

## Unmasking the Hypocrisy of Pride

Matthew 23:1-39 - NCBC, June 6, 2021

Main Point: **Jesus' condemnation of religion causes us to question whether we trust in Christ alone.**

- Do we fail to practice what we preach? (1-4)
- Do we crave approval from others more than from God? (5-7)
- Do we draw attention to ourselves more than to God? (8-10)
- Do we believe we deserve to be served by others? (11-12)
- Do we make salvation about works rather than grace? (13,15)
- Do we use religion to get ahead of others? (14; Mk 12:40; Lk 20:47)
- Do we divert from God's words with man-made traditions? (16-22)
- Do we focus more on rule-following rather than love? (23-24)
- Do we care more about outward appearances than inward purity? (25-26)
- Do we cover our sin rather than confess it in repentance? (27-28)
- Do we pretend to be better than those who lived before us? (29-36)

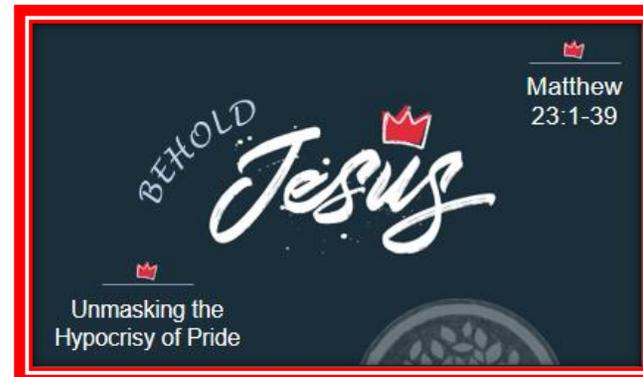
Application: **Humbly rest in God's mercy and receive Jesus as your King! (37-39)**

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### Opening Announcements:

- **Resource of the Month is *Letters to a Romantic: On Dating*.** Renew your mind with biblical wisdom about dating by reading this month's recommended resource! Complimentary copies available in our church resource center today.

<<Grace and Peace>>



**God's grace is amazing**, and we've gathered to celebrate King Jesus together today. I pray that you've prepared your heart to receive God's Word, as this morning we return to our preaching series through Matthew's gospel.



Today we will consider **Matthew chapter 23**. Due to the length of the text, we are going to just read it as we walk

through it together, so you will definitely benefit from having an open Bible in front of you for this sermon. If you need a Bible, simply raise your hand and we will gladly give you one. Then please open your Bible to **Matthew 23**.



And before we begin, just a quick note about next Sunday. Hopefully, you all received an email this past week introducing you to Tysin Smith, whom our elders desire to call as our new Associate Pastor of Music and Worship.

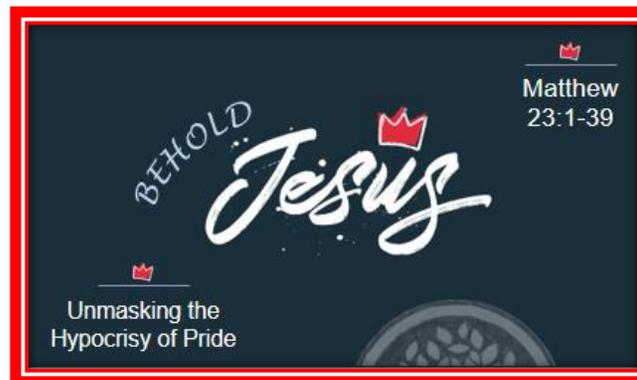
Tysin will be preaching here next week, and then in both services we will submit votes to affirm our desire to call Tysin Smith to this brand new pastoral position.

