) When we get “off course,” we need to make “course corrections.”  
**I Jn. 1:7:** “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”  
**2 Cor. 13:5:** “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.”
  - (4) Course corrections make all the difference in the outcome.
  - (5) But, if we are too foolish, too distracted, too apathetic, or whatever the case may be; and fail to make the needed corrections (and we all need them!); we’ll hear the worst words at the very worst time...on “that day.”
- D. **\*\*** Hearing those words will mean a lifetime wasted; it will mean it’s too late to do anything about it. It will mean eternal condemnation from the Lord.

### **They are the worst words you’ll ever hear, because of...**

#### 2. **6** Who will say them:

- A. The importance of words spoken are in proportion to the importance of the person speaking them.

- (1) Words spoken by our parents are important; boss, teacher, but even more important when spoken by a policeman.
  - (2) Words spoken tenderly by a child or a spouse can be extremely important.
- B. But the words we are considering were spoken by none of these.
- (1) \*\* It's Jesus who said these words!
 

**Jn. 1:1-4:** *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."*

**Acts 17:31:** *"...He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."*

**I Tim. 6:15:** *"...He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,"*

**Jn. 8:58:** *"Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.'"*

**Rev. 1:8:** *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'"*
  - (2) These words will come directly from His mouth; directly to Y-O-U!
    - ☛ Words of castigation and condemnation!
    - ☛ Words that will be the most devastating words you'll ever hear!
    - ☛ Words that will strike an unimaginable depth of dread and terror in you!
    - ☛ Words that will cause your heart to melt and tremble with fear!
  - (3) Had an apostle said these words, we could hold out for hope and mercy from God.
  - (4) Had our preacher said these things, we might believe he doesn't know the whole story.
  - (5) Had our church felt this way, we may think that they just do not understand.
- C. But as it is, Jesus will say these words; and we know Jesus is never wrong.
- (1) He never misunderstands; He knows all and hears all.
  - (2) He can read our hearts and minds and see through the fog of our excuses.
  - (3) He knows our motives and our attitudes; He knows when we are faking things and when we are genuine.
  - (4) It is Jesus who said these things; you can't go above Jesus' head! No court of appeals!
- D. If Jesus is the mediator between man and God (I Tim. 2:5) and Jesus says these things, all hope is gone.
- (1) We have disappointed, disobeyed and let the Lord down.
  - (2) We have let down the one who laid down His life for us; who suffered unimaginable shame, pain and agony for us.
  - (3) If we hear these words we'll bear, not only their consequences insofar as the eternal punishment in hell for eternity, but also the eternal shame and regret for "what could have been."

## ***They are the worst words you'll ever hear, because of...***

### **3. 7 What is said:**

#### **A. Jesus said two things; both are shocking and condemning, first: *"I never knew you."***

- ☛ This is what strangers say to one another.
- ☛ "Have we ever met?" "No" is the reply, "I never knew you."
- ☛ This means a lifetime was spent not in fellowship with Christ.
- ☛ It means one didn't walk w/Christ, follow Christ, or make Christ the Lord of his heart.
- ☛ He did not really read the words of Jesus.
- ☛ His character, his heart and his behavior were not shaped by Christ.
- ☛ He did what Jesus said, when it suited him, but not when it didn't.
- ☛ He may have thought that Jesus doesn't mind what he does.
- ☛ He may have believed Jesus loves everyone, so, everyone is going to heaven.
- ☛ He may even have been a member of the Lord's church for years.
- ☛ He may even have faithfully attended services, bible classes and gospel meetings.
- ☛ But, he never truly *"hungered and thirsted for righteousness."*
- ☛ He may have even placed some emphasis on seeking *"the kingdom of God and His righteousness,"* but such a search never got above second place in his life.
- ☛ Wow! How wrong he was.
- ☛ He thought he knew the Lord, but such was not the case.
- ☛ The Lord didn't say, 'you look familiar to me. Have we met?'
- ☛ No, it was the bold, *"I never knew you."* NEVER!
- ☛ "You never really talked to Me; you never really sought Me; you never really desired an intimate relationship with Me; you never gave all of yourself to Me!" **Lk. 9:23**
- ☛ Surprisingly the people who hear this will actually think they knew the Lord!
- ☛ It was in the name of the Lord they did all their "good works"!
- ☛ In their minds, they not only knew the Lord; but also worked hand in hand with Him!
- ☛ How could they be so, wrong? So, confused? So, misguided?
- ☛ Because of their disobedience, their lawlessness (i.e., *"iniquity"*), their failure to do the will of the Father; that's why Jesus doesn't know them.
- ☛ It doesn't matter what good we do (in our own minds), if we do not follow God's will, we distance ourselves from Him; surely, we can understand!

**Jn. 14:15:** *"If you love Me, keep My commandments."*

**Jn. 15:14:** *"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."*

**1 Jn. 2:3-5:** *"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."*

#### **B. \*\* The second thing that Jesus says, is:**

### **“Depart from Me.”**

- ☛ Leave. Get out of My sight.
- ☛ “I can’t stand to have you in my presence! You disgust me!”
- ☛ You are not going to be where I am.

