The Problems Of The Pharisees And Scribes

Matthew 23:1-12

Intro:

A. the Pharisees constantly criticized and questioned Jesus.
   1. They tried to enslave Him.
   2. "what thinkest thou?"

B. Until this point in His ministry he has done little more than answer their questions.
   1. Is it lawful to give tribute money to Caesar?"
   2. "Which is the great commandment of the law?"

I. The Pharisees Have Legitimate Authority.

A. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat." v.2
   1. seat = καθήδρα = chair, a soft seat with a back.
   2. This was a place where men sat to read the law or make decisions.

B. These Jewish disciples are to obey the Law.
   1. bid = ειπων = "to command", "to order" v.3
   2. observe = τηρεω = "to watch attentively," "keep"
   3. do = πουω = "to make," "to produce," "to act," "to form something."
   4. work = ἔργον = "deed" "the result of energy expended," "the thing wrought"
   5. "They say and they do, but they do not do what they say."
   6. The law is still fully in force.
   7. The disciples must not break the law.
   8. They must not be disrespectful.

II. The Specific Problems Of The Scribes And Pharisees.

A. They overloaded God's people. V.4
   1. bind = δεσμευω = "to tie on"
   2. burdens = φορτιον = "a specific load."
   3. heavy = βαρυς = "heavy," "hard to carry"
4. grievous = δυσβαστάκτω = “oppressive”
5. They lay them on men’s shoulders.
6. They will not move them.
7. move = σαλευω = “to make to shake,” “rock.”
8. They laid out extremely difficult paths.
9. Some pastors do this today.

B. They work to be seen.
   1. This is their motive for service. V.5a
   2. The motive and the reward become the same.

C. The things they did.
   1. “They make broad their phylacteries.” V.5b
      a. phylacteries = φυλακτηριον = “a strip of
         parchment, on which were written various
         parts of the law, bound about the forehead
         or around the wrist”
      b. broad = πλατυνω = “to make wider”,
         “extend.”
   2. “...and enlarge the borders of their garments”
      a. enlarge = μεγαλυνω = “to make great”, “to
         magnify.”
   3. “And love the uppermost rooms at feasts...”
      a. rooms = πρωτοκλησια = the first place of
         reclining at a table, the chief place at a
         banquet.” Abraham’s bosom.
   4. “the chief seats in the synagogues.”
      a. Chief seats = πρωτοκαθεδρια = “the first
         seat” The seats usually occupied by the
         elders of a synagogue, near the pulpit.”
   5. “And greetings in the markets...” v.7
      a. greetings = ασπασιμον = “salvation,” “to
         hail by name”
   6. “...and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.”
      a. Rabbi = ραββι = one great, a chief, a
         master.

III. Special Instructions For His Disciples.

   A. Do not be called Rabbi.
      1. “...for one is your Master, even Christ...” v.8
2. "...and all of ye are brethren..."

B. **Do not call men father.**
   1. This refers to teachers, not a parent.
   2. "...for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

C. **Do not be called Master.**
   1. master = καθηγητὴς = "a leader or a guide in the way," "a director."
   2. "...for one is your Master, even Christ."

IV. **The Essence Of Discipleship.**

A. **"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." V.11**
   1. "...shall be your minister" - Rhm
   2. δικτηνος = "servant"
   3. Greatness is achieved by serving not in doing what the Pharisees and scribes did.

B. **The eternal principle of God.**
   1. True in the Old Testament.
   2. Job 22:29
   3. exalt = ὑψωω = "to raise high," "lift up."
   4. abased = ταπεινωω = "to make or bring low"
   5. humble = (Same as 4 above)
   6. exalted = (Same as 3 above)

Phariseeism = The Pharisees constantly acted so as to improve their image before others. Jesus never tried to improve His. He sought to do the truth. The truth vindicated Him, not His actions. "By thy words shall thou be justified." Any attempt to make yourself look good to others is Phariseeism.