Introduction…

What image comes to mind when you think of a judge? Do you picture one of the judges on your favorite crime drama? Or one of those hard-to-take-seriously judges on daytime TV? Please tell me that you didn't think of the judges on American Idol. I'm talking about actual judges who are responsible to uphold law and order.

Cartoon judges, syndicated TV judges, crime drama judges might look the part; but when the time comes we want true judges to be what they should be, not what a television audience might want them to be. We expect judges to be just, to be fair, to be people of integrity, to do what is right and to uphold the law…so long as we aren't the ones on trial. When I'm on trial I want a judge that is merciful.

But what if there were a way for us to know ahead of time that we would soon stand trial? What if we knew it was coming and we knew who was going to judge us and why? What if we could be given a lifetime to prepare ourselves to stand before that judge? Would you be ready?

There is a theme that runs throughout the Bible and this theme sets before us the certainty of a day that is to come. It is a day, when all of mankind will be called to stand before God and give an account for the way we lived our life. The Bible refers to this day as, "***The Great Day, The Day of the Lord, The Day of God, The Last Day***, or even simply ***That Day."*** It is the day of judgment when everyone who has ever lived will be called into the presence of the Judge of All the Earth and we will give an account of our lives to Him.

Our passage this morning is one of the most haunting texts in the NT. It is one of the most sobering lessons to come out of Jesus' mouth. This passage echoes loudly in our minds and hearts, but in many ways, it is a gift to us. In this passage, Jesus is not simply trying to frighten us, but He is trying to warn us that this day of judgment is coming, and the question is will we be ready.

Transition…

As Jesus works to bring His Sermon on the Mount to a close, He looks forward to that day and He forces us to do the same. He gives us some idea of what it will be like on that day and He even tells us that on that day there will be those who will be surprised at how they are received.

> **Matt 7:21** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. **22** On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' **23** And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

In our passage this morning Jesus wants us to know **three truths about That Day: The Day is Coming, there will be True and False Disciples, and Jesus is both our Judge and our Savior.**

Sermon Focus…

I. There is a Day of Judgment Coming

Judgment is part of our lives every day, but most of the time we think of it as something that affects, "those people." We like it that way. Judgment is something that we would rather keep at arm's length but the reality is that judgment is more a part of our lives than we care to admit.

We pass judgment on people all the time. We observe how people drive, how people eat, how people dress; and we mumble our judgments under our breath. We also receive the judgment of others on a regular basis. When a stranger rolls their eyes at us, or a random woman in a car honks at us and offers us an encouraging hand gesture, we are experiencing their judgment.

Why am I pointing this out? Because I want us to understand that Justice in an underlying and universal human reality. We have a natural longing for justice. When someone takes something that belongs to us we want justice, even small children give evidence of this. How many times as a parent or an observer of children have you heard the phrase, "that's not fair!" That statement is about justice and it's just in them.

God created us in His image and He has imparted to us some of His own sense of right and wrong. We get our sense of justice from Him. He has written His law on our hearts, which means that deep down we know that there is such a thing as good and evil, fairness and unfairness, justice and injustice. But He has also revealed to us in His Word that a day is coming when true justice will be poured out.

Our sense of justice comes from God and it is strong, but it is also corrupted by sin. **God's sense of justice is perfect because it is a reflection of His own holiness. The flood in Genesis 6** that resulted in the destruction of all life and the reshaping of the entire planet was an act of perfect divine justice. **The sacrificial system in the OT** was about divine justice. **The burning of Sodom and Gomorrah** was about God's justice and wrath. **The Israelite wars against the pagan** nations were about divine justice.

> **Eccl 12:13** The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. **14** For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

God will judge every deed, every secret thing. This theme continues in the NT, in fact it becomes even more clear that the judgment of God is coming.

> **Rom 14:10** For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; **11** for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." **12** So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

> **2 Cor 5:10** For we must all appear before ***the judgment seat of Christ***, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

This is an interesting twist in the theme of judgment. Jesus himself has been appointed by God to be the actual judge that all men must answer to.

> **John 5:22** For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, **23** that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. **24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
>
> **25** "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. **26** For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. **27** And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

Jesus is the Divine Savior sent into the world to rescue us from our sin and He is the Divinely appointed Judge who will judge even the secret thoughts of men with perfect justice. When Christ carries out the final judgment upon the world we can be certain that we will be held accountable for our deeds and the true justice that our hearts longs for will be carried out. History is moving toward a goal and that goal is the triumph of good over evil. Judgment means that evil will one day be disposed of authoritatively, decisively and finally.