#### **(1) Remember John 14:**

**Jn. 14:2-3:** *“In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

- ☛ Not so for this crowd in Matthew 7; they are not going to be with Jesus. Depart!
- ☛ There is only one other place; if it’s not heaven, then it’s hell.
- ☛ Eternity w/out God, no hope, no future, no help, no good, no God. Some deny hell (explain; 11 of 12 times “hell” used in NT, Jesus says it!).
- ☛ Here are folks who were confident all the wonderful things they were doing, they were doing for the Lord.
- ☛ By that very claim, we’d classify them as being spiritual. So, spiritual people will be in hell! At least some will be.
- ☛ They were there because they did not obey God.
- ☛ They were there because Jesus never knew them.
- ☛ What this tells us is not everyone who gets baptized goes to heaven.
- ☛ This tell us not everyone who “goes to church” goes to heaven.
- ☛ Heaven is for those who know Christ and He knows them!
- ☛ Heaven is for those who do the will of God!

#### **(2) \*\* We can play the game, talk the talk, put on the happy face, but if we do not truly “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt 6:33); we will hear those terrible words: “I never knew you; depart from Me...”**

### **They are the worst words you’ll ever hear, because...**

#### **4. 8 Everyone will hear:**

- A. I don’t mean the words “I never knew you; depart from Me...” will be personally directed at every single person.
- B. Certainly, the vast majority will have those words directed at them (Matt. 7:13-14).
- C. \*\* What I mean is that if those terrible words are personally directed at me, everyone (and I mean EVERYONE!) will know it!
  - (1) We know God is omniscient; He knows all the “*thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Heb. 4:12); “*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*” (Heb. 4:13)
  - Psa. 44:21:** “...He knows the secrets of the heart.”
  - Rom. 2:16:** “in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.”

- (2) But, what I mean is that everyone will know MY deeds; they will know exactly why the Lord is directing those awful words to ME!

☛ Everyone that ever lived will be there!

**Matt. 25:31-33:** “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.”

**Rev. 20:12:** “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.”

☛ All the bad things I’ve done will be made known, if my life is not “hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3).

**I Cor. 4:5:** “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.”

**Eccl. 12:14:** “For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

- D. Imagine that: All your “dirty laundry” on display for every human being (and angel!) that ever lived to see! Imagine the shame and embarrassment!

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5. **9** Their finality:

- A. Notice in Matthew 7:22; the lost stake their claim to righteousness:

**Matt. 7:22:** “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’”

- B. But the Lord does not accept it; He knows they are guilty! He doesn’t say, “You know, you have a point.” (i.e., He doesn’t lend even a whiff of legitimacy to their claim.)

**Matt. 7:23:** “And then I will declare (“tell them plainly”, NIV; “declare”, NASV) to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

- C. Notice, they have no “comeback”! They make no further attempts at self-justification.

- D. The Lord and His mighty sword of truth will stop the mouths of all the wicked:

**Psa. 63:11:** “But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.”

- E. Imagine bearing all the shame of unforgiven sin, of all of your ugly deeds and ugly words.

**Job 8:22:** “Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing.”

- F. **10** I don’t know if this will be the case, but the vision I have of the judgment is this:

- (1) For the lost, I envision a long, nearly endless line of totally dejected people, eyes blankly staring downward, head held low, shoulders slumped, arms hanging limply at their side, slowly marching single file down a long path leading to a horizon ablaze with flames.

- (2) Imagine yourself in that pitiful procession to eternal damnation:

☛ How would you feel?

- ☛ What would be your emotional state?
- ☛ What thoughts would be going through your mind?
- ☛ Imagine the utter terror, the awful feeling in the pit of your stomach.
- ☛ Imagine muttering over and over again to yourself: “This can’t be happening, this can’t be happening!” “How can this be?!” “Why was I so foolish?!” “Why was I so stupid?!”
- ☛ These feelings of abject terror and shame just will not go away, they will not diminish...forever!

### III. CONCLUSION: ! !

1. The worst words will be spoken on the last day and they will be spoken by Jesus: *“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”*
2. As these words are spoken, the door to eternity is opened, your eternal fate is sealed, and the door is shut...forever!

**Matt. 25:10, 13:** *“...and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 13...Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”*

- A. You’ve spent your one life doing the wrong thing, walking down the wrong road.
- B. You’re lost forever! And, it didn’t have to be!
- C. If Jesus Christ and His word are not at the center of your life, these terrible words will issue forth from the Lord’s mouth directly and squarely at YOU!
3. I shouldn’t have to issue an appeal to you to avoid this awful fate; it is manifestly evident to any sane, logical thinking person what their correct course of action should be.
4. Do you “get it!”

**Rom. 9:33:** *“As it is written: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’”*

Adapted from an article (**Jump Start # 1937**) by Roger Shouse.