

W D J S
On Religion and Hypocrites
Matthew 23

Jesus was a very popular teacher. People LOVED the way that he “called a spade a spade,” and the way that he was not bound by the religious leaders who were so harsh and corrupt. **“He spoke with authority, and NOT as the Pharisees!”**

*Jesus was really a RELIGIOUS rebel

-He associated with outright SINNERS.

-He defied LEGALISTIC laws (Sabbath work, Fasts)

-He CRASHED religious FEASTS and FESTIVALS

-He DENOUNCED religious GREED. [Drove out the money changers!]

[I understand why irreligious people LIKED Jesus, but HATED religion!]

Never was this more evident than in MATTHEW 23. Yet – once again – Jesus DEFIES all of our PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS about him!

INTRODUCTION to **Matthew 23**:

*Jesus had been teaching and preaching and doing good for some time.

*Jesus had been patiently responding to the shifty tactics of the Pharisees for a long time. Now, he was about to shift his responses into HIGH GEAR. Jesus was a MASTER TEACHER. He had perfect TIMING and spoke ABSOLUTE TRUTH.

-His set up: The Pharisees’ authority comes from God. Listen to them. **(Vs. 2a)**

***Jesus never rejected the authority of scripture; he fulfilled it and affirmed it!**

*His focus: The HYPOCRISY of the Pharisees! [PRETENDER, Stage Actor]

-Popular term these days, but where did it COME FROM? Surprise!

-JESUS alone spoke this word in the Gospels. (18 times!)

-The people would have been SHOCKED and secretly PLEASED about this.

*He denounced their EXAMPLE. **(Vs. 2b)**

*He exposed their SHALLOW MOTIVATIONS. **(Vs. 5-7)**

-They lived for TITLES and RECOGNITION. **[Rabbi, Father]**

-He again reaffirmed his SOLE RIGHT to our devotion. (Vs. 8-10)

*He defied their BLIND, POWERLESS LEGALISM. **(Vs. 3) [Haircuts and jeans]**

-They offered no HOPE for the weary. [Mean-Spirited and GRACELESS]

***If all that religion offers me is more PAIN, then I have no reason to believe.**

*Contrast this with Jesus words in **MATTHEW 11:28-30**

-Christ offered forgiveness, friendship, and help in time of need!

-They made it all but IMPOSSIBLE for people to love or trust in God! **(Vs. 13-15)**

*Their rituals and rules simply created unbelievable ARROGANCE!

*He exposed their BLINDNESS to their OWN SINS! **Matthew 23:25-28 NIV**

25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the

outside also will be clean. 27 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees,

you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything

unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

WHY DID JESUS DO THIS TO THE PHARISEES? [\[Give the final answer at end!\]](#)

-Was it cruelty? Retaliation? Humiliation? Was it for popular approval?

HAS JESUS EVER SAID A "HARD THING" TO YOU? [\[My Utmost – August 16\]](#)

*First, it was a NEEDED REBUKE for the religious crowd.

*Second, it was a WISE WARNING for the ENTIRE audience!

One of the MOST POPULAR TEACHINGS of Jesus: **Matthew 7:1 NIV**

1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

Why do we LOVE this verse? We despise judgment! Yet, we are all GUILTY of the very thing that we HATE in others! **Matthew 7:3-5 NIV**

3 "Why do you **look at** the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and **pay no attention** to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 **You hypocrite**, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

WHAT IS JUDGMENT?

*Judgment is different from DISCERNMENT. **Matthew 7:6, 15-16 NIV**

6 "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces. ... 15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

-Discernment is the ability to identify BEHAVIOR.

*Judgment is critical determination about the MOTIVES of another: WHAT vs. WHY?

*Judgment is Condemnation: A FINAL sentence.

*A selfish focus on the FAULTS of others. [\[My lesson in sports etiquette at Vilonia\]](#)

-What are you doing about the "PLANK" in your OWN EYE?

Who has the ABILITY and RIGHT to show you what you need to know about YOU?

*Jesus SPECIALIZES in PLANK REMOVAL! Why is he so good at this?

Jesus knows you.

*It is intimidating to realize that someone really KNOWS you. [\[We fear intimacy!\]](#)

-Christ knows your SECRET SINS and your HIDDEN BEAUTY

-Christ knows your SELFISH MOTIVES and your PUREST THOUGHTS

-Christ also knows your DEEPEST NEEDS

*He is the LIVING WORD: **Hebrews 4:12-13 NIV**

12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

-His word will EXAMINE you.

*Surprisingly, most of us don't really examine ourselves! We are HYPOCRITES that love to EXAMINE OTHERS! **Matthew 7:3 NIV**

3 "Why do you **look at** the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and **pay no attention** to the plank in your own eye?

*Hypocrites LIVE A LIE so well that they begin to believe it.

[They refuse to really face who/what they are.]

*Hypocrites never admit they are wrong.

*Hypocrites LOVE TO BE RIGHT! [And they gloat about it when they trap someone.]

*Hypocrites are obsessed with the desire to LOOK better than everyone else!

*Hypocrites work to be in control of others.

-They use religion as a weapon to bind others and to blind others.

Illustration: How NOT to use a flashlight] (It is not a light saber!)

-They hate light because it will EXPOSE them for what they are. **John 3:16-20**

-They cause others to HATE THE LIGHT as much as they do.

~They associate the light only with CONDEMNATION.

It is not enough that Jesus just KNOWS us. He has to do a HARD THING.

Jesus will expose you.

*He prefers to do this without humiliating you!

[This happens when a preacher preaches and you hear the Spirit speak!]

*His LIFE is the STANDARD by which we are judged. **John 9:39 NIV**

39 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

-Those who claim to be guiltless are BLIND! Only the admittedly guilty see!

*Jesus spoke VERY DIFFERENTLY to those who knew they were sinners!

*Woman caught in adultery, Zaccheus, Matthew's house party

*He affirms that EVERY SECRET *will be REVEALED!* **Luke 12:1-3 NLT**

1 Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. 3 What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

*This is NOT a THREAT! It is just a simple FACT OF LIFE.

-We will never successfully HIDE our sins.

[\[My short life of smoking\]](#) [\[Lisa's Dreams\]](#)

*We attempt to prevent this (or distract from this) by JUDGING OTHERS!

*But Jesus INVITES us to COME TO HIS LIGHT! **John 8:12**

-GRACE can ONLY be found in the LIGHT! **John 3:19-21 NIV**

19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done **has been done in the sight of God.**

-If you DESIRE to CONTINUE your secret sins, you WILL hide from the light!

*Our only hope for FREEDOM is to COME TO THE JUDGE . . . NOW! Terrifying?

*What was the MOTIVATION behind Jesus's harsh words? Surprise! [\[Final Answer\]](#)

Jesus loves you.

*His KINDNESS has continued from the very beginning, but . . .

*He refuses to stop sending other resources necessary for possible repentance.

Matthew 23:33-34 NIV

33 "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? 34 Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.

*He WEPT over their REFUSAL to come to him! **Matthew 23:37 NIV**

37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.

HIS SORROW – "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!"

HIS MERCIFUL PERSISTENCE: "How often . . ."

HIS DEEP DESIRE: "How often I longed to gather you . . ."

HIS GENTLE PROTECTION: "How often I longed to gather you under my wings!"

-He wanted them NEAR to him! [\[Like a soccer mom\]](#)

-He wanted to guard them from harm and hell!

OUR STUBBORN PRIDE: "But you WOULD NOT!"

*Your refusal IS your judgment!

Jesus KNOWS you. Jesus will EXPOSE you. Jesus LOVES you.

What are you going to DO with Jesus?

Let's pray.