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. V.s.16,17
   3. The gift of the altar and not the altar. V.s.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**