Even though we've been praying and talking about this for several years, I recognize we've never had an Associate Pastor of Music and Worship before, so please carefully review the information that was emailed to you last week, and if you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to one of our elders before the vote next Sunday. We are very excited about Tysin, Candace, and

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 24:1  
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Abbott joining our church family, and they are very eager and excited to come pending our vote of affirmation. This is such an energizing time to be part of New Castle Bible Church. Thanks for being such a praying and welcoming church. The Smith family has already been so encouraged by their interactions with you during previous visits.



Now today we come to **Matthew chapter 23**. This chapter probably contains the most severe judgment and condemnation from Jesus ever recorded in Scripture. Here Jesus unmasks the hypocrisy of religious pride, and His words clap like lightning bolts across darkened hearts.

Let's remember our context: This is the middle of the week when Jesus will be crucified on Friday. Jesus is on the Temple Mount,<sup>1</sup> speaking here to the crowds and his disciples, but the religious leaders are also listening. After all, Jesus had just silenced the Sadducees, Herodians, and Pharisees and the scribes in **chapter 22**. They didn't dare ask him any more questions,<sup>2</sup> but they were still within earshot.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 22:46

So now Jesus warns His disciples about the dangers of religious hypocrisy, pronouncing 7 woes, or 7 prophetic declarations of judgment, upon the Pharisees and the scribes – those religious leaders whom the people would have thought to be the most godly, most respected, and highest models of spirituality among the Jewish people.

So we must enter this sermon together with soft and humble hearts. Every listener will encounter conviction from this text, so let's pray now that God will give us ears to hear, and hearts that trust and obey as we draw near to **Matthew 23**.

### Can I pray for us?

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All the religions of the world can be boiled down to just two simple categories. If you take all the different religions like Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity...and examine everything they believe and teach, at their innermost core, there are just simply two religions in the world: The religion of human achievement and the religion of Divine accomplishment.<sup>3</sup>

Every religion is either a religion of people's work, or God's work. A religion of compensation, or a religion of grace. A religion of merit or a religion of mercy. It doesn't matter if its eastern or western...popular or unpopular... all religions in the world fall into one of two simple categories: it's either a religion of human achievement or it's a religion of Divine accomplishment.

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<sup>3</sup> I'm thankful for this insight from Pastor John MacArthur.  
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Only biblical Christianity teaches a religion of mercy...a religion where God saves His people *apart from* their works, entirely by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.<sup>4</sup>

So here's the tragic reality that **Matthew 23** calls us to consider. A person's sincerity is not a sufficient measure of true spirituality. Just because you are sincerely religious, or even call yourself a Christian, is not enough to please God.



Jesus' condemnation of religion in **Matthew 23** causes us to question whether we trust in Christ alone.

After all, the scribes and the Pharisees were the most highly esteemed religious people at the time. They were the most sincere, generous, kind, and orthodox leaders among the Jews. Yet Jesus publicly condemned them and pronounced woes of judgment on them.

This should jolt us awake and cause us to ask ourselves some probing questions to uncover whether we are truly trusting in Jesus' work. Or are we instead trusting in our

<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 2:4-9

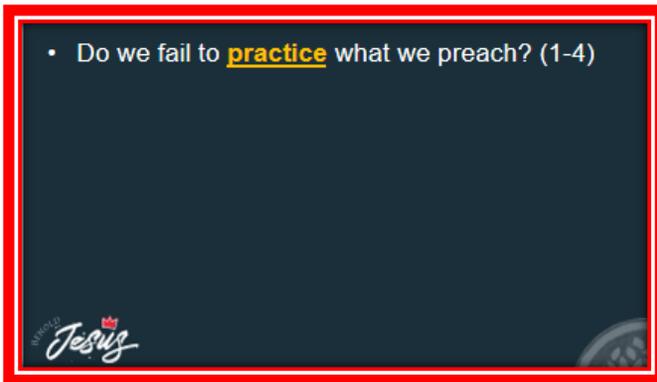
own religious achievements? We must examine our own hearts this morning to unmask hypocrisy and recenter our trust on the mercy of Christ alone.

