

Matthew 23:13-39 | Kent Stiles

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[0 : 00] This is about, we've got some holidays coming up with Memorial Day and July 4th.! And I'll tell you, this is for me the start of when I dislike all of my friends that are school teachers.

So, if you're a school teacher here today, my brother is a school teacher. Well, he's not really a teacher, he's a PE coach. As he says, he gets paid to play games. So, he's the only teacher I know that's actually honest about his job.

Everybody else puts in 10-12 hours a day. I haven't seen my brother-in-law grade a paper in the 15 years I've known him. So, at any rate, I'm jealous for about three months. But then, conversely, I feel very euphoric come mid-August when he's got that gut-wrenching pain in his stomach that I felt for many years when I was a student because he has to go back.

Turn with me, if you would, in your Bibles to the book of Matthew. We're going to continue taking a look at Matthew's Gospel account. We're looking at chapter 23 today.

Before I came up here, I looked online just to be curious and I saw that there was one person watching on YouTube. So, I'm going to make the assumption that Jeffrey and Teresa and Brad Nanner huddled around one TV and this message is making its way to Mexico.

[1 : 34] Because what else would you do when it's 89 degrees and sunny? All you can eat and drink and you have a beach. You'd probably be watching this message. So, guys, my first international message that I know of.

So, with that being said, Matthew chapter 23, we're going to do a little bit of overlap on what Jeffrey talked about a few weeks ago as he entered into 23.

It just really flows together. And I think without doing that, it would make sense, but I think it works together a little bit better. Of all the topics that you guys would come to hear today, probably want to be really encouraged by just the, you know, goodness of God, which is true.

You want to be encouraged by just being a light in a lost world. And that's true. And so, what I'm going to do is we're going to encourage this morning with just a message on hypocrisy.

So, if you're wanting to hear about how to be a hypocrite, today is your day. The good thing about that, though, is that, well, with hypocrisy, you might think to yourself, you know what, I might stay away from that message.

[2 : 42] That one might not be for me. But the Bible says we have to endure sound doctrine and that teaching of the word is not always pleasant, but it's necessary. It's beneficial. It's sometimes you have to do something that you can endure.

And so, think about when you were a kid and you had that plate of food in front of you and had those green things on there that you called vegetables. And your parents said, you know what, you may not like it, but you're going to eat it and it's good for you.

You go to the doctor, they give you that shot, may not feel good, but they say, you know what, it's good for you. Maybe, maybe, possibly. That's what we're looking at today.

So, there's a little scouring that we all need. And incidentally, the good thing is this message, I will give the caveat. It won't be a problem if you've never sinned. So, if that's the case, you're good to go.

You have no problem whatsoever. But if you happen to be human, then that causes us to have the need to look at hypocrisy. And I think hypocrisy is not something that's just a sin, meaning it's not something that we tend to look at that's something that's just indulging or yielding to or a vice or something to that effect.

[3 : 47] Hypocrisy, oftentimes, it has far-reaching consequences. And because it's not just sinning or indulging in sin, it also includes covering up that sin.

And we'll talk a little bit about that. Going beyond that, it's not just covering it up, but it's covering up sin with a mask of righteousness.

It's essentially imitating what you aren't to escape that which you are. Hypocrisy, as a matter of fact, the very word hypocrisy comes from hypocrisis, and it means to speak from under or speak out from under.

And so in the Greek theater, they would use masks, and the actors would be called hypocrites. And it's the idea that he or she was speaking out from underneath a mask.

And it's the word that's used for a religious phony. And so hypocrisy, somehow, it harms in a wider area than just sin, because when sin occurs, you see it.

[4 : 51] It's visual. But with hypocrisy, it kind of lingers, because oftentimes, it's undetected. And once it's detected, you tend to be discredited.

And so it's not just that you say that that's a sinner, but you discredit God with what you've done.

And so the question is, I don't know for you guys, how many times have you heard this phrase that, I don't go to church because of all the hypocrisy.

Or I just feel like that's a place of hypocrites. That you discredit God in your hypocrisy. And all those around you get infected by it.

