

- In our postmodern, relativistic and plural culture, how do Christians justify this exclusivism, which seems to be so arrogant? It is not that we are defending Christianity and saying it is better than anything else. Often it is not. Often it is shoddy and does not stand comparison with the ethos of what is best in other faiths or in liberal humanism. No, it is not the religion of Christianity that disciples are concerned to vindicate. With Dietrich Bonhoeffer, we believe that Jesus Christ came to destroy religion. Religion, if conceived as a human attempt to become acceptable to God by whatever system of beliefs and practice, is a beggar's refuge. It will not keep out the wind and the hail. What Jesus offers is totally different. It begins not from our reaching up, but from God's reaching down. It is not a religion at all, but a revelation and a rescue. Jesus is the revelation of what God is like; never has there been such a true likeness. The King has come to bring in the kingdom. He is no less than God's rescue for men and women lost in self-centeredness and sin. [Green, M. (2001). *The message of Matthew: the kingdom of heaven* (pp. 109–110). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.]
- I could never claim ultimacy for Christianity as a system. I do claim it for Jesus Christ. In him God has broken with blinding light into our darkness. In him God has provided for sinners a way back to himself. [Ibid.]
- (1 Corinthians 8:1b–3 ESV) ... we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. **But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.**

- **Would they reject the present secure but shallow sifting sands of the religious leadership of the scribes and Pharisees and choose instead Jesus' words as the foundation for their lives?**
The religious establishment was advocating a form of surface righteousness that masked an unstable foundation of religious hypocrisy. [Wilkins, M. J. (2004). *Matthew* (p. 327). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.]
- A profession of faith that makes no difference to the way we behave is barren and will never save anybody. **There must be fruit, consistent, attractive fruit on the tree of our lives. Fruit that will show there is a Gardener at work.**
Fruit that will satisfy the hunger of the passer-by. How evil are the fruits to be found in many professing Christians!—an arrogance that alienates; an externalism that does not touch the heart; a separation between religion and life; a faith that makes no demands, or that consists in legalism; a religion that takes refuge in charismatic jargon about prophecy, or miraculous healings, or the driving out of demons, but may not even really know Jesus, and does not really do the will of the heavenly Father. [Green, M. (2001). *The message of Matthew: the kingdom of heaven* (p. 109). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.]
- (2 Corinthians 11:3–4 ESV) But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims **another Jesus** than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive **a different spirit** from the one you received, or if you accept **a different gospel** from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.



- (John 10:7–14 ESV) So Jesus again said to them, “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. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. **I know my own and my own know me.**
- (John 10:27–30 ESV) **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them,** and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.