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Lesson 3 – Pharisees, Crowds, Rich Young Man ***The Gospel, Not for Unbelievers***

If an encounter with Jesus changes people, why do so many turn away from the gospel, in Christ's day and in ours? Some follow Christ to the death while others quit for silly reasons. Why such vastly different responses?

The difference between following Christ and forsaking Christ is genuine faith.

Today we will see three negative examples of unbelief. From these examples we will see three characteristics of true faith by seeing where these examples failed.

- I. **The Pharisees: Genuine faith is characterized by spiritual understanding.**
 - A. **The Pharisees demanded signs yet refused them (Matthew 12:38-40; 16:1; 28:11-15; John 18-34).**
 - B. **The Pharisees claimed to be followers of the law yet missed the whole point of it (Matthew 23:23-28).**
 - C. **The Pharisees root problem was spiritual blindness that resulted from spiritual pride (Matthew 23:5-12).**

Application You must humbly put yourself in a place of recognizing your status as a creature and ask God to open your eyes to the truth of His Word.

II. The crowds: Genuine faith is characterized by endurance (John 6:25-69).

A. People quit because of objections to God's Word.

B. People quit because of objections to God's Ways.

Application Endurance takes place as you focus on Christ and what He has done for you. Only as you realize what you have in the gospel will you hold on to your faith even when things get hard or passages make you squirm.

III. Rich Young Man: Genuine faith is characterized by a singular devotion (Matthew 19:16-22).

A. People desert because of love for the world.

B. People desert because of the cares of the world.

Application: You must love God more than any other thing and be willing to sacrifice all for Him if that's what it takes, and you must make a practical commitment to follow Him despite the busyness of life.

In the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:18-23), Christ shows us these three categories of people: The spiritually darkened, the quitters, and the deserters. The difference between them is how they received the Word, whether in faith or in one of the varieties of unbelief.