We must resist the urge to demonize the scribes and the Pharisees. We are not better than them. Many people who say they are Christians also genuinely believe they are doing God's work and obeying God's Word, all while they are trusting in themselves and headed to hell.<sup>5</sup>

We need the mercy of Jesus which He freely gives to the humble.

So as we walk through this chapter, I'll ask 11 questions to expose any sin of hypocrisy within our hearts. God desires to save us from ourselves as we find our refuge under the wings of our Lord's mercy.<sup>6</sup>

Our first question comes from **verses 1-4**,



Do we fail to practice what we preach? (1-4)

**Verse 1** reads,

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<sup>5</sup> C.f. Matthew 7:21-23  
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*Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, <sup>3</sup> so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.*

Jesus warns the scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat – meaning they have a God-given authority to teach Scripture. So whenever they preach God’s word, obey God’s word. But don’t follow their example. For they preach, but do not practice.

What about us, loved ones? Does our walk match our talk? Do we quickly excuse away inconsistencies between our own lives and what we demand from others?

As a parent, or a supervisor, or a spiritual mentor to anyone... are you quick to point out other’s sins while excusing your own sin?

This week I had to repent of this. I’m constantly up my children’s grills about how much time they’re on their phones, and how they need to be more responsible on their phones. But after demanding that they turn in their phones before bed, I would play games on my phone while lying in bed. What hypocrisy! What inconsistency!

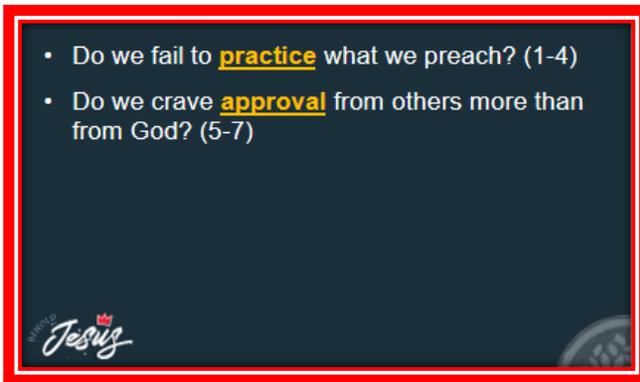
Yesterday my family forgave this expression of my hypocrisy. By God’s grace, I want to practice what I preach.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 23:37

Are there any ways you are likewise inconsistent?

We need the mercy of Jesus which He freely gives to the humble.

Next **verses 5-7** cause us to ask,



Do we crave approval from others more than from God?

Start reading in **verse 5**,

<sup>5</sup> *They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,*  
<sup>6</sup> *and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues* <sup>7</sup> *and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.*

If you write in your Bible, you might underline the first part of **verse 5**: Religious hypocrites live *to be seen by others*.

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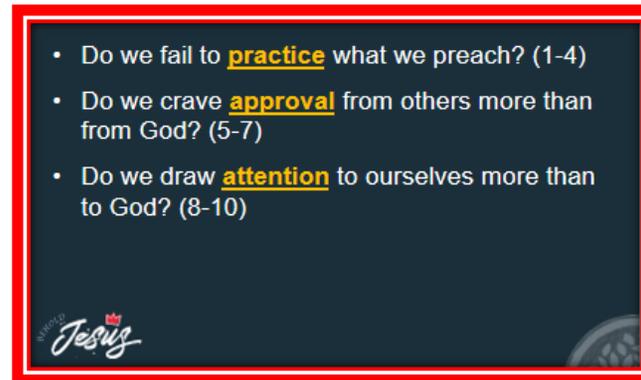
<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 6:8

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 22:12

“Phylacteries” were small boxes containing Scripture verses that were worn on the arms or fastened on the forehead.<sup>7</sup> “Fringes” were tassels worn on the four corners of one’s clothes.<sup>8</sup>

So these religious leaders made their phylacteries extra big, and their tassels extra long... all to draw more attention to themselves. God’s Law prescribed Scripture boxes and tassels to draw more attention to God and His Word... but instead these leaders practiced their religion in whatever way would bring them the most public honor, recognition, and acceptance by others.

