

Matthew 23.13-39

Telling the Truth with Tears

Palm Sunday – Begins Most IMPORTANT Week of Human History

Week determines ETERNAL DESTINY All HERE – All People ever BORN
BIG Chunk of Gospels focus this Week > Teaching, Temple Cleansing, Passover

Mt, Mark, Luke, John 4 GOSPEL Writers tell Same Story – Different Emphasis

2 Clearly Fixed Days – Palm Sunday / Easter – bracket TUMULTOUS Week

ANCHORED in Middle GOOD FRIDAY > **join us Friday Night at 7:30**

Palm Sunday: Jesus rode into City, Acclaimed by Crowds as KING and SAVIOR

Study of Matthew: MESSAGES & MINISTRY of Jesus during HOLY WEEK

LUKE connects THESE Tearful Words of OUR TEXT to Palm Sunday...

As Happy Crowds Sang to Him > Heavy Hearted Savior Wept for THEM

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it... Luke 19.41

Triumphal Entry was TEARFUL Entry

WEEPING Prophet like JEREMIAH, Both saw DESTRUCTION of Jerusalem

WEEPING NOT for Himself, MANY would SUFFER and DIE in UNBELIEF

1. Indictment of the Sovereign

a. Path to the Kingdom Obstructed

Sermon on Mount, Jesus pronounced Blessings / BEATITUDES on Faithful

Here - like Old Testament Prophets – FINAL Prophet > 7 Woes on Wicked

A woe is a lament or wail concerning the final end for evil people. James Boice

SCRIBES: Scholars of Law of Moses / Some Priests, Sadducees, some Pharisees

Word SCRIBE occurs 57 x's SYNOPTICS, just ONCE in JOHN

Over 1 / 3 of references to SCRIBES in GOSPELS > “scribes and Pharisees”

Jesus says here their LAST NAME is HYPOCRITE

v. 13 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.”

Ch 16 Jesus gave Followers KEYS of Kingdom > Gospel of GRACE & MERCY

Leaders of ISRAEL doing their BEST to THROW KEY Away for their Nation

Leaders were GATE KEEPERS for Nation > Let them into Knowledge of God

Became GATE CLOSERS! Blocking people from Way, Truth, Life > JESUS

Led Parade to Very Doors of Heaven > Refused to Go In, Blocking Way Others

Kingdom is Christ’s Kingdom > Stopped People from Coming to Saving King

v. 15 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.”

2nd Woe goes Further: Pulled from Doorway of God’s Kingdom into Darkness

Israel to CALL Nations to God’s LIGHT > but COMPOUNDED the Darkness

Jews not Evangelistic People > Jesus SARCASTIC about their PUNY Efforts

NOTHING Funny about GRIM Results of their Efforts > led Sheep to Slaughter!

Pastors who Never Explain the Way of Salvation thru Faith in Christ Alone

Seminary Professors Undermine belief in Authority of Bible, Deity of Christ

M Workers More Interested in Promoting their Church or Denom than JESUS

Woe! Woe! Woe! A Thousand Times Woe

Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Matthew 18.6

b. Power of the King Insulted

Name of God is POWER, they make it PLAYTHING > Trivialize God's Truth

Name – Strong TOWER to Save – became Religious Speech to Cover their LIES

vs. 16-22 “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

PRIORITIES CONFUSED > That of Every Detail except Most Impt > GOD

“Blind Guides” = Handle Truth in Useless and Corrupting Way

Cannot see Spiritual Issues Clearly > Lead Others & Themselves into PIT

Jesus: “I tell you, Do not swear at all.... Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” Matthew 5.34, 37

Casualty > Religious Professionals who made Minute Distinctions in Law

Avoid True Meaning of Law to Escape its Consequences

Some Teachers offer LOOP Holes to Holiness > Permits for Misbehavior

Ways to GET AROUND the Law of God > find some WIGGLE ROOM

We Never Say – God Damn! / Christian's Say – Gosh Darn!

We Never Say – What the Hell! / Christian's Say – What the Heck!

We Never Say – Damn You / Christian's Say – DANG You!

