

FOLLOW ME

The Gospel of Matthew

WEEK 3 - THE SORROW IN STORE FOR WHITEWASHED TOMBS OVERVIEW

As the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders reaches a boiling point, Jesus gives one of the most intense and incendiary teachings about their failure to live up to their role. He repeatedly calls the religious leaders of Israel “hypocrites” and points out their lack of integrity – placing unbearable religious demands on the people while ignoring their own sin and wickedness. Within these teachings is a vital look at the difference between legalism and grace which is a message the Church of today needs to hear.

*What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites!
For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces.
You won't go in yourselves, and you don't let others enter either.*

Matthew 23:13

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did you have a worship song or hymn that meant a lot to you years ago? What is it?
2. What is your first response to the question Maron asked, “What is the primary theme of Jesus’ message(s)?”
3. What characteristics of God’s kingdom, or God’s reign, do we see in [Micah 6:8](#)?
4. Read [Matthew 23:1-5](#).
 - a. What was the “illness of the heart”, or “inward condition” that Jesus was saying the Pharisees had?
 - b. Why was Jesus upset that the Pharisees wore *extra wide prayer boxes* and *extra long tassels*?
5. Read [Matthew 23:6-12](#).
 - a. Why does Jesus not want anyone to call the Pharisees *Rabbi*? (see [Matthew 19:16-17](#).)
 - b. Describe how this passage in Matthew is part of the “Kingdom Manifesto”. (see also [Matthew 19:30](#).)
6. Read [Matthew 23:13-39](#).
 - a. Describe some of the things Pharisees were doing that Jesus did not approve of. (see also [Matthew 5:37](#).)
 - b. What is the significance of *whitewashed tombs* in [verses 27-28](#)?
 - c. What is the key to restoration when your *house is abandoned and desolate*? Read [2 Chronicles 7:13-14](#).
7. How would you compare Jesus’ words and actions in Matthew 23 to other passages about Jesus?
8. What can we learn about discipleship from this passage?
9. Do you see legalism similar to the Pharisees’ happening today? What do you think Jesus would say to the church today? What would Jesus say to you?