So this leads to our next question,



Do we draw attention to ourselves more than to God?

Is our Christianity all about the external and what people can see? Are we Christian mainly for social benefits?

Friends, the praise of men is like a very addictive drug.<sup>9</sup> Once your flesh enjoys it, you want it more and more and

<sup>9</sup> Proverbs 29:25; c.f. 2 Corinthians 10:12

you become less and less satisfied with the approval of God.

But listen to Jesus' words in **verses 8-10**:

*<sup>8</sup> But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup> And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.*

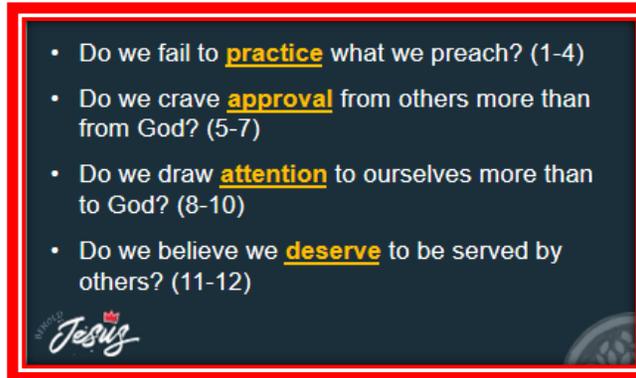
Now Jesus is not forbidding the recognition of formal leadership positions in the church, since later Scriptures speak clearly of elders<sup>10</sup> and spiritual fathers.<sup>11</sup> But Jesus is clearly forbidding the exaltation of any human leader above Christ Himself.

And that's how hypocrites disciple. We make disciples of ourselves, more than disciples of Christ.

Loved ones, spiritual leadership is all about being a servant, not a celebrity. Spiritual leaders are to be the chief repenting officers in the church.

We need the mercy of Jesus which He freely gives to the humble.

Let's ask ourselves,



**Do we believe we deserve to be served by others?** as we consider **verses 11-12** now:

*<sup>11</sup> The greatest among you shall be your servant.*

*<sup>12</sup> Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

Perhaps these two verses would have been the most shocking for the disciples and the crowds who were listening? If you write in your Bible, draw a box around these two verses, for they sum up the core message of our Lord against religious hypocrisy:

The self-exalted will be humbled, but the self-humbled will be exalted.

The world teaches to measure success by how many people exist to serve you. God's word says true religion is all about sacrificially giving away your life for the eternal good of others! Humility is the posture of Jesus Himself!

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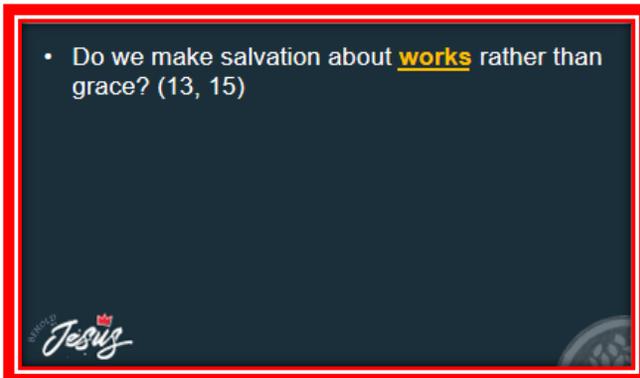
<sup>10</sup> 1 Peter 5:1-5; c.f. Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; etc.

<sup>11</sup> Philippians 2:11

So humbly consider... is your life governed by competitive pride? Are you constantly seeking to outdo someone else? Do you take pleasure believing that you are better than others?