Uh Oh!! Did I just SAY those BAD Things!! – God knows Words Say & Think

How big is the gap between your outside Christianity & your inward hypocrisy?
Philip Ryken

We Speak Courteous Words > while Thinking Unkind Thoughts
 Never Swear Outwardly > your INNER DIALOGUE is Laced with Expletives
 Never had Sex Outside Marriage > but your Eyes are Full of Adultery
 Say you Trust God > filled with RESENTMENT for What He has Given You
Outward Conformity > without Inward Godliness > is Heart of Hypocrisy

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139.23

c. Priorities of the Kingdom Compromised

v. 23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

TITHING Not Problem!! > You SHOULD TITHE – Required in OT & NT
 Not JUST Requirement by MOSES – before Moses – Abe to Mel, Isaac, Jacob
 “These you ought to have done” – Jesus tells DISCIPLES they Should TITHE!
 Learned from FINANCE Report Last Week > We in ZGC Need take Seriously
 Everything in New Covenant is Super-Sized > GRACE GIVING in Christ

Legalism directs people’s attention from what is real to what is non-essential.
 Joe Kapolyo

Pharisees Fretted over Law’s Minutia, Neglecting Ultimate, Eternal
 TITHED TINY Leaves & SEEDS from Herbs but FORGOT Justice and Love
 Preoccupation with Trivia > Is it WRONG to Tithe SPICES? No! You Should!
 Just DO IT! Don’t PAT Yourself on BACK, SHOW OFF before Others

- I am hypocrite when I am more concerned about my own little rules than the big things that matter more to God.

I hope we have a FAITH in Christ that MAJORS on HIS MAJORS....

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6.8

We FRET Away hours taking PICTURES of Food, Facial Expression, Physique
 Champion GAMERS or Internet SEARCHERS or SHOPPING QUEENS
 Internet is GREAT TOOL > Must NOT become our MASTER

v. 24 You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

Were So FEARFUL of Swallowing an UNCLEAN Gnat in TEA Cup
 But Ignore BIGGEST Unclean Animal in Palestine – CAMEL

Religious Leaders were busy with SILLINESS, Jesus was Deadly SERIOUS

Jesus was FOCUSED like a LASER on Fulfilling the WORK of His Father

He was Not HIDING – Out in the Open, Teaching in Temple – Clearly Seen

Before giving himself up as a sacrifice, He desired to draw the attention of the whole Jewish nation to Himself. The Lamb of God was about to be slain. The great sin offering was about to be killed....The wisdom of God so ordered events that a denial was impossible. Whatever people may think of the doctrine of Christ's atoning death, they never can deny the fact that he died. Publicly he rode into Jerusalem, publicly he was seen and heard in the city, publicly he was brought before the high priest and Pilate to be condemned, publicly he was led to calvary and nailed to the cross. J.C. Ryle

d. Purity of the King Polluted

Pharisees debated Kosher Kitchen > Devised Many Complex Rules

METICULOUS Social Rules governed Dinner Behavior of HOSTS & GUESTS

ACCEPTING Invitation into HOME > Submit to Expected SOCIAL Customs

“The food or drink inside a vessel might have been obtained by cheating or extortion or theft; it might be luxurious and gluttonous; that did not matter, so long as the vessel itself was ceremonially clean.” William Barclay

vs. 25-26 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

Today we Church-Going People > can focus on Keeping up Appearances

Make SEPARATION between PRIVATE and PUBLIC Life

ALL we DO is Laid Bare before SOVEREIGN GAZE of God, Nothing Hidden

Sees Money we Put in COLLECTION – and Money we KEEP Back

Knows us When we are IN CHURCH – and Wherever our Feet Find us Week

Hears us Lift Up our Praises and Prayers – and Whatever Else leaves our lips

Pharisees CLEAN HANDS & Proper TITHE, Best SEATS in SYNAGOGUE

CLOSER Sat to FRONT – More Righteous – Some EVEN FACED Others

There were NO BACK ROW BAPTISTS in the SYNAGOGUE!

- I am a hypocrite when I crave for people to notice my spiritual accomplishments.

