

Christless Christianity?

Matthew 23:13–39 NIV

1. Christianity without Christ shuts heaven’s door.

13 *You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.*

Jn 10:7–10 **ESV** *Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*

2. Ministry without Christ is fruitless.

15 *You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.*

John 15:5 *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

3. Prioritizing gold and gifts over Christ is foolishness.

16-17 *You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.’ You **blind** fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?*

Acts 3:6 *Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”*

4. Tithing is a good start, but we can do so much more in Christ.

23 *You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.*

Ezekiel 36:26–27 *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

5. Looking good isn’t the same as being born again.

25-26 *You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

6. Good works without new life in Christ isn’t as good as it may look.

27-28 *You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.*

Eph 2:4–5 *Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.*

7. External reform doesn’t fool God.

29- 32 *You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’*

Romans 3:22–23 *This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

THE GREAT NEWS: Jesus offers abundant life to you, if you will trust in Him!

37–39 *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”*