We need the mercy of Jesus which is freely given to the humble. Proud competition fuels hypocrisy and self-trust. Humble dependence upon God's undeserved mercy fuels Christ-like service and love.

Now Jesus pronounces 7 woes on the religious hypocrites. The first woe is in **verse 13**, which causes us to ask ourselves,



Do we make salvation about works rather than grace?

Now of course most of us here would never say aloud that anyone can work their way into heaven. But religious pride always makes salvation more complicated than it is.

Religious pride hinders people from coming to Jesus, either by adding man-made rules to following Jesus or by

trying to convince lost souls that they are already saved and safe in Christ while they are still far from Him.

Listen carefully to **verses 13 and 15**,

*<sup>13</sup> "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. <sup>15</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.*

These Jews sincerely thought they were doing God's will at great personal sacrifice. But in truth they were only hindering people from seeing Jesus as He truly is.

Church listen carefully. We must not preach ourselves.<sup>12</sup> We must not preach culture. Our message is Christ Jesus crucified, resurrected, and ascended for sinners who believe on Him!

Are those who follow our example amazed by the mercy and grace of God? Or are they are amazed with us?

We need the mercy of Jesus which He freely gives to the humble.

Now you probably noticed there's no **verse 14** in our English Bibles since that verse is not included in the earliest and most reliable copies of Matthew's Gospel. However, **verse 14** is part of the biblical text in **Mark 12** and **Luke 20**, so from those Scriptures we can ask,

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<sup>12</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:5

- Do we make salvation about works rather than grace? (13, 15)
- Do we use religion to get ahead of others? ([14]; c.f. Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47)

Jesus

Do we merely use religion to get ahead of others?

Religious hypocrites selfishly use God to get what they want from other people.

**Verse 14** reads,

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore you will receive the greater condemnation.*

Biblical religion calls you deny yourself, not fund yourself. Anyone who practices religion to become healthy, wealthy, or successful in this world has been blinded by the hypocrisy of pride.

We simply need the mercy of Jesus which He freely gives to the humble.

Now ask yourself,

- Do we make salvation about works rather than grace? (13, 15)
- Do we use religion to get ahead of others? ([14]; c.f. Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47)
- Do we divert from God's words with man-made traditions? (16-22)

Jesus

Do we divert from God's words with man-made traditions?

This is so common. Look at **verse 16**,

*<sup>16</sup> "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup> And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' <sup>19</sup> You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup> So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.*

You see, the Jews had made up a bunch of rules that allowed people to swear by certain things and not be bound by their word. In short, they added man-made qualifications onto God's law in order to be able to squirm out of any promise they didn't want to keep.

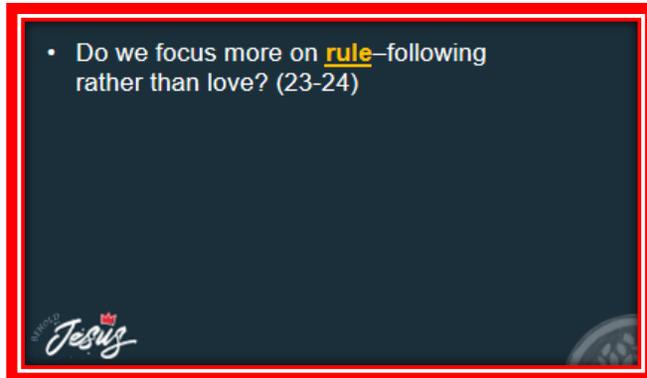
Listen carefully... religious hypocrisy always emphasizes the letter of the law more than the spirit of the law. Hypocrisy is so near-sighted that it affirms itself with legalistic minutiae, while remaining condemned under the full spirit of God's perfect law.

Let me ask,

Have you become comfortable with any "respectable sin" among us, instead of fleeing from sin which is repulsive to God?

We need the mercy of Jesus which He freely gives to the humble.

We must never,



focus more on rule-following rather than love.

