

**Matthew 23**  
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**2/14/24**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What qualities do you think make good learners/disciples?
  2. Jesus said, and many people agree, hypocrisy is not good. Why do we all often struggle with it?
  3. If pride is about comparison and competition, what might humility be about?
  4. Which question from the woes hit home with you?
  5. What do you think Jesus is feeling in v. 37? What does that tell us about His kingdom?
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### **Teaching Notes:**

After the religious leaders tried to trap Jesus...

...He ends chapter 22 with His own question...

**Matthew 22:41** **41** While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, **42** saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "*The Son of David.*"

**43** He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying:

**44** 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand,

Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" '? **45** If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" **46** And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

**The Pharisees thought they had all the answers.**

The fact is, they didn't. And no one does.

**When we come to Jesus, we come with humility to learn.**

**The Woes.**

Jesus outlines their problem, their condemnation, and His heart.

**Jesus will show us through negative examples what leadership should look like in His kingdom.**

**23:1** Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, **2** saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. **3** Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

**Jesus tells them, "Listen because of their place...**

**...but don't follow because of their hypocrisy."**

**4** For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

They **bind** heavy burdens. It is attached by guilt or shame or religious pride or personal pressure.

They are **hard** to bear. They don't fit, they are difficult to live with.  
AND they **will not do it** themselves or **help** others.

**5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.**

**They like to tell people what to do.  
They like to make it difficult for people.  
The spiritual burdens have nothing to do with God.**

**What is the motive?**

To be seen? To get credit? To be better than other people?  
Or to grow and glorify God?

CS Lewis said, "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others....It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest."

**6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'**  
They love the titles, to be better than others. Simple pride.

Now Jesus gives guidance on leadership...

**8 But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.**

**Some have taken this as very literal: brother/sister only.**

But the point seems to be: Jesus is the only exalted authority.

So instead of trying to have exalted authority in your title...  
...be a humble servant.

**11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.  
12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**

We can be humbled, but true humility is a choice.

**In Jesus kingdom...**

**...servants are the greatest because they help people and caring for people is what His kingdom is about.**

So now comes the woes...in light of all these issues is judgment.

First: **13** “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in *yourselves*, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

The first condemnation is...Your life closes the door of salvation.

### **1. Do we help others access God?**

Second: **14** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

They take advantage of the weak and then make long prayers to sound spiritual.

### **2. Do our actions match our prayers?**

Third: **15** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

They work hard to make a convert, but they don't convert them to faith or a real relationship with God.

They are converted to follow them and their rules.

### **3. Do we help people become more like Jesus?**

Fourth: **16** “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged *to perform it.*’ **17** Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? **18** And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged *to perform it.*’ **19** Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? **20** Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. **21** He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. **22** And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

**They didn't understand the true values of the kingdom.**

**Jesus is saying, in His kingdom...**

**...it is the spiritual that gives value to the physical.**

### **4. Do we see what is of real value to God?**

Fifth: **23** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. **24** Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

They worried about the tiniest little gifts and offerings being “right”. But they neglected the things that were really important.

**Not everything has the same value or weight to God.**

### **5. Do we see what weighs more?**

Sixth: **25** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. **26** Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

**They keep the outside clean...but only to be seen.**

### **6. Do we take care of the inside first?**

Seven: **27** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men’s* bones and all uncleanness. **28** Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Their condemnation is they appear righteous to men but are fakes doing whatever they want and justifying it.

### **7. Do we care about appearance more than righteousness?**

**Eighth 29** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, **30** and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ **31** “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. **32** Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ *guilt*. **33** Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

### **One last question: 8. Do we think we are better than we are?**

**34** Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, **35** that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah,

whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. **36** Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

They had the greatest opportunity and the greatest responsibility and the greatest condemnation.

**37** “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! **38** See! Your house is left to you desolate; **39** for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”

**How often has He wanted to gather us?**

What is our proper response? Bow in humility and say...  
...Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!