Whereas a lot of sins, people aren't harmed by it, but you just see it. But in hypocrisy, you think about the kid that sees the parents, and they act one way during the week, and they look somewhere different on Sunday.

And that person never wants to set foot in a church. Or the coworker that sees his or her coworker say one thing, do another. And they never want to have any interest in the things of God.

[5 : 56] And you tend to discredit God whenever you see this. And so a hypocrite that goes untouched, in a way it's kind of like typhoid Mary, that knows that she's got it, but never deals with it and just infects those that are around her.

Or like someone who has AIDS, and knowing he has it, but he continues in undisclosed relations and takes that person down with them.

And that's hypocrisy. It's infectious. And what we're going to see this morning is that Jesus is going to incinerate it. He's put up with it for the last three years of his ministry, and now it's time for him to speak out.

So with that being said, let's go ahead and open up in a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you for this day. Thank you for the beautiful weather, Lord. Thank you for your creation. Lord, thank you for your goodness to us, and thank you for each one that's here.

We pray that you would open our eyes and ears as we look at your word. We thank you, Lord. We pray for those that aren't with us this morning, that you would watch over them. Lord, just bless this next 30 or so minutes.

[7 : 04] As we look at this text in Matthew 23, we ask this in your name. Amen. So this morning, what I'm really going to do is just give you a survey.

Not a questionnaire, but like a survey, meaning a review. Of the text with you. And what we're going to do is we're going to look at the whole text again of Matthew 23. And I'm going to let you go home and just take notes so that you can feel bad in private.

You don't have to feel bad in public. And so I'll just survey the text, and there's only four parts to it. It's a really, by all accounts, it's a simple text. There's really no theological problems with the text. There's no deep discernment that comes along with it. No doctrines, so to speak. And it's one of those texts that you know what it means just by the fact of reading it.

Sometimes I like that. The simplicity of the text speaks out. So with that being said, if you want to take a note, you can. By no means are you required to. But in verse 1 through 7, we're going to be looking at the term of instruction.

[8 : 09] And that what we're going to see here is that Christ, he's not going to speak to the hypocrite directly at first, the Pharisee. He's going to speak rather to the disciple, to his people, as to how they are to behold this hypocrisy.

And so that rather than taking on the hypocrite and how he should see it, he talks to you and I and explains to us how we should see it. What things are out there for us to visualize.

So with that being said, he says in verse 2, the scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses. Now the chair of Moses was literally or a literal place in every synagogue.

And that was the place of authority of biblical interpretation. And so he says that they have seated themselves in the place of biblical authority. Therefore, all that they tell you to do and observe, but don't do according to their deeds.

So in other words, he says here, don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. Meaning, don't throw out the Bible because of these guys. When they, what they tell you is, in some cases a lot of what is accurate is true.

[9 : 21] But you need to distinguish between what they tell you and who they are. So in essence, do it if it's, if it lines up with the Lord, but don't imitate them.

And in verse 4, he says three things about them. He goes into more detail regarding them. Number one, he says they're hypocritical. They tie up heavy burdens and they lay them on man's shoulders. And that was talking about their, excuse me, interpretation as to how the law of God was to be carried out. That they would give you this big list of legalistic rules.

They tie this heavy burden on man. But in verse 4, it says they themselves are unwilling to lift them with such a finger. So much as a finger.

So they don't do it themselves, but they want you to do it. And in verse 5, it says they're proud. They do their deeds to be noticed by men.

[10 : 23] They broaden their phylacteries. And a phylactery, what that is, it's a wooden box that you would tie to your head or your neck. And you would carry Bible verses in it.

And the book of Deuteronomy says that this law of the Lord shall be on your head and your hand. And it shall be on your heart and it shall be on your head. And that was a spiritual meaning. That it'll guide your thinking.

Your walking. It'll guide your actions. And so they took it literally. And they would take verses. And they would write them down. And they would put them in this box.

And they would tie them to your head. And they had this rule that it couldn't be wider than, say, I believe it was four fingers wide. Otherwise, it would keep you from seeing the law. And so he said, you broaden your phylacteries.

