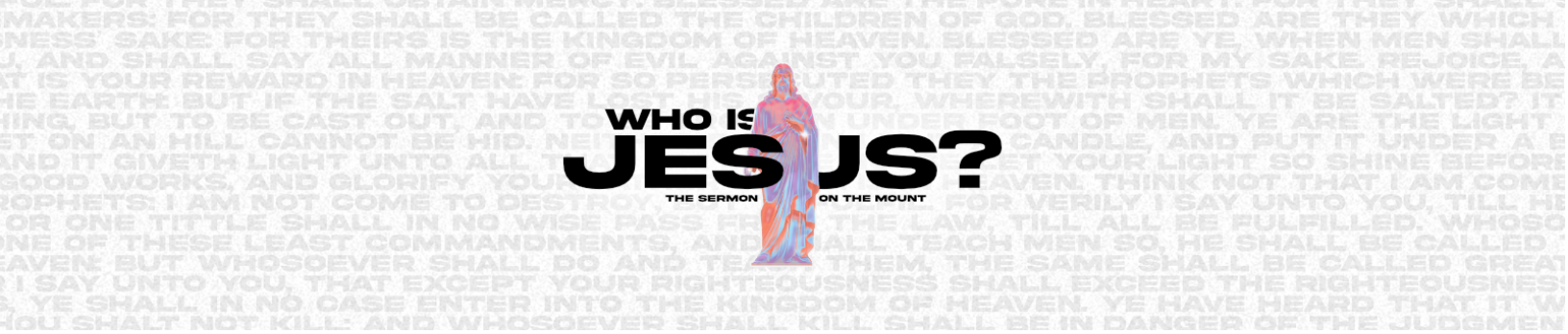




I NEVER KNEW YOU

Who Is Jesus? | Devan Bumstead

Matthew 7:15-23

20TH ANNIVERSARY

Activity vs. Intimacy

MATTHEW 7:15-23 | NIV

WOLVES, FRUIT, & THE COURTROOM

- 1) WOLVES (Matt. 7:15, Ezekiel 13:3-4, Jeremiah 23:18)
- 2) FRUIT (Matt. 7:16-20, Genesis 3:6, Galatians 5:22-23)
- 3) THE COURTROOM (Matt. 7:21-23, Phil. 3:4-9, 1 Cor. 13:1-3)

ABIDING

JOHN 15:5, 9 | ESV

ABIDE DEVOTIONAL

5-Day Invitation to Know Jesus More

npfcc.org/abide



SERMON SUMMARY

Feel free to read this message summary to the group before your discussion to refresh their memory on its central themes.

Jesus warns that appearances, religious activity, correct theology, and even impressive ministry accomplishments are not the same as truly knowing him. Like a wolf disguised as a sheep or poisonous fruit that looks appealing from a distance, a person's spiritual life can appear healthy while remaining disconnected from Jesus on the inside. The genuine fruit of a transformed life grows not through striving to earn God's approval, but through abiding—making our home in Jesus' love through ongoing, conscious communion with him. Matthew 7:15–23 is therefore both a sobering warning and a gracious invitation: stop hiding, performing, and building your identity on what you have done for Jesus, and return to the surpassing joy of actually knowing and being known by him.

LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

1. Proximity or intimacy?

The message says, **"We can share a calendar without sharing our hearts. Proximity isn't the same as intimacy."**

Where might you be doing things *around* Jesus or *for* Jesus without intentionally being *with* Jesus? What does genuine intimacy with him look like in your current season?

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you." —John 15:4

2. What can appearances hide?

Jesus warns that wolves can wear sheep's clothing and that harmful fruit can initially look appealing. Why are outward appearance, giftedness, confidence, theological knowledge, or ministry success unreliable measures of spiritual maturity?

What qualities should we look for in someone who claims to speak on God's behalf?

"By their fruit you will recognize them." —Matthew 7:16

3. What fruit is slowly growing?

Read Galatians 5:22–23. Which fruit of the Spirit have you seen Jesus genuinely producing in your life over time? Which fruit seems underdeveloped or especially difficult for you right now?

How might your closest relationships provide a more accurate picture of your fruit than your public or church life does?

4. What are you tempted to place before Jesus?

In the courtroom scene, the people point to everything they accomplished in Jesus' name. What might you be tempted to present as proof that you are spiritually healthy or deserving of God's approval?

How is Paul's attitude in Philippians 3:7–9 different from theirs?

"I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."

—Philippians 3:8

5. Activity without love

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1–3. Why can meaningful, generous, gifted, or even miraculous activity become spiritually empty when it is disconnected from love?

What helps you recognize whether your service is flowing from love for Jesus or from pressure, pride, fear, or a need for recognition?

6. Practicing abiding

A. W. Tozer described abiding as "habitual, conscious communion" with God. What do you think that kind of relationship could look like during an ordinary workday, family day, or busy week?

What is one realistic way you could create space this week for solitude, silence, Scripture, or contemplative prayer?

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love." —John 15:9

ACTION STEP

Lifegroup Leaders—encourage your group to engage in the included 5-day devotional, *Abide*, located at npfcc.org/abide. Practicing the presence of God on a daily basis is the primary way we ensure we really "know" Jesus.