But that's exactly what hypocrites do, isn't it? Read now **verses 23-24**,

*<sup>23</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe the 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!"*

Religious hypocrites make big deals out of little things. They elevate third-order doctrines to first-order doctrines. Everything is always black and white, and what's most important to them is being right!

But Jesus says...there's something far more important than what percentage you tithe, or what religious rules you follow.

What's most important is love!<sup>13</sup> Hypocrites lack love for people in need, while they puff out their chest for how well they understand the most difficult Scripture.

Church – let me be painfully clear. Following Jesus is not just about weekly church attendance and bible studies. Those are wonderful and necessary things. But if we are unwilling to get our hands dirty truly loving sinners, then we are merely religious hypocrites.

Following Jesus is always costly to pride. Expressing mercy and justice for the poor and needy will always take us out of our comfort zones. That's why we need God's mercy which He freely gives to the humble.

Only someone blinded by pride would strain the smallest gnat out of his soup but eat contentedly while a rotten corpse of a large camel was in it!

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew 22:37-40

So let's ask ourselves,

- Do we focus more on **rule**-following rather than love? (23-24)
- Do we care more about **outward** appearances than inward purity? (25-26)

Do we care more about **outward** appearances than inward purity? Do we care more about someone else in the church seeing our sin, or God Himself seeing our sin?

Are we meticulous in how we groom our own social media profile, while we chase sin with every secret click that we believe no one else can see?

Read carefully **verses 25-26**,

<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.

Jesus couldn't be more clear. Purity is a matter of the heart.<sup>14</sup> Purity is about who we are on the inside before it is ever about what we do on the outside.

Parents – this strikes close to home with our children,

doesn't it? How often we prefer for them just to obey on the outside... without any care for what's going on in the worship factory of their heart?

We all need the mercy of Jesus which He freely gives to the humble.

- Do we focus more on **rule**-following rather than love? (23-24)
- Do we care more about **outward** appearances than inward purity? (25-26)
- Do we cover our sin rather than **confess** it in repentance? (27-28)

In **verses 27-28**, Jesus continues with His woes, causing us to ask, **Do we cover our sin rather than confess it in repentance?**

This of course is related **verses 25-26**, but here we see even more clearly how religion offers such a dangerous coverup for spiritually dead hearts. Spiritually dead people can use religion to make themselves look alive:

**Verse 27,**

<sup>27</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> So you also outwardly appear

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew 15:10-20

*righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

In Jesus' day, the Jews would paint tombstones white to help them stand out in the hot desert sun, so no well-meaning Jew would accidentally stumble across a grave and defile themselves. In other words, the white paint served as a bright warning for people to keep their distance from this place of death.

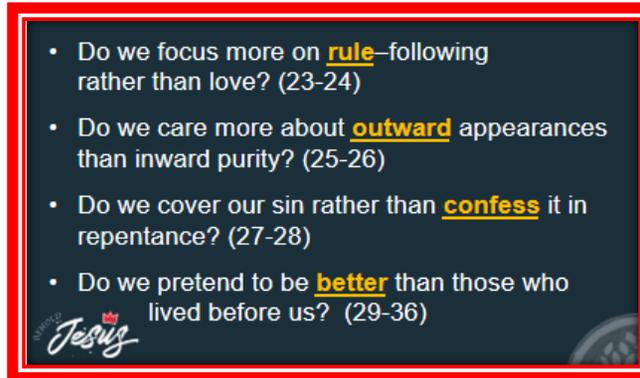
So with a magnificent word picture, Jesus calls these Jewish leaders whitewashed tombs...sources of uncleanness and defilement that all should avoid.

Their external beauty could not hide the fact they were full of hypocrisy and spiritual deadness inside.

So here's the important question: when's the last time you confessed any sin to God or to others? Hypocrisy is content to cover or hide sin, rather than confess it in true repentance.