If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself. Dwight L. Moody

5th Woe leads naturally to 6th > Outwardly Polished Cup > Whitewashed Tombs

vs. 27,28 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

Passover Week > Jewish Practice to Whitewash Tombs month Before
 So Faithful Pilgrims Not Accidently Defile Themselves on way to Jerusalem
 Dare Not touch a Place where Bodies of the Dead were Buried > UNCLEAN
 LAW > Anyone who TOUCHED a GRAVE – UNCLEAN for 7 Days
 Pharisees > If JUST your SHADOW touched CORPSE you were UNCLEAN
 Could NOT PARTICIPATE in Feast and Celebration if they were Unclean

True CORRUPTING Influence was PHARISEES Themselves

Anyone who Contact w/ Them – Follows TEACHING - Spiritually DEFILED

All of us inevitably communicate what we are. We can externally do all the right religious things...but we will ultimately impart what is within. The people around us will see the artificiality, the affectedness, the elitism, the anger, the hostility, the hatred, the suspicion, the sourness, the inner blasphemies. We leave our finger prints on each other's souls, for Christ or unbelief. Kent Hughes

No CONCERN for INWARD Corruption focused only OUTWARD Ceremony

Leaders of REFORMATION > Church must be ALWAYS REFORMING!

PROCESS does not END until BRIDEGROOM comes to take His BRIDE

HOW Dearly do we HOLD Social Customs – Political Views – Opinions?

Are we OFFENDED when people Violate OUR CODE of CONDUCT?

If we are troubled by our equally polluted lives, we will flee to the cross of Christ where alone a true cleansing from sin may be found. James Boice

e. Prophets of the King Murdered

vs. 29-32 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.

7th Woe > Climax and the Most Damning Accusation

Pharisees: True Sons of Ancestral Fathers who killed Prophets God Sent Them
 Jesus MORE than PROPHET > HE is GOD who SENT the Prophet, Sends More
 They Claim they would NEVER kill Prophets

Just as we're sure we'd Never have cried out Crucify Him, Crucify Him!

vs. 33-35 You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and a scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

Early Gospel Preachers were Flogged, Pursued, and Killed

Read about PHARISEE, may have Heard Jesus, SAUL of Tarsus

Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem... Acts 8.1

First MARTYR Deacon STEPHEN > SAUL Organized the ROCK CONCERT

IN 1st book Scriptures – Abel in GENESIS, Final - Zechariah in 2 Chronicles

Last Book of Hebrew Bible > CANON of Sacred Hebrew Scripture COMPLETE

Jesus: "...and Scripture cannot be broken" John 10.35

KILLING JESUS was ALSO to Kill ALL Prophets who TOLD about HIM
 CRIMES committed by FATHERS FOLLOWED by SONS > Kill APOSTLES
 They kill the prophets, you make sure they are dead. T.W. Manson

v. 36 Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Thru this Chapt FOCUS on Religious Leaders – Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees
 LEADERS Represent the PEOPLE > God gives people Leaders they DESERVE
 COMPROMISING Leaders were PLEASING these CORRUPT PEOPLE
 They were SERVING Up the Message of Excuses they WANTED to HEAR
 Just as Millennial PREACHERS Today tell Homosexuals Everything will be OK

Instead of BRINGING them TRUTH > they BLOCKED the Way to TRUTH
 PLANNING to CRUCIFY the very KEY to God's TRUTH > Way, Truth, Life

Are WE CLEAR about the SIMPLE, SAVING Gospel of Jesus?

DO We speak about CHURCH BUSINESS before the NEW LIFE?

DO We ADD Works as a BASIS of TRULY KNOWING God?

DO We Focus on OUTWARD Rituals, Not INWARD Relationship with God?

DO We STUDY Bible MORE than we LET the BIBLE STUDY US?

DO We CONFUSE Christianity with OUR POLITICS?

SAD Part is Pharisees THOUGHT they were DOING RIGHT

PROBLEM > Moved FURTHER and FURTHER from WORD of GOD

Archaeologist Howard Carter - found tomb of King Tutankhamen in EGYPT

Opened CASKET - ANOTHER INSIDE - covered with gold leaf > 4 Caskets

Third - Fourth - MADE OF PURE GOLD

Body in 4th - Wrapped in Gold Cloth with Gold Face Mask

BODY - unwrapped LEATHERY AND SHRIVELED

Beauty on Exterior does not change the Rottenness of Interior

2. Invitation of the Savior

FINAL Public Words to Nation of Israel, Citizens of JERUSALEM

His Judgments on Israel's Leaders were Spoken More with Tears than Wrath

vs. 37-38 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate."