There is a Day of Judgment Coming. But what does that mean for you and me?

II. On that Day, there will be True and False Disciples

> **Matt 7:21** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. **22** On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'

When that day of final judgment comes, among the crowd will be a group that we can call false converts. They have many similarities to true believers, but something is missing. Let's look first at how these false converts are similar to true converts.

1. They are Orthodox in their profession – They call Jesus Lord. The Greek term *kurios* means master in most cases and it is often used to describe the master, in a master slave relationship. But this term is also used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament and it is used to refer to God Himself. In **Exodus 34** when God descended in the cloud to stand before Moses and proclaimed His name to Moses we see this term used.

> **6** The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ***"The LORD, the LORD***, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, **7** keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty…

These people come before Jesus with orthodox doctrine and say to Him, "Lord, Lord."

2. They are Emotionally Invested – If you want to emphasize a word in Greek you move it to the front of the sentence. So instead of saying, "I did all these things in your name, Lord," you would write it this way, "Lord, look at what I've done in your name." Putting Lord at the beginning of these statements ***emphasizes*** that Jesus is Lord.

But if you want to stress emotion then you would repeat the word. "Lord, Lord," stresses emotion and emphasis, which means that these people aren't just orthodox in their profession, they are also emotionally invested. The speaker standing before Jesus wishes to draw attention to the strength and zeal of their emotion about His lordship.

3. They are Active in Service – What these people stress as they speak to Jesus on Judgment Day is that they have prophesied in His name, cast out demons in His name, and done many mighty works in His name. Notice, that Jesus doesn't deny their claims. There should be no doubt that their claim is true, after all…

> **Matt 24:24** For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

These unnamed people are making an emphatic, emotional, orthodox, and public profession. They even have evidence to back up their claims, but Jesus could not be more clear that their profession and evidence will do nothing to help them on Judgment Day.

> **V. 23** And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Jesus says here that you can be orthodox in doctrine, emotionally invested and active in religious service, but still not know God. How does this happen? What is missing?

Jesus rejects them based on 3 things: They have a love problem, a relationship problem and a lordship problem.

1. False Converts have a love problem – Do you remember the first great commandment? "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength (**Matt 22:37**). One of the things missing from the false convert's profession, is a sincere love for the Lord. They know what to call Him, "Lord." They know the church activities to engage in. But they have nothing to say with regard to their love of Jesus.

> **James 1:12** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Being a Christian is about more than crossing your orthodox t's and dotting your good works i's; it's about having and growing in your love for God.

What was the difference between Peter, who denied Jesus, and Judas, who betrayed Jesus? Both men professed Him to be Lord, both cast out demons in His name, both did might works in His name, and both failed miserably to be faithful to Jesus at crucial points in their lives. Why was Peter a true disciple and Judas a false one? It was Peter's love for Jesus.

Judas loved himself, he loved the things of the world, he loved money and he loved all these things more than Jesus. Peter left everything to follow Jesus. He boldly declared that He would never leave Jesus' side, which he failed to do out of fear. But in the end do you remember what Jesus stressed to Peter during that shoreside breakfast?

In **John 21**, Jesus came to the disciples in the morning and made them breakfast. When they finished eating, Jesus looked to Peter and asked him, "Peter, do you love?" He asked this three times and each time Peter said, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Peter was not a perfect disciple. He had to be rebuked by Jesus, corrected by Jesus, and forgiven by Jesus many times. He abandoned Jesus, He denied Jesus, but in the end it was undeniable that He loved Jesus.

True Christians aren't perfect disciples, but one of the marks of true conversion is a love for Christ. The false disciple in Jesus story didn't say, "Lord, Lord, I love you." Hypocrites can fake many things to make others think they are legit. They can fake prayer, they can fake give, they can fake service, fake religion, and fake worship. But they cannot fake a love for Jesus.

As you evaluate your own heart, ask yourself, "Do I love Jesus?" Is He the pearl of great price to you? Is He your chief delight? Do you love Jesus and are you growing in your love for Jesus? If so, understand that you love Him because He first loved you. If you have love for Jesus in your heart it's because God put it there when He caused you to be born again. ***False converts have a love problem.***

2. False converts also have a Lordship Problem – These folks can say, "look at the things that I've done in your name." but Jesus says to all of us, "the one who does the will of my Father…is the one who will enter the Kingdom." Where is the breakdown?