O church... we all need the mercy of Jesus which He freely gives to the humble. Will you humble yourself enough to confess your sin when God shows it to you, turn from it in repentance, and find your hope in the mercy of God?

The final woe in this piercing sermon is found in **verse 29**, which causes us to ask,



Do we pretend to be **better** than those who lived before us?

Listen to Jesus severe judgment in **verse 29**,

*<sup>29</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' <sup>31</sup> Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? <sup>34</sup> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup> so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup> Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.*

You see, these religious hypocrites thought they were better than their ancestors who had killed God's prophets. Now they were more educated, they were more sophisticated, they were more enlightened and woke!

But Jesus calls them serpents and vipers, and says they are no better than their forefathers...for just as their ancestors persecuted God's messengers, so they are about to kill the very son of God Himself!

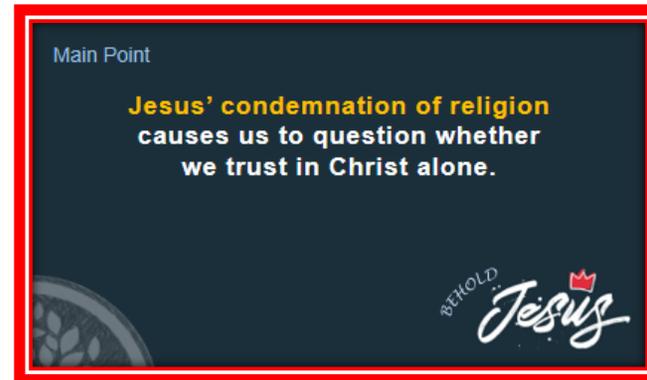
Abel represents the first righteous martyr in the Old Testament Scriptures,<sup>15</sup> and Zechariah represents the last righteous martyr in the chronology of the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>16</sup> So Jesus here teaches that these scribes and Pharisees are simply continuing the same practice as their own fathers, while pretending to be better than their fathers.

Loved ones, religious pride only produces children of hell. Throughout this entire sermon Jesus exposes these men whom the Jews would have thought to be the finest specimens of biblical religion as hypocrites, blind guides, fools, whitewashed tombs, serpents, and murderers.

So we must not be deceived.

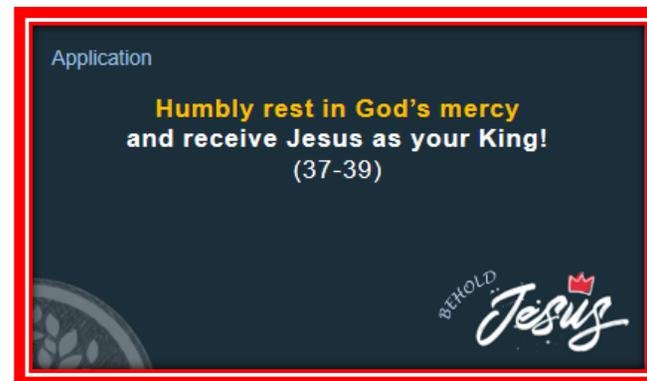
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<sup>15</sup> Genesis 4:1-16  
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Jesus' severe condemnation of sincere religion must cause us to question whether we trust in Christ alone.

The only way we can be saved is if we receive God's mercy that we do not deserve. Any self-reliance on our own religious achievement will only receive eternal woe.



Therefore church, as we hear Jesus' sermon to these religious hypocrites, I urge us to **Humbly rest in God's mercy and receive Jesus as your King!**

I love how Jesus closes this most severe message in **verse 37** with words of tender sympathy and hope:

<sup>16</sup> 2 Chronicles 24:20-22

<sup>37</sup> “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>38</sup> See, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup> For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

Don't miss the saving hope of this conclusion loved ones! Jesus here yearns for sinners to be saved! Underline those words, *you were not willing!*

O, are you willing to receive the mercy of Jesus today that you can never earn or deserve? Are you willing to flee to Jesus in repentance, believing that His death is entirely sufficient for your sins, and that His resurrection and ascension has secured your everlasting life?

