

Sermon Notes – May 19, 2019

Review:

- ⇒ Remember Matthew's target audience appears to be a primarily Jewish one as evidenced by his frequent quotations from Hebrew Scripture (the OT) and his use of the much-anticipated "Kingdom" story line.
- ⇒ Matthew's gospel has been filled with hostile encounters between Jewish religious leaders (i.e. Pharisees, Scribes, Priests, etc.) and Jesus. Time and time again, these religious leaders attempt and fail to discredit, shame, and displace Jesus.
- ⇒ In our last sermon on Matthew, we heard Jesus compare His Kingdom to a wedding feast where all are invited but many reject His gracious invitation because they are too busy with the wrong things—because they had wrong priorities.

Today's Text: Matthew 23:1-39

Today's text continues Jesus' ongoing conflict with the religious leaders of His own people. There is no doubt that these interactions disturbed Jesus as their hard hearts persisted, unbending in their will to reject and ultimately, destroy Him. Today's chapter introduces the climactic ending to Jesus' conflict with these leaders, as we will see Him 1) warn others from repeating their behavior and 2) pronounce judgment on them.

A Solemn Warning (vv. 1-12)

- ⇒ Notice who Jesus is addressing in verse 1: the _____ and His _____. This indicates that Jesus' emphasis here is less about denouncing the scribes and Pharisees and more about _____ His followers concerning their conduct.
- ⇒ What was so bad about their conduct? It was _____.
- ⇒ The Pharisees and scribes worked hard to keep up their _____ in accordance with their own teaching and rules. Their motive, "to be seen by others" (v.5), reveals the worthlessness and hypocrisy of their pursuit.

- ⇒ Jesus makes a distinction between the false and _____ exaltation that comes from the world, and the true and _____ exaltation that comes from God Himself. In His Kingdom, the King will exalt those who served genuinely—with no regard for _____ - _____.

A Solemn Judgment (vv. 13-39)

- ⇒ The word "woe" is used by Jesus here to express BOTH _____ and _____. Jesus is not being malicious but appropriately judicial. He does not rejoice over this judgment. (Cf. Ezek. 18:32; 33:11)
 - (vv. 13-15) Jesus condemns _____ passion.
 - (vv. 16-24) Jesus condemns "majoring in the _____."*
 - (vv. 25-28) Jesus condemns _____ a wicked heart.
 - (vv. 29-39) Jesus condemns _____.
- ⇒ Ultimately, the worst failure of the Pharisees and scribes was their deliberate _____ of Jesus as the Messiah.
- ⇒ It is entirely possible to live a life filled with all kinds of Christian behaviors and yet never know Christ. Matthew 23 screams: DON'T DO THAT!

Responding to God's Word:

- ⇒ Jesus' question to the Pharisees in the preceding chapter is one that we all must answer. He asks, "What do you think about the Christ?" Your response to this question will determine your eternal destiny. (Cf. Romans 10:9-10)
- ⇒ For Christians, external religion is not an indicator to the world that we follow Jesus. Nor are things like tithing or attending church our *primary* concern. We do not neglect these practices, but we prioritize the "weightier matters" (v.23) of loving God and loving people. (Cf. Matt. 22:37-40)
- ⇒ We will always face temptation to pursue the praise of men. Remember and sing the words, "Riches I heed not, nor man's *empty* praise, Thou mine inheritance, now and always, Thou and Thou only, first in my heart..."

*Reference: "Preaching the Word: Matthew" by Douglas Sean O'Donnell

Next Sunday: May 26, 2019

"Stay Awake! The Son of Man is Coming!"

(Matthew 24:1-51)

Pastor Jay Mosser

Answer Key: • crowds • disciples • warning • hypocritical • appearances • meaningless • valuable • self-interest • condemnation • compassion • misplaced • minors • masking • unbelief • rejection