

Matthew: Jesus, The King of Kings

Fools and Blind (Not Willing)

Matthew 23

Previously:

- Pharisees, Sadducees & Those Willing to See
- Parables of the Kingdom, killed messengers, invited guests

Today

- Jesus tells his followers what not to be like
- Jesus rebukes the religious leaders
- Jesus heartbreak for the capital city of God's nation

Wisdom is doing what is right

You don't have to be wise to do it - wisdom is for the fool to make one wise!

The difference between being foolish and wise is doing the right thing

But it starts with recognizing that we are foolish -

either just don't know what we're doing or that what we thought was right really isn't.

[Pray]

23:1-7

Speaking to the crowd and His disciples

Being a **disciple** is not the same as being a "christian" in our **society**

Disciple - student, salve discipuli, salvete magistra

Great Commission

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore^[fn] and make disciples of all the nations..."

Not to make a big deal about semantics, too many Christians fight over the word

Christian, disciple, Christ-follower...

And what words were said at conversion (as if it's a magic spell)

But, we are to be disciples

Students, learners, and in Jesus' day, followers.

Doing life with Jesus

Learning first-hand

Book smarts AND street smarts

The ministry school of Moses, David, Abraham, all of the disciples, Paul

Real ministry was learned on the street not the seminary.

Scribes and Pharisees

(DGC) William Barclay, the Talmud describes seven different types of Pharisees; six of the seven are bad.

- **The Shoulder Pharisee**, who wore all his good deeds and righteousness on his shoulder for everyone to see.
- **The Wait-a-Little Pharisee**, who always intended to do good deeds, but could always find a reason for doing them later, not now.
- **The Bruised or Bleeding Pharisee**, who was so holy that he would turn his head away from any woman seen in public — and was therefore constantly bumping into things and tripping, thus injuring himself.
- **The Hump-Backed Pharisee**, who was so humble that he walked bent over and barely lifting his feet — so everyone could see just how humble he was.
- **The Always-Counting Pharisee**, who was always counting up his good deeds and believed that he put God in debt to him for all the good he had done.
- **The Fearful Pharisee**, who did good because he was terrified that God would strike him with judgment if he did not.
- **The God-Fearing Pharisee**, who really loved God and did good deeds to please the God he loved.

sit in Moses' Seat

*DGC "Synagogues had a stone seat at the front where the authoritative teacher [sat]." (Carson)
"The Jews spoke of the teacher's seat as we speak of a professor's chair." (Bruce)*

But, who was Moses?

- The man God used to free Israel from slavery
- The man God used to lead them through the wilderness
- The man God used to deliver the law
- The man God used when he gave them manna from heaven
- The man God used to build the Ark of the Covenant, Tabernacle
- But not the man God used to bring them into the Promised Land

The law could never deliver. And yet, the Pharisees acted like they were royally descended from Moses - able to give the law and better than the people who would receive the law

That they were above the law.

There shouldn't be this type of attitude or distinction in the church!

- **Pharisees love to burden others**
But they themselves couldn't even carry the weight
- **Pharisees loved to look religious, seen by others as holy!**
So who's opinion were they concerned about? Not God's, but People's!

We will do whatever it takes to look, sound, and be holy compared to other people!

Is this hitting a little too close to home?

Not drinking - being out at a restaurant, I've been with some who say to the waitress, "Oh, I don't drink!" Sure, maybe, but is it necessary to create the divide of self-righteousness in their mind?

- **Pharisees love to be called Rabbi (Teacher)!**
Titles! Positions! Public proclamation of it.
The looks folks get when they wear a collar in public, or their robes
(*monks at the airport*)
- **Pharisees love to be recognized by others as something holier than thou, to appear as someone with all the religious answers. The ones the very law is delivered and interpreted by!**
This is what they esteem.

:8-12

But you...

If you're with Jesus, you're to be the very opposite - not just in appearance, but from the heart

Do not be called teachers!

Woah! What about our titles? Gifts? Pastor/teacher!

A title is earned - a gift is given.

Spiritual gifts are not titles.

Apostle this. Reverend that. Pastor this.

Calling someone pastor. *I will call pastors "Pastor Joe" in front of others, and even to them as a sign of respect culturally. But you'll never HAVE to call me pastor. Even if I am your pastor, and I get it, but at the end of the day, I'm an undershepherd. If I help you at all, it's because of Jesus. If you learn anything at all, it's because Jesus taught you.*

He's the shepherd. He's the teacher. He's the savior.

*I just may sometimes, maybe, get to be a part of what he's doing.
But He gets the credit and adoration.*

**How to tell if someone is really a pastor? Really a teacher?
Really XYZ title? They will be your servant.**

**The "Christian corporate ladder" is one that goes down...not up
The leadership should be serving you, and if you won't let them, at least they should be willing**

Pastor cleaning toilets, vacuuming, doing whatever is needed

Psalm 84:10 - For a day in Your courts [is] better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Ministry is about serving others. Not about being served by others.

Ministry is about lifting others up with grace and truth. Not weighing others down with the law.

Sure, the law must be given and sometimes executed...

but the lawgiver is Jesus, not you or me.

:13-15

Now Jesus turns his attention from those following close, those considering following, to those in opposition.

Woe is me? Woe to you!

Woe - grief, sorrow, wretchedness

The spiritual trouble the Pharisees are in - is because of their hard hearts and behavior

Hypocrites - wearing a mask, outward character different than the inward person

What does God expect of you and I? What does he want us to be?

His friends.

James 2:23 - And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

John 15:15 (partial) - "No longer do I call you servants,...but I have called you friends..."

All the religious clothes, talk, tattoos, bumper stickers - won't make you a friend of God
But a friend of God will act, dress and talk a certain way - from the inside out.