Meaning you want everybody to know how great of a biblical scholar that you are. It's all about show. He goes on to say that you lengthen your tassels.

[11 : 24] And what that means is in Numbers chapter 10, it talks about or it says that every Jewish man, that they had four of these blue tassels that they would wear on their garment. And that was no matter where he would turn or where he would go, he was to be conscious of the holiness of God.

And it was always to remind you in everything that you did of the law of God and of the holiness of God. And so whenever you saw another Jewish man, you saw the law of God and how you were to treat him, how you were to interact with him.

So it was a standard. It was a divine mandate of the absolute. And yet it says they would lengthen their tassels and they would broaden their phylacteries. And the purpose for this was just to be seen by men.

But they missed the purpose of it. Okay. So not only are they inconsistent and proud, but in verse 6, it says that they're vain.

So we're going through these characteristic traits of these hypocrites. It says that they love the chief seats in the synagogues, the respectful greetings in the marketplace and being called rabbi.

[12 : 38] It says that they're vain. That they're falsely ambitious for spiritual notoriety. So he says to you, he says, men, you Christians, you observe this.

You notice this. This is not what you want. This is not what we want to see someone who is in leadership. It's inconsistent.

It's arrogant. It's ambitious. It's vain. It's superficial. And rather, what we're going to see, so he has this indictment.

And then in verse 8 through 12, we're going to consider the correction. So we've identified what this looks like. So what should it be like?

Oftentimes, you think about this is what it is. What would be ideal state, so to speak? And so you consider this term correction, that the disciples are going to begin to brand a brand, a new tradition of religious leadership, that we're about to have a changing of the guard here.

[13 : 43] And in verse 8, he says to them, instead of this high and lofty place here, that you're predominant, that you are seen as being important.

On the contrary, you're nothing. He says, don't be called rabbi, for only one is your teacher. You're all brothers or equals. Don't call anyone on earth your father, for only one is your father, he who is in heaven.

Don't be called leaders, for only one is your leader, and that is Christ. And the idea is this, don't be looking for religious leadership so that you can have all these perks for people calling you these titles, because you're all the same.

It is God that is great. He is the only one. Paul said in Corinthians 3 that, I planted a palace water, God caused the growth, so then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

Well, he goes on here in chapter 11, he says, but servants of a great master, the greatest among you shall be your servant.

[14:59] Paul said to the Corinthians, let a man regard us in this manner as servants of God and as stewards of the mysteries of Christ. That we're responsible for the word, that we are accountable to the almighty, that we are servants.

And that's in stark contrast to what we see five, six verses ago. You have guys who are being hypocritical, guys who want attention, guys who want titles. What's the total opposite of that? Someone who's a servant. So Christ says that's who you are. You serve a great master. You're all equals. Don't be looking for vain ambition. And then he goes ahead in verse 12, because if you do, here's who you make as an enemy.

Whenever, whoever exalts himself shall be humbled. Whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

And so that God is opposed to the proud and he gives grace to the humble.

And so Christ says, we're going to have a changing of the guard. We're going to do things altogether different. We're going to go back to square one as to what a leader is. And we're going to get off this idea of this perverse leadership that we've got.

[16:13] And we're going back to servanthood. Scripture tells us that the son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give himself a ransom for many.

And that's our example. And so Christ points out the error of those men. And he says, we're going to begin a brand new era or a brand new tradition and leadership.

So again, first 12 verses, he's talking to his disciples about this situation. Okay.

Now, could they be overheard? I don't know. But what we do know is he turns his attention in verse 13. He turns away from the disciples and now he's going to look directly at the Pharisees and the scribes.

And he issues what I think might be his most harsh statement here in the next 21 or so verses that he did over the three years of his ministry. From verse 13 down to verse 33, what we're going to see is we're going to see eight different woes.

[17:19] And we'll get through these quickly. Just a couple points on each of them. But we're going to go through these eight different woes. Woe unto you because judgment is coming.

Okay. So let's look at these briefly. Verse 13. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees and hypocrites.

