



Connecting People to **Jesus**

### DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Monday, November 21, 2022

Pastor Eric Jay

**Prayer:** Jesus, when we look at you we realize everything we are not and everything we were created to be. Have mercy on us Lord, change our hearts, and make us the people that will bring You all the glory. Amen.

#### **Scripture: Matthew 23:23-26**

*<sup>23</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup> You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! <sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.*

#### **Devotion – “Inside Out”**

I think most times when people say that it’s what’s on the inside that matters most, they are referring to a person’s character, their personality, or what we commonly refer to as the heart of a person. There is no doubt that the inside of a person (their heart, their values, their personality and so on) is far more important than any outward appearances when appropriately judging those we are considering having a relationship with, whether that be a spouse, a friend, or a business partner. The problem is, however, that we cannot truly see inside of a person’s heart or see their unfiltered character or personality.

When we try and evaluate the inside of a person, we only have the outside of a person with which to evaluate with. The words a person says, how they say them, their behaviors, and responses and how they live their life. Unfortunately, as we all have or undoubtedly will come to learn, it is what’s on the inside that counts, and no matter how picture perfect someone may seem on the outside, on the inside we are all a broken mess. This may not be what we like to think about ourselves or others, but the amount of time, energy, and effort we put into carefully controlling what people see on the outside testifies to the truth of our brokenness and sinfulness inside.

The Pharisees specialized in putting on a religious show. One could say that their religion was religion. Jesus describes exactly who the Pharisees were when he tells them directly in out text for today, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate,

but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.”

It is what’s on the inside that counts, but Jesus isn’t talking about our intentions, our character, or our hearts. We are all like the Pharisees. We all worry too much about what’s on the outside, what others see, more than we by nature worry about what God sees on the inside. 1 Samuel 16:7 reminds us, “For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” What’s on the inside does matter the most, and faith in Christ is the only thing on the inside that truly matters both now and for eternity. This is why David would pray in Psalm 51:10, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

Only when we confess our sin, receive the forgiveness and grace of God through faith in Christ and are cleansed and given a new heart through the waters of baptism, only then are we able have the hope of living this life for the glory of God and faithfully living inside out.

We have been called and been given the grace of God in Jesus to live not outside in, but inside out. What does a faithful and inside out life look like? I think pastor John Newton, the same John Newton who wrote the words to Amazing Grace, describes the inside out life well when he says, “I am not what I ought to be — ah, how imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be — I abhor what is evil, and I would cleave to what is good! I am not what I hope to be — soon, soon shall I put off mortality, and with mortality all sin and imperfection. Yet, though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say, I am not what I once was; a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle [Paul], and acknowledge, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

Thanks for joining me for another daily devotional in God’s Word, and remember that God has forgiven yesterday, is with you today, and has already taken care of tomorrow. Amen.