Jesus tells us how to spot Pharisees

(religious hypocrites, false teachers, sons of hell)

- **Pharisees shut up the kingdom of heaven - block the way**
- **Pharisees prey on poor people and take their money**
- **Pharisees make long prayers in public to be showy**

How we talk to God in public should be how we talk to him in private.

Ecclesiastes 5:2b ...For God [is] in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.

- **Pharisees will receive tougher judgment** - because they were know it alls who claimed to be as good as the source! they had all the knowledge, but used it for themselves
- **Pharisees will go anywhere and do anything to make converts!** But they convert them into even more devilish people

Calling it ministry, making converts and gaining numbers doesn't mean it's God's work!

We can't lead anyone where we ourselves haven't gone. We can't teach anyone what we ourselves haven't learned. We can't make disciples if we ourselves are not.

:16-24

They are fools AND blind

A fool is able to see and refuses to understand

The blind cannot see even if they wanted - or worse, think they can see but can't

- **Pharisees do the bare minimum**
- **Pharisees care more about things than people**

You can use people to win things

Or use things to win people**You can what a thing is by what it does** (*Book about Communism*)**You can tell what the minister and ministry are about by what it values**

What the goal is. Where the money goes. Who the ministry serves.

*Priests in OT over and over get in hot water with God for taking from the people for themselves**DGC Out of obedience to God's Word they refused to swear by the name of God (as commanded in Exodus 20:7). Yet they constructed an elaborate system of oaths, some of which were binding and some were not. It was a way of making a promise while keeping fingers crossed behind one's back.*

- **Pharisees make legal loopholes** (*Kiryas Joel*)

A promise is a promise and God hears them all**Ecclesiastes 5:4-6** - When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For [He has] no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed-- Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger [of God] that it [was] an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?**James 5:12** - But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and [your] "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.**:25-28**

- **Pharisees work hard to appear clean on the outside, but don't pay attention to the dirt inside**
- **Pharisees give the appearance of being spiritually alive, but are really dead**

What is the only way to be Spiritually Alive? Being born again!

Speaking to a Pharisees "You must be born again" (John 3:3)

Being filled with the Holy Spirit!**A church cannot be made alive with activities.****A believer cannot be made alive with good works.****Both are dead without God's Spirit.***Is there something missing in your life? Spiritually? Are you going through the motions? Are you tired from trying to conjure up real life? Good! Because you can't!*

Ask God to fill you. Spend time with him and let him give you life!

The only way to be clean? Cleaned from the inside out.

Washing a car from the top down

If our hearts are changed, our words and actions will take care of themselves

It's a lot less work when God does it.

Chasing a toddler around, trying to keep everything clean after her

I think half the goal of parenting is teaching kids to not make a mess in the first place!

1 Sam 16:7b For the LORD does not see as man sees;[fn] for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Self-righteousness is exhausting.

Like a habitual liar, always trying to keep their story straight after telling everyone something different

:29-32

As in the parables, they murdered God's messengers -

as if the parables weren't clear enough, Jesus calls them out directly, to their faces

- **Pharisees build religious monuments but hate the actual work of God**
- **Pharisees can't see that they're the enemies of God**

Becoming what you hate

Thinking you're on the right side of history - those today claiming they'd fight the nazi's when they themselves are (ratting out neighbors in covid, forcing injections, closing businesses, etc.)

- **Pharisees are witnesses against themselves**
Their very own behavior calls them out. There's no need of a jury of peers, it's obvious to God and anyone following God.

Fill up their father's guilt

Israel's rejection of God over the centuries culminated with this generation of Pharisees rejecting God's son to the point of crucifixion

John 8:37-47 (homework?) - "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. "I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of

Abraham. "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. "You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father--God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. "You are of [your] father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own [resources], for he is a liar and the father of it. "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

:33-36

Serpents, brood of vipers

Repeating John's description of them

DGC Jesus spoke so strongly about these religious leaders for two reasons. First, He did not want others to be deceived by them. Second, He loved these men. These men were the farthest from God and they needed to be warned of coming judgment. What Jesus really wanted was their repentance, not their judgment.

That is the point of the Great Tribulation. Judgment on nations. But one last chance for people to repent.

Literally as the parables say, it is them

"I send you prophets..."

Is this not Jesus telling them HE is the one who sent all the prophets?

Is this not Jesus prophesying of what would become of his disciples and the early church?

Jesus said it. It will happen. And the time is upon them.

"Daddy said it, I believe it."

:37-39

Jesus now turns to the city itself, across the generations

Cities and nations face judgment on Earth within history, we face judgment after death

A city/nation of Pharisees rejects God's people and God's word - even if they claim to observe his laws.

Luke tells us Jesus wept over the city.

God does not want judgment to come to anyone!

Even the Pharisee. Even the society that rejects him!

Their condemnation? They were not willing.

How simple it would be?

God desires to gather us together

God desires to protect and provide for us - to watch over us

Ease our worries and cares.

But He can't? Why? Because we're not willing.

There's nothing worse than the judgment we bring on ourselves

As the Pharisees

Or as Jerusalem

Our fate is of our own design. The consequence is ours to bear.

Romans 1 abandonment judgment...

A house left desolate...

Quiet house when the family leaves to do something

Different dynamic with just the boys and I

But those are good

*It's different when the house is empty of laughter, joy, love, family, or simply food and belongings
- because we've driven them out, wasted our resources, caused trouble with our own behavior*

The Second Coming

When Jesus returns the second time, at the end of the Great Tribulation, it is then Israel will be ready. But it's going to take 2000+ years of rejection, acceptance of a false Messiah (AC), and the most awful time on earth. But Israel will turn.

Where are we? Have we been foolish?

Are we willing to see our own blindness?

Are we willing to just ... be willing

for Jesus to be all that He wants to be for us?