You shut off the kingdom of heaven from people because they were refusing Christ and the nation.

And you do not enter in yourselves and you do not allow those who are entering to go in. So if you're, if you're, if you were to write a note here, I think the term you could say is dangerous.

That you're dangerous to the nation. That you not only yourself shut yourself off by refusing

Messiah, but you are contaminating my people. So these people are dangerous.

And he says, woe to you. In verse 14, they're also deceptive. You devour widows' houses. A widow was never to lose her house.

[18:17] It was called in the book of Micah, her pleasant house. And they found ways, what they did here, the Pharisees or the scribes, they found ways to cheat a widow out of her home.

And so they would devour widows' houses, but for the pretense, make these long prayers that would sound great and would make them seem righteous and holy. Standing in the corner and they would orate about how great God is.

But at the same time, as they mouth these prayers, they would devour the homes of a poor widow.

And so he says, you're not only dangerous, but you're deceptive. Woe to you.

In verse 15, you're destructive. You travel around land and sea and you make one proselyte. So a Pharisee, to be a Pharisee once a year, he had to make a convert to convert to Judaism from among a Gentile.

And he said, when he becomes one, you make him twice as much as a son of hell as you are. Because you see, the Jew was meant in Genesis 12, 3, the Bible says of Abraham, he was to be by your seed, shall be the nations be blessed.

[19 : 28] But by these so-called children of Abraham, were the nations now being cursed. You turn him not into a child of God, but into a child of the devil.

And by this neon sign that you say, by this proclamation, we are the people of God. Come listen to us. Come do what we say. Well, fourth in verse 16, not only are they destructive, but it says they're darkened.

That you can't understand truth. That they can't understand the trappings. That they don't understand or know the difference between ritual and reality. He says in verse 16, woe to you, you blind guides, who say whoever swears by the temple.

That's nothing. But whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated. You fools and blind men, which is more important, the gold in the temple, or that temple that's sanctified with the gold.

So what makes the gold in the temple holy is the presence of God in that place, not the gold itself. And you say whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing.

[20 : 42] But whoever swears by the offering that is on it is obligated. So incidentally here, Christ is saying here that religious adornment outside of truth is useless.

So no matter how pretty it is, no matter how impressive it is, no matter how high and glorious it is, if God is not there, it's useless.

And so he says, you men, woe to you, you're darkened. Goes on in verse 18.

Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing. But whoever swears by the offering that is on it is obligated. You blind men, which is more important, the offering or the altar that sanctifies the offering?

Therefore, the one who swears by the altar swears by both the altar and by everything on it. You see, the reason that men could approach God was by the altar by which the sacrifice was offered.

[21 : 48] And if you offer sacrifice in any other way or place than God had designed it, that being by the way and by the truth, by the life, that sacrifice is meaningless because you come to God not by your way, you come to God by his way.

And so God says, here's my presence and this is my propitiation. This is my sacrifice. This is how I'm approached and you missed it.

You missed it. So they're darkened. All you see is the sacrifice on the altar and the gold that's in the temple. You just see the religion and the trappings and you missed the essence and the heart and the holiness of God.

Woe to you, you're darkened. Verse 23, he says, on top of being darkened, they're distracted. For you tithe mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law, justice and mercy and faithfulness.

So they would have these spices and they would lay them out and what they would do is that they would count the individual components of these spices.

[23 : 07] I mean, can you imagine if you're supposed to give, for example, 10% of your fennel seed? You know, most of us would just say, okay, that looks like 10%. There you go.

Maybe we'll give a little more to make sure we're on the heavy side. Now, they would actually separate out every component and make sure it was very precise, not to ensure that the Lord was getting enough, but to make sure that they weren't giving too much.

And yet, he says, on the weightier provisions of justice and mercy and faithfulness, on the love of God and the love of man, you know, really the real substance for which the other stuff is just a shadow, on honoring God, you can't even see that.

He says, you're distracted by religion and you're oblivious to the essence of it. So he says, they're distracted. And then in verse 25, he says, you're dirty.

Verse 25, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you clean the outside of the cup of the dish and they would, you know, before they would eat in Israel, you had to wash your hands kind of like a surgeon.

