

Text: Matthew 23:13-39

Introduction: Blessings and Woes

LIVE THE STORY

We must not only love the Gospel Story, we must begin to live the Gospel Story, indeed, to have the Central Character live in us.

- How do you respond to the Pascal quote on the 1st page. Can you think of some scriptures that would support it?
- Why are the Pharisees and teachers of the law shutting the door to the kingdom of heaven? Why was Peter opening it?
- What might we learn from the Pharisees about the dangers of not keeping the Gospel central in evangelism and mission?
- Can you think of ways you have ever focused on worship of God to the exclusion of loving your neighbor?
- Why do you think the Pharisees valued oaths made on the gold in the temple more than oaths made on the temple?
- What dangers can you think of in arguing little strains of doctrine? What camels might be easy to swallow?
- How do horizontal relationships measure the reality of your vertical relationship to God?
- Commenting on Matthew 5:20 Paul Tripp says, “The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was not enough because it was not righteousness. It was ugly, prideful, human self-righteousness.” Why wasn't it righteousness?
- How do you respond to the idea that your righteousness must move beyond what people see, to what is in your heart? How does this drive us to the Savior?
- How might the command “confess your sins to each other” (James 5:16) help us pursue internal righteousness?

A. What are woes?

- i. *Woe: expressing extreme displeasure, calling for retribution on someone or something! Horror, disaster, calamity; divine penalty.* It can express threat and condemnation, or sympathetic sorrow.
 - 13:33-35 Condemnation(33)
 - 13:37-39 Sympathetic sorrow(37-39)

B. Why such grieving condemnation? What is the offense?

Pascal: "If one does not know himself to be full of pride, ambition, lust, weakness, pettiness, injustice, one is very blind."

I. 23:13-15 Don't be a Decoy of Death

A. How did they keep people out of heaven?

- i. Matthew 16:16-19

B. Reverse evangelists... (vs. 15)

➤ Psalm 130:3

ii. They taught the law without its *redemptive purpose*.

a) They did not recognize life when He came, and kept others from recognizing!

II. 23:16-24 Don't Strain out a Gnat but Swallow a Camel

A. The 3rd & 4th woes are about how these leaders are the blind leading the blind. (16 & 24)

➤ Matthew 22:36

B. 16-22 Blind Foolishness

C. vs. 23 Love God... Love Neighbor

➤ Lev. 27:30-33

➤ Deut. 26:12

➤ 1 John 4:20

III. 23:25-28 Don't Live Before Men Rather than Before God

A. External Righteousness, Ignoring Internal Wickedness

i. The cup and dish

ii. They were like whitewashed tombs...

B. How easy to push others into this trap:

C. How easy to fall into this trap ourselves:

Richard Sibbes: "It were an easy thing to be a Christian, if religion stood only in a few outward works and duties, But to take the soul to task, and to deal roundly with our own hearts, and to let conscience have its full work, and to bring the soul into spiritual subjection unto God, This is not so easy a matter..."

Paul Tripp: "*The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was not enough because it was not righteousness. It was ugly, prideful, human self-righteousness.*"