

The Trouble With The Pharisees

Matthew 23:13-39

Intro:

- A. **False religion or perverted religion has always had good press.**
 - 1. People go gaga over the preaching of those who are false prophets.
 - 2. They use the name, Jesus, but they fabricate what Paul called "another gospel".

- B. **In the days of Jesus there were many deeply religious people.**
 - 1. They were the leaders in Judaism.
 - 2. They were objects of his denunciation.
 - 3. In these verses He describes their character and God's opinion of them.

I. The Characteristics Of The Scribes And The Pharisees.

- A. **They blocked heaven's door.**
 - 1. "...for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men..." v.13
 - 2. How? They block the door by indecision, never sure about the way, they confuse others.

- B. **They cover their sins with long prayers.**
 - 1. They positioned themselves to take advantage of widows, ravaging the estate. v.14
 - 2. They covered this with long prayers.
 - 3. Long prayers never cover wrong doing.
 - 4. Their judgment will be more severe.

- C. **They have a great zeal of God.**
 - 1. They travel long distances. v.15
 - 2. They make proselytes.
 - 3. They inoculate them against salvation.

- D. **They confirmed their oaths by lesser things.**
 - 1. The Jews were big on swearing oaths.
 - 2. The gold of the temple, not the temple. Vs.16,17
 - 3. The gift of the altar and not the altar. Vs.18-20

4. The heavens and not by the throne of heaven upon which God is sitting. **V.22**
 5. These were attempts to lessen one's obligations to keep one's word.
- E. They were meticulous in small things.**
1. They tithed for show. **V.23**
 2. They dismissed the real issues of life.
 3. Religious activity never takes the place of things of the heart.
- F. They didn't know what was important.**
1. They strained out wiggle tails. "gnats" larvae **v.24**
 2. They left horses!
- G. They were ceremonially clean and inwardly filthy. V.28**
1. The cup and platter example. **V.26**
 2. The sepulchre illustration. **V.27**
- H. They judged themselves wrongly.**
1. "...if we had been in the days of our fathers..." **v.30**
 2. They built monuments to the prophets. **V.29**
 3. They were the same as their fathers. **V.31**
 4. They will do as their fathers did. **v.32**
- I. They were headed for hell.**
1. "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers."
 2. How can you escape the consequences of your actions?
- J. They would do as their fathers.**
1. Jesus told them what they would do. **V.34**
 2. They did all these things!
- K. They would be the culminating generation of Jewish blood-guilt.**
1. "...the righteous blood shed...from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias..."(this person's identity is not known)
 2. The Jews were quick to shed blood.
- L. They were under judgment.**

1. Much innocent blood had been shed and God's wrath had not been seen. **V.36**
2. The generation that crucified Jesus and persecuted His disciples would be punished.

II. The City Of Jerusalem Would Suffer.

A. **The sins of the city.**

1. "...thou that killest the prophets..." **v.37a**
2. "...stonest them which are sent unto thee..."

B. **God gave them opportunity to repent.**

1. "...how oft would I have gathered thy children together..." **v.37b.**
2. "...even as a hen gathereth her chicks..."
3. "...and ye would not."

C. **They would reap their acts.**

1. "...your house is left unto you desolate."
V.38
2. He would not reign from there until another dispensation, the 1,000 year reign. **V.39**

