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Matthew 23

1. Diagnosis (1-12)



Matthew 23

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ² “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, ³ so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. ⁴ They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. ⁵ They do all their deeds to be seen by others.

Matthew 23

⁵ For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶ and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues ⁷ and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.

Matthew 23

⁸ But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹ And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰ Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. ¹¹ The greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Matthew 23

1. Diagnosis (1-12)

2. The Cause (13-15)



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.

Matthew 23

1. Diagnosis (1-12)
2. The Cause (13-15)
- 3. The Prognosis (16-36)**



Matthew 23

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.

Matthew 23

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.

Matthew 23

1. Diagnosis (1-12)
2. The Cause (13-15)
3. The Prognosis (16-36)
- 4. The Cure (37-29)**



Matthew 23

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.’ ”

Matthew 23

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- b. You will be tempted to disguise and dress up your backstage death.
- c. Jesus has better for you.
- d. Begin by entering in!**

Matthew 23 Reflection Exercise

1. Look at your front stage. What are the “trappings” of the front stage in your life? Jesus gives clear direction to his followers about what he desires on the front stage of leadership (Matthew 23:8-12). He provides this in stark contrast to the leaders of his day (Matthew 23:1-7). Spend a few minutes reviewing these verses (verses 1-12). Ask God to give insight and to show you what he sees on your front stage. Invite God to direct and shape the front stage of ministry. Record your prayer along with what God shows you.

Matthew 23 Reflection Exercise

2. Look at your backstage. Is your inner person characterized by life or death, authenticity, or self-indulgence? Review your backstage considering Matthew 23:25-28. Jesus invites you to “enter in” and to receive cleansing and renewal. Record what God shows you.

Matthew 23 Reflection Exercise

3. Pray about entering in. Jesus teaches that life is not ultimately found on the front stage, but in the hidden spaces behind the curtain. How would you like to respond to Jesus' invitation to come backstage to receive his care? What are some next steps the Holy Spirit is leading you to take? Remember, Jesus protects you and cares for you; he invites you to "enter in" to his kingdom and his grace. Record your next steps.