

## Intro or segue from last week...

## Verses 1-7

- The **disciples** that accompanied Jesus, and the **crowds** that gathered around Him had witnessed the heavy weight bout
  - Jesus had very easily handed the **religious leaders** a defeat as they sought to **trap** Him in saying something detrimental by challenging Him on issues of **politics**, the **Bible**, and **morality**
  - Since they ended up being discredited in front of everyone, Jesus is lovingly telling the **crowds** how to view them now (they had been, and were the **authorities**) (upset Israel's equilibrium)
- In doing so, Jesus exposes them radically
  - He had given them every chance to repent from their course and humble themselves and acknowledge the truth
  - Refusing to do so, Jesus will now **humiliate** them by telling the truth about them (could be us)
- Verses 2-3a = **The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you.** (Affirms their work in part)
  - The work of helping people understand the *Torah* and how to observe (keep) it
  - (obviously they missed the mark sometimes (Cf. Mt 15:3-6), but Jesus is speaking in generalities)
- Verse 3b = **But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach**
  - **Hypocrisy** (recurring theme in chapter—we'll define it later)
  - Verse 4
    - Making obeying God's law arduous and complicated (they had work-arounds)
    - Jesus in **Matthew 11:28-30**, NASB
  - Verses 5-7
    - **Phylacteries** = little leather boxes containing Scripture worn during prayer times
      - **Deuteronomy 6:1-9**, NASB
      - Photo
      - **They make their phylacteries wide** = bigger to denote better (be seen)
    - **Tassels** = little strands of material hanging from the corners of their garments
      - **Numbers 15:37-41**, NASB
      - Visual aids to help them **remember to obey all His commands**
      - **Long** = to denote better (be seen)
    - **They love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogue**
      - **Important seats in synagogue** = facing the people near the wooden platform
    - **Greeted with respect and called "Rabbi" by others**
      - **They loved the admiration and praises of people (feeling important)**
      - We all do... but they used devices that were meant to draw attention to God and His truth to draw attention to themselves and their piety
        - = A temptation for religious people: Cf. **Matthew 6:1**, NASB (motivations)
        - Jesus expects us to bring glory to God, not to our selves (**Matt 5:16**, NASB)

## Verses 8-12

- "**But you are not...**" = adversative force (Jesus does not want His followers to be like them)
  - **Course correction:** Don't make the goal being praised by people—make the goal praising God
- **Rabbi, father, instructor** as titles of exaltation and superiority that are desired by the proud
  - The emphasis of exaltation is to be on Jesus
- **Serving others** as opposed to exalting self and seeking to be served is the way and the goal (Jesus; Cross)
  - **Humble yourself** or God will do it for you

## The religious leaders had not humbled themselves so now Jesus is going to do it for them (serious and sad)

- Let's not make it only about them (or others!)
- Let's try to discern anything in these "**woes**" that might be a helpful rebuke or warning for us

**Woe** = A`n expression of pity and compassion, and a warning of trouble someone is in if they persist in their course

- Does not denote any gladness in the person's fate, but rather sadness, and a desire for a diff. outcome
- Recurring theme = **Hypocrisy** (i.e. playing a part) (Means that Jesus believed them to be insincere)
  - That they did what they did **for its effect** on those who observed them, not because deep down they believed it to be the right thing to do<sup>1</sup> (to be seen as good, not actually do good)
- The **seven woes** = a study in missing the point!

### **Woe 1 & 2 are for the wrong direction (v. 13-15)<sup>2</sup>**

- v. 13 = Opposing Jesus' work of announcing and bringing the kingdom (should have known better)
- v. 15 = **Child of hell** = relying on own righteousness as opposed to what God has provided in Christ

### **Woe 3 is for the wrong affections (vv. 16-22)**

- **Swearing** on something as a practice of the day; on most solemn/important (Cf. "on my mother's grave")
- Jesus is pointing out the fact that overall, they value the wrong things (human things, not God things)
  - The **gold** versus the **temple**; the **gift** versus the **altar**; **what man provided versus what God provided**
- **Philippians 3:7-10**, NASB

### **Woe 4 is for the wrong conclusions (vv. 23-24)**

- Gave very careful attention to small details of keeping the mosaic law (Cf. the letter of the law)
- Gave no attention to the big ideas, main point of the law (Cf. the spirit of the law)
- God expected both—**but it is easier to do menial things than love unlovable people and serve others**
- Missing the point; Tangibles versus intangibles (**Colossians 3:12-14**, NASB)

### **Woe 5 & 6 are for the wrong emphasis (vv. 25-28)**

- They put effort into external observances and appearances but ignored the inward reality (heart)
- **Right emphasis:** **Psalms 119:80**, NASB
- **Problem:** **Mark 7:20-23**, NASB; **Solution:** **Jeremiah 31:33**; **Ezekiel 36:25-27**, NASB; **Prayer:** **Psalms 139:23-24**, NIV

### **Woe 7 is for the wrong assessment (vv. 29-33)**

- Their assessment of themselves was better than their assessment of others ; or self-assessed as better
  - **Galatians 6:1-5**, NIV
  - Our need to compare = identity issue (beloved)
  - Our sin always looks worse on others and blinds us to our own
- **Jesus says they are actually just like those they were accusing of being bad** (**descendants of those**)
  - It would be proven in the years to come (Cf. the Book of Acts) (**verse 34**)

### **After the warnings (and their refusal to heed them), Jesus pronounces judgment (verses 35-36)**

- **Abel** = first innocent killed (Genesis); **Zechariah** was killed in 2 Chronicles (last book of the Hebrew Bible)
- They were culpable for the whole revelation of God in their rejection of Jesus (**Hebrews 1:1-3a**, NIV)

### **After pronouncing judgment, Jesus expresses regret that they had not responded to His love (verses 37-39)**

- Last sentence (v. 39) is a reference to the Second Coming (to judge and restore all things)
- Jesus had come to them to forgive and heal them (**seek and save**) – they refused...
- Where is Jesus looking to "**gather** you under His **wings**" of love? Where are you **unwilling**?
- Do you see places where "**your house is being left desolate**" because of your refusal to come under the loving authority of Jesus?

### **Last Thing (Don't miss this fact...)**

- Jesus had wanted to gather and care for the rebellious in Jerusalem, even in the midst of their rebellion
- Jesus loves sinful rebels... like you
- He wants you to know His love, forgiveness and care (waits on high to have compassion on you)
- Don't run from Him in your sin and guilt, run to Him in humility and repentance (**Isaiah 1:18**)

<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 579.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 14 is omitted in the NIV since it is not found in the earliest manuscripts. It echoes what Jesus said in **Mark 12:40**, **Luke 20:47**—i.e. taking advantage of the vulnerable and saying prayers to be noticed by people.