

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TARENTUM BIBLE CLASS

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Discipleship—Dietrich Bonhoeffer Lesson #56—The Sermon on the Mount-The Great Separation (Part IV)

Matthew 7: The Community of Disciples Is Set Apart

A. How can we tell? (Matthew 7:21-23)

- Confessors and doers are separated from each other.
- Jesus reveals to his disciples here the possibility of a demonic faith, point that they are indistinguishable from the deeds of true disciples of Jesus.
- They do works of love, miracles, perhaps even sanctify themselves, and yet deny Jesus and discipleship.
- It is just as Paul says in chapter 13 of the First Letter to the Corinthians about the possibility of preaching, prophesying, having all knowledge, even all faith to remove mountains—but without love, that is, without Christ, without the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 13:1-4)
- Yes, even more than this: Paul must even consider the possibility that the works of Christian love themselves, giving away one's goods, even so far as martyrdom, can be done—without love, without Christ, without the Holy Spirit.
- Without love—that means that in all those actions the deed of discipleship does not take place, that deed, whose doer is

finally none other than the one who calls us, Jesus Christ himself.

- That is the deepest, least comprehensible possibility of the satanic within the congregation, the ultimate separation, which, of course, does not take place until the last judgment.
- But it will be a final one.
- Those following Jesus must ask what is the ultimate standard of measure of who will be accepted by Jesus and who will not.
- Jesus' answer to those who are rejected at the end says it all: "I never knew you."
- That is the final secret, which has been kept from the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount up until its end.
- That alone is the question, whether we were known by Jesus or not.
- The end of the Sermon on the Mount connects here with its beginning.
- His word at the last judgment—it is issued to us in his call to discipleship.
- But from the beginning to the end, it remains his word, his call.
- Those who in discipleship hold fast to nothing except this word and let everything else go will be carried by this word through the last judgment.
- His word is his grace.