[24 : 19] If you ever see a surgeon scrub in, it was essentially kind of like that. You had to literally baptize your dishes to make sure they were ceremonially clean and they would eat with clean hands and they would eat upon clean dishes, but they were contemptible in how they obeyed God and how they treated others.

And so he says, the outside of your cup is clean, but inside, you're defiled. And he goes on in verse 26, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish so that the outside may also become clean.

And I think that verse anticipates breaking with law into grace, that if your inside gets cleansed by faith, you don't have to worry anymore about the physical symbol of the dirt on the cup.

So they were dirty. In verse 27, he goes back full circle, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you were like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside appear beautiful, but on the inside, so these tombs that were whitewashed aesthetically were beautiful, but on the inside, they were contained that of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

So you too outwardly appear righteous to people, but inwardly, you're full of lawlessness and hypocrisy. He doesn't hold back with them.

[26 : 01] In verse 29, he goes to the very root of the problem. He says that you're of the demon, that you're demonic. He says you build the tombs for the prophets and you decorate the monuments of the righteous.

And you say, if we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in the shedding of this blood. So in other words, our fathers killed these men and we're adorning their tombs.

Thus, what we're doing is we are distancing ourselves from the acts or the activities of our fathers. And what Jesus said is, no, you're not because I can see your heart. That's one of the things that makes God who he is.

He says, you're opposing me and I am the fulfillment of the prophets. And so he takes the word of our fathers and he says in verse 31, you testify against yourself.

You are sons of those who murdered the prophets. In essence, he says the problem is like father, like son. You know, your descendants before you, your ancestors, they opposed Isaiah.

[27 : 18] They opposed Zephaniah. They opposed Jeremiah and Malachi. And you're exactly like them. You've got the same DNA as they have. They were natural children of the darkness and they hated the word of God.

And you've done the same thing in your opposition of me of whom the prophets and the law spoke. And then in verse 33, he goes further into that statement.

He says, you serpents, you brood of vipers. So can you tell me who is Christ assigning them as being children of you brood of vipers?

Who in the Bible is called the serpent? Satan. He says, no, you're not children or not sons of Israel. You are sons of snakes.

You're sons of snakes. Now you can imagine, incidentally, this message, this will get you killed. Okay? And we're going to see that in just a handful of weeks.

[28 : 24] And that's what happened to Christ. So, dangerous, deceptive, destructive, darkened, distracted, dirty, disgusting, demonic, and doomed.

Verse 33, you're doomed. You will not escape the sentence of hell. God knows you. God sees you. God identifies you. And you will be with your father forever.

You know, remembering that eternity is nothing more than an eternal family reunion. Children of God with the father, with God. Children of the devil with the father, the devil, forever with each other.

They're doomed. Well, the last part in verse 34 through 38, what we're going to look at here this morning just over the next couple minutes, is the prophecy of what is about to come.

So, he talks to the disciples. He calls out the hypocrisy. He tells them how to live. He tells them how to act in leadership. He pivots to the Pharisees and the scribes.

[29 : 32] He's direct. Woe to you. Eight different times. This is what's going to happen. This is who you are. And now, he's going to be talking about what's to come. And in verse 34, that's the book of Acts.

I'm sending you prophets and wise men and scribes. Some you will kill and crucify. Some you will scourge in your synagogues. Who are the prophets and the wise men and the scribes that he's about to send?

You know, men like Peter, men like John, men like James, Matthew, and Bartholomew, and Thomas, and later on, a man like the Apostle Paul. And he says, I'm sending you wise men.

And what you will do is this. Is you will kill them as they did James. You will crucify them as they did Peter. And you will scourge in your synagogues and you will persecute them as they did the Apostle

Paul.

So he is foreshadowing this. He is prophesying this. So he says, you're going to continue to reject these New Testament apostles just like you fill up the measure of your fathers in killing me.

[30 : 39] And just like you did in the past days in putting to death the prophets, you're going to keep going. It's not going to stop. And in verse 35, here's why you'll do it. Because of who you are.

