

Mathew 23: Warning To Followers And Pharisees.

1. (1-12) Jesus Warns His Followers About The Scribes And Pharisees.

- i. 1-7: The Pharisees and Scribes didn't walk their talk, they focused on external performance rather than living God's Word from the inside out.

Jesus instructed the people to obey God's commands given through their hypocritical teachers, not because of their conduct, but because they sit in Moses' seat, they hold an office of authority, ordained by God.

The scribes and Pharisees expected more of others than they did of themselves. They set heavy burdens on others, yet they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Matthew 11:29-30 - "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

They tied scriptures around themselves in phylacteries (small leather boxes with scriptural texts tied to the arm and head) and the borders of their garments.

Deuteronomy 11:18 - "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. "You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. (Numbers 15:38-40).

They coveted the seats of honor at banquets and at the synagogue, and they loved public attention and honoring titles such as Rabbi, Father, Pastor, Apostle, Rev...

- ii. 8-12: Jesus' followers were to be different; serve one another in humility and not give so much emphasis on titles; we're all equal God's children, brothers and sisters.

Normally people estimate greatness by how many people serve and honor them. Jesus reminded His followers that in His kingdom it should be different and that we should estimate greatness by how we serve and honor others. The proud always be humiliated but the humble exalted.

James 4:10 - Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Proverbs 22:4 - By humility and the fear of the LORD, Are riches and honor and life.

2. 12-39: Jesus Warns the Scribes and Pharisees About Coming Judgment.

Jesus spoke harshly here, yet this was not the language of personal irritation but of divine warning. Jesus exposes the corruption that was covered by the spiritual image of the scribes and Pharisees.

- i. 13: They blocked others from entering the Kingdom of heaven.

The religious leaders kept people from the kingdom of heaven by making human traditions and human religious rules more important than God's word.

- ii. 14: The religious leaders stole from the vulnerable.

They stole widows' houses through spiritual manipulation.

***1 Timothy 6:5** - useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.*

- iii. 15: The religious leaders led their converts on the wrong path.

Their zeal in evangelism did not prove that they were right with God. These religious leaders went to great lengths to win others but they brought people to darkness, not light.

- iv. (16-22) The religious leaders made false and deceptive oaths.

***Mathew 5:37** - "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.*

- v. (23-24) The religious leaders focus on minors and neglect majors.

They were unjust, unmerciful and unfaithful to God and people.

***Micah 6:8** - He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you. But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*

- vi. (25-26) The religious leaders are impure both inside and out.

You cleanse the outside of the cup but left the inside dirty. He called them to be concerned with both, but to first address the inside. True outward righteousness starts on the inside.

- vii. (27-28) The religious leaders have the appearance of good, but without spiritual life in the inner man; they looked alive, but were dead.

- viii. (29-36) The religious leaders honor dead prophets, but murder the living ones.

Jesus prophesied about how these leaders would complete the rejection of the prophets their fathers began by persecuting His disciples, whom He would send

- ix. (37-39) Jesus laments for Jerusalem.

Jesus wanted to protect them from the terrible judgment that would eventually follow their rejection of Him.

Jesus here revealed something of the conditions surrounding His Second Coming. When Jesus comes again, the Jewish people will welcome Him as the Messiah saying, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"