



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

The King's Judgment!

Matthew 23:1-39

Message #65 of 80 – S1100

Sermon given on June 9, 2024



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The King's Judgment!

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Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 23**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The King's Judgment!**
- This chapter is a strong rebuke to the Jewish religious people of Jesus' time.
- It should also serve as warning to all true believers, our religion matters to God.
- Insincere, hypocritical, and unloving religion does not please God.
- In this message I am going to encourage you to examine your faith more closely.
- Our chapter begins with Jesus talking to the multitudes about the religious hypocrites.
- **Matthew 23:1-2**
- The scribes and Pharisees served an important role in the religious life of the Jewish people.
- They interpreted the things of God and His Word for the people.
- 'sit in Moses' seat.' = They have Moses' authority to lead God's people to God!
- We might think Jesus tells the multitudes to ignore the religious hypocrites – He doesn't.
- **Matthew 23:3-4**
- Jesus is not telling them to do everything the scribes and Pharisees tell them to do.
- Insofar as they are teaching God's Word rightly, the people are to obey and follow them.
- As Christ-followers we must be watchful of spiritual creep.

- This is when our faith is gradually eroded or compromised by the worldly influence around us.
- It might be so gradual that we don't realize it is happening.
- We must try to maintain radical openness to God's Spirit to examine our faith (**1 Corinthians 13:5**).

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

- I am going to give you a series of questions you can use to examine your faith.
- These are also questions we can ask a spiritual brother or sister to ask us about our faith.
- The first one: **Do I practice what I preach?**
- Do my actions line up with my words and do my actions and words line up with God's Word?
- One of the signs the world sees most clearly is spiritual hypocrisy.
- The next question comes from verses 5 to 10.
- The next question: **Do I imagine or think of myself as superior to others?**
- **Matthew 23:5-10**
- Jesus is not forbidding teachers and other positions of authority within the church because elsewhere He calls for these things.
- What He is saying is that we should not aspire to these titles so that we can use them to control people and elevate ourselves.
- To do so is to prove that pride is active in your heart.
- The first thing Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5:3**). **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- The less we think of ourselves, the more useful we become to God.
- Which Jesus repeats this concept in verses 11 to 12.
- Which brings us to our next question: **Do I humbly serve others or am I hypocritically focused on myself?**
- **Matthew 23:11-12**
- Humbly serving others is the way of Christ (**Philippians 2:8**). **And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**
- Jesus' entire earthly ministry was characterized by humble service.

- So, if we call ourselves Christ-followers, our lives should be characterized by humble service.
- In verse 13 we find the first of seven occurrences of the phrase, “woe to you, scribes and Pharisees” in this chapter.
- These are the strongest words Jesus used while He walked on this earth.
- A ‘woe’ is an expression of horror or an exclamation of judgment and often includes a sense of impending doom.
- Our next question of self-examination is: **Am I hindering or helping others to be saved?**
- Don’t rush to answer any of these questions, let God speak to your heart.
- **Matthew 23:13-15**
- The scribes and Pharisees were preventing people from entering the kingdom of God by their hypocritical ways.
- In the last chapter we learned that the greatest commandment was to love God with our whole being and to love others.
- Their unloving adherence to the commands of God were blocking people from approaching God for salvation.
- The next question: **Am I more concerned about biblical minutiae more than I am with practical truths that lead to humbly serving God and others.**
- That’s what Jesus addresses next with the scribes and Pharisees.
- **Matthew 23:16-22**
- The scribes and Pharisees prided themselves on knowing the fine details of the law and they often debated these details energetically.
- There is a place for debate and discussion, but it should always be done with a desire to know how to better love God and others in a way that glorifies God.
- Then Jesus deals with their attitude toward giving and how it relates to more important issues.
- **Matthew 23:23-24**
- One of the mistakes some Christ-followers make is looking at tithing or giving to the work of God as optional or voluntary.

- Giving is an act of faith and is in the character of God (**John 3:16**). **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**
 - More important than an act of faith and obedience or as an expression of worship, giving is a display of love.
 - How much should you give?
 - As much as reflects your love for God, His church, and the others who will be ministered to by your giving.
 - God is a giving God and God's people should be giving people.
 - That brings us to our next question for self-reflection: **Am I focused on how I see myself or on how the world sees me or how God sees me?**
 - Another way of expressing that question might be: **Am I more concerned about looking holy or about being holy?**
 - **Matthew 23:25-28**
 - Purity or holiness always begins on the inside and then manifests in our words and actions.
 - Jesus talked about that from a negative perspective (**Matthew 15:18-19**).
- But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.**
- It would serve us all better to care little about what the world thinks of us and care deeply about what God thinks about us.
 - Our next question is: **How do I treat God's messengers?**
 - If God sends someone into your life or leads you to a church or ministry that is faithfully declaring God's Word, are you showing them the respect that is due them as a messenger of God.
 - Hopefully you are not treating them the way the scribes and Pharisees were.
 - **Matthew 23:29-33**
 - Jesus is pointing to their hypocrisy of saying they would not have persecuted the prophets of old while they are plotting to put the Messiah to death.
 - Then Jesus says something that is so subtle we might miss it.
 - **Matthew 23:34-35**

- ‘I send you prophets’ is a subtle claim to His deity.
- Jesus is predicting how His followers will be treated in the future.
- A quick study of Paul’s life proves how accurate this prediction was.
- Turn a page or two to your right to **Matthew 27**
- In just a couple of days, these same men will take part in inciting the crowds to call for the crucifixion of Jesus, their Messiah.
- **Matthew 27:22-25**
- A terrible condemnation awaits those who would lead others to reject their Savior.
- Turn back to **Matthew 23**
- Jesus has just expressed His righteous displeasure with the religious hypocrites.
- Then He expresses His heart for the city God chose to be the place where the Messiah would come.
- **Matthew 23:36-39**
- Sadly, they are still waiting for their Messiah.
- Thankfully, God has a plan that includes saving the Jews.
- As Christ-followers we have the glorious privilege of walking through this life with the living God.
- God made that possible by sending Jesus to make a way for us to be right with God.
- We appropriate that privilege by faith, and we prove that privilege to the world by obedience to God’s Word and surrender to God’s Spirit.
- We are going to partake in Communion this morning.
- We do this to remind ourselves of just what had to happen so that we could be saved – freed from the bondage and consequence of our sin.
- But not just remember, we should also recommit to live a life that is worthy of the sacrifice that was made for it.
- Let’s take some time and reflect upon these questions and ask God to speak to us about just how real our faith is.
- **Pray! Communion!** Worship Team plays the last song!