Many people say, "I want all the things that Jesus promises…forgiveness, heaven, eternal happiness, etc. but I don't want to give up my freedom. I don't mind going to church, telling others that I am a Christian, I'll even teach a Sunday school class from time to time; but I reserve the right to do what I want. I want to decide when I want to forgive others, I want to decide to sin when I want to, to sleep with whomever I want, I want to decide when I am going to tell the truth. I want to be in a position where I can make these decisions for myself."

That is not Lordship, it's a deluded mind. It is a person living under the delusion that he/she can have the benefits of following Jesus without the actual following part. Their profession of faith was verbal but not moral. They called Him Lord, but they didn't submit to His Lordship.

Luke's version of this saying is much stronger than Matthew's,

> **Luke 6:46** "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?

Don't call Jesus Lord with your mouth and then turn and treat His teaching like you can take it or leave it. To profess faith in Christ without practicing the commands of Christ is not a new sin, so don't be deceived. **One of the distinguishing marks of a true convert is a surrendering of your will to Jesus.**

Tim Keller reminded me a great Biblical illustration of this point from the life of King Saul. In **1 Samuel 15**, God tells Saul to go into battle against the Amalekites and after the battle God told Saul to destroy all the livestock. This didn't seem to make much sense, but a lot of the time obedience doesn't seem to make sense. Saul decided to keep the livestock instead of obeying God's command.

Then the prophet Samuel came and said to Saul, "Why do I hear the bleating of sheep? The Lord told you to destroy the livestock of the Amalekites, why haven't you done this?" Saul said, "Well I thought we could offer it as sacrifices to the Lord." **Then Samuel said, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice…you have rejected the word of the lord."**

Saul called Him Lord but didn't obey Him as Lord. God didn't want the sheep, He wanted Saul and Saul wouldn't give up his will for the sake of God's. It is not those who cry out, "Lord, Lord!" who enter the Kingdom, but those who do the will of the Father." **False converts have a Lordship problem.**

As you evaluate your own heart ask yourself the question, "Am I submitting my will to His? Am I calling Him Lord ***and*** doing what He commands?" Maybe you are holding on to some sin and you won't let it go. Maybe you are refusing to forgive someone close to you. Don't just call Him Lord, submit to His Lordship.

3. False Converts have a relationship problem – Jesus will tell them, "I never knew you, depart from me…" This phrase ***to know*** carries a pretty significant weight when talking about relationships. It is used of intimacy within a marriage and also of intimacy with God. Jesus uses this phrase throughout ***John 10*** to describe His own relationship with the Father as well as His relationship to His sheep.

Jesus explained that sheep follow their master because they recognize his voice and they recognize his voice because ***they know him*** (*relationship*). The sheep don't follow strangers because they don't recognize the strangers voice. But the crowd didn't fully understand what Jesus was talking about and what it had to do with His Kingdom. So He clarified.

> **John 10:7** So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. **8** All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. **9** I am the door. ***If anyone enters by me, he will be saved*** and will go in and out and find pasture. **10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. *11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep… 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me*, **15** just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. True converts know that our relationship to God is not based on what we say about Jesus, nor is it based on what we do to try and earn a place in the Kingdom. True conversion is based on knowing Jesus Christ as Lord. A true disciple is not trusting in their doctrine to save them, nor their profession, nor their emotion, nor their service; they are trusting in Christ Alone.

Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked come to thee for dress, helpless look to thee for grace.
Foul, I to the fountain fly, wash me savior or I die;
Rock of Ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.

Conclusion…

Jesus is our righteous judge, but He is also our sacrificial savior. We know that Judgment is coming because the Bible has made that clear. God is holy and we are not, and there is a reckoning due. Evil will be punished, sin will be punished and because we are sinners, this poses a problem for us. **The day is coming when we will stand before Jesus as the judge of all the earth, but there was also a day when Jesus came to earth to be the savior of all those who believe.**

The one who will judge with perfect judgment on the day to come, was once asked to bear the judgment that all of God's people deserve. On the cross, Jesus died in our place.

> **Isa 53:5** he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. **6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus is coming to judge and His judgment will be perfect, but the judgment that His people deserved has already been poured out.

You can get in on this today. Come to Jesus. Acknowledge your sin to God. Believe in Him and you will not perish but will have eternal life. Turn from your sin and bear the fruit of submitting your will to God. **Come to Jesus and let His Lordship rule over your life, let His Word be the lamp for your feet, and His gospel be the light for your path.**