In **verse 38**, the Jews temple, or house of worship, is left desolate and empty. Their religion had no room for God Himself. And so Jesus says in **verse 39**,

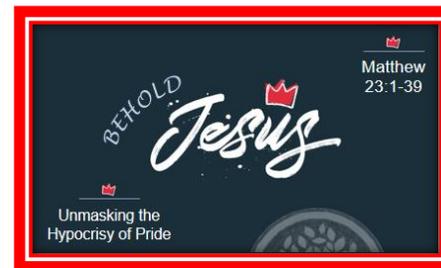
*You will not see me again, until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”*

In other words, I will have no welcome here among the Jews until you willingly receive me as your King! The Jewish apostacy is fixed until such time when Jesus will return to the earth – someday that is still future – and Israel will believe on Jesus, and rejoice in His coming as their Divine Savior and Lord.

But loved ones, we don't have to wait until the end of days to take off our proud mask of hypocrisy.

Today is a day of salvation. Today is a day where sinners like you and me are able to rest in God's mercy and celebrate the rule and reign of Jesus our King!

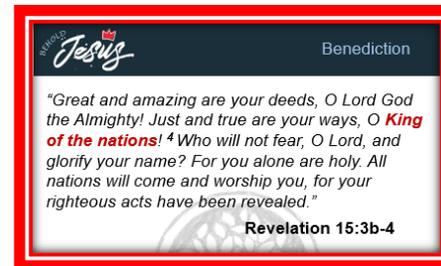
Will you turn from your religious pride, repent of any hypocrisy, and rest in the religion of all that God has done for you by His mercy and grace?



**Let's pray.**

<<Jesus Paid it All>>

**Let's pray our benediction together:**



*Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.*

**Revelation 15:3b-4**

## Recommended Resources on The Hypocrisy of Pride:

- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Proverbs 26:23-28
- Isaiah 29:13
- Micah 6:8
- Matthew 5:37; 6:2, 5, 16; 7:1-5; 15:7-9, 13-14; 22:18; 24:51
- Mark 12:38-40
- Luke 6:41-42; 12:1-5, 9, 56; 13:15-16; 20:45-47
- Romans 2:17-24; 12:9
- 2 Corinthians 10:12
- Galatians 2:13
- James 3:1, 17
- 1 Peter 2:1
- 1 John 1:6-2:6
  
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-making-of-a-modern-pharisee>
- <https://www.gracechurch.org/sermons/325> "How to Raise a Pharisee"
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-hypocrisy.html>
  
- "Hypocrisy Unmasked" sermon on John 13:21-30 preached 9-18-16
- "Fear-Driven Hypocrisy" sermon on Galatians 2:11-16 preached 4-9-17
- "Blind Hypocrisy" sermon on Luke 6:39-42 preached 11-19-17
  
- *Respectable Sins*, Jerry Bridges
- *What do you think of me? Why do I Care?* Ed Welch

## Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Review Matthew 23:11-12. How does dependence upon God's mercy suffocate a proud heart? What other sins does pride lead to?
2. Review Matthew 23:13-32. Why is the punishment of hypocrisy so severe? Why is it not enough simply to be sincere in what you believe?
3. Read Luke 11:39-44 and Matthew 23:23. What is the opposite of hypocrisy? What are the "more important matters" to God? What counsel would you offer to someone who is not sure whether their faith is genuine? (c.f. 1 John)
4. Read 1 John 1:6-9. What role can other Christians play in helping you avoid the blindness of hypocrisy? (c.f. Hebrews 3:12-14) How does God's Gospel provide all you need in order to dare to be real?
5. Review Matthew 23:37-39. What is Jesus' tone or mood in these verses? What hope for sinners is found in these final words from Jesus to the Jews?