Jesus' Final Lament and Prophecy > Condemnation with Deep COMPASSION

These Leaders may INDEED be Going to HELL and Taking OTHERS...

"Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?... Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."
Ezekiel 18.23,31,32

Jesus DECLARED and DISPLAYED the TENDER CARE of God

PROTECTOR & PROVIDER – Gives his LIFE for SALVATION of His People

Jesus Woes NOT just Personal FRUSTRATION > DIVINE Judgment

He is the GOD who SENT and WILL SEND More PROPHETS

WOES are not ABSTRACTIONS > Real PEOPLE are going to be JUDGED

Jesus: "you refuse to come to me that you may have life" John 5.40

DIVINE WRATH going to FALL on Real City > GOD'S OWN CITY // House

Jesus is GOD who CAN PROTECT His People from WRATH

HE will BEAR its Full FURY for those who COME to Him in TRUSTING Faith

v. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Jesus is the GOD-MAN that we will SEE on that FINAL, GLORIOUS DAY

Jesus left the NATION with PROMISE – He WILL Return – as KING!

Psalm 118 Great MESSIANIC Psalm > Quoted many times in HOLY Week

NOT Enter Jerusalem to CLAIM Kingship, ALREADY IS King

Jesus restored to CROWN after CROSS – Can see Crown even before Cross

If REFUSE to have JESUS DIE for their Sins > will DIE FOR THEIR OWN SOVEREIGN Gaze – 40 or so years to Future > City DESTROYED by Romans

JESUS - As GOD (future knowledge) and as MAN (real tears)

IRONY Jerusalem = CITY OF PEACE - did not know what brings PEACE REJECTED PRINCE OF PEACE – EMMANUEL – SO God NOT with Them

IGNORANCE WAS NO EXCUSE - THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN

2,000 YEARS OF SACRED HISTORY FULFILLED IN THIS MAN

DO YOU KNOW WHAT WOULD BRING You PEACE?

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THE TIME OF GOD'S COMING TO YOU?

SHOULD have BEEN an 8th WOE here, spoken by GUILTY Leaders, Me, You

“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”
Isaiah 6.5

Woe is me, Lord, for I am the heartless legalist, I am the hateful rebel who hinders people from coming to Christ. God, save me by the cross where my sins sent Jesus to die.
Philip Ryken

The way to clean up a dirty vocabulary is not to brush your teeth but to cleanse your heart.
Warren Wiersbe

FIRST thing we MUST Give God is INSIDE > Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength
THEN – only then – Do OTHER GIFTS become ACCEPTABLE to Him
HYPOCRITE Hopes NO ONE will FIND OUT True Condition of HEART
HUMBLE Christian CRIES about the DARKNESS in their Heart...

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?
"I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."
Jeremiah 17.9,10

HYPOCRITE is EAGER for MORE RECOGNITION

HUMBLE Christian EAGER to EXALT Jesus – Only HE is WORTHY!
Hypocrite DEMANDS Praise / Humble Christian DEFLECTS Praise to Jesus

EVEN WITHOUT God we can LOOK GOOD > For AWHILE, to PUBLIC
Work Harder – Live Better – Smile More – Swear Less – Stop Drinking
ONLY GOD can change OUR HEARTS > NEW Heart to TRULY Love

Powerful Gospel of Jesus Christ, Working in Heart, Only Remedy for Hypocrisy

GOSPEL changes OUR PRIORITIES > FIRST is to LOVE GOD with our ALL
ONLY when you have TRULY LOVED God can you TRULY Love Neighbor
Only when God gives you NEW HEART can you give it BACK to HIM

I offer you my heart, Lord, promptly and sincerely. John Calvin

Matthew 23.¹³ “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.¹⁶ “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’¹⁷ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?¹⁸ And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’¹⁹ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?²⁰ So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.²¹ And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it.²² And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.²³ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.²⁴ You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.²⁷ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.²⁹ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous,³⁰ saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’³¹ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.³² Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.³³ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?³⁴ Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and a scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town,³⁵ so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.³⁶ Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.³⁷ “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!³⁸ See, your house is left to you desolate.³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”