That upon you may fall the guilt of the righteous blood shed on the earth from the blood of the righteous Abel. That was in Genesis 4. The first shedding of blood to the blood of Zechariah, son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

And that's in 2 Chronicles 24. So the end of the Old Testament for the Jew was not really the book of Malachi, but the two books of Chronicles, 1 and 2 Chronicles. It literally chronicled the history of Israel all the way up until the return under Persia, under Ezra, Nehemiah.

And so you went from Galatians to 2 Chronicles, and we see the first person to die in Genesis, Abel, killed by Cain, Genesis 4.

The last martyr to die is Zechariah, the prophet, who was put to death by King Josiah in 2 Chronicles 24. And he states that those righteous men, they died in the lineage and by the activity of evil men.

[31 : 54] Now, the Jew in this day, they would have seen themselves as in the lineage of the righteous. That's how they would have thought of themselves. They went back to Abraham, who went back to Shem, who went back to Noah, who went back to Enoch, back to Seth, who took the place of Abel, back to Adam.

That's how they saw themselves. But Jesus said, no, you're not of that righteous generation. You put to death those men, the people of God. Who you are is you are children of the devil.

You're not of Abel, but rather you're of Cain. You resisted God, and so he makes a hard statement to them that they are not part of God's people, that your heart tells me that you are enemies of God. You look one way on the outside, but the heart tells a different story. And in verse 35, the blood of those men, it says, cries out.

And so now, it's time to pay. And in verse 36, all these things will come on this generation. So there's a balloon payment that's been building.

[33 : 12] And it's about to come. It's about to come due. And that generation is going to be destroyed by the Romans and sent into captivity all over the earth. And it's time for judgment to come.

And so here's what Christ has done. He's prophesied the book of Acts that my people will be resisted. And he's prophesied 70 AD that judgment is about to catch up.

And then in verse 37, he says, this is why I came to deliver you from judgment. The book of Hebrews says this, God, who spoke to the fathers and the prophets in many portions and in many ways in the last day has spoken to us in his son.

Christ was the last word to the nation of Israel calling them to repentance before judgment came. And he said this, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her?

How often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. and you were unwilling. Just imagine that.

[34 : 23] He wants to gather them together. He wants to protect them. They're unwilling and they reject him. And in verse 38, your house, meaning Jerusalem, is being left to you desolate.

The hawk is coming for the chicks. He talked about the book of Acts. He's talked about the rejection of the apostles that's coming. He's talked about the desolation that's about to occur, that your house is being left desolate.

In 70 AD, we know that the Romans destroyed it. They deported the Jew. The house was burned to the ground. Jesus said, not one stone would be left unturned.

And so they're desolated. For the last 20 centuries, he says in verse 39, they're darkened.

You will not see me. And for the last 20 centuries, that nation has been darkened to the Almighty.

You won't see me. But fortunately, as we oftentimes see in Scripture, there's hope.

[35 : 30] In verse 39, until you say in verse 39, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And that statement, that comes from Psalm 118.

It's a statement that would have been said before, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, that Jesus said, someday, you're going to say that again. You're going to call me blessed, and

you're going to look upon me, and you're going to recognize me, and you're going to repent. And when will that happen? Zechariah chapter 12 says, when Israel is surrounded by their enemies, and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for me, as for an only son.

No, he says, you won't see me again until the day that you'll call me your king. And that is what happened, or we're going to see, chapter 24 and 25 coming up, and that's the second coming of Jesus Christ.

So what a gracious and loving God. Even with all of this, we finish with that day will come. If the musicians want to come up, I'm going to circle back, and I want to ask you, can I tell you something about hypocrisy?

[36 : 44] Just make a couple quick statements. Hypocrisy is called by Christ leaven, and we know what leaven is, and we know what leaven represents.

And it says, we need to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, because what happens is it starts small, and it takes over. And so you have to get it early.

I would encourage you, encourage myself, when our, when we notice that our private life is not matching up with our public life, we've got to jump on it early, and beware of the leaven, because it starts out small, but it grows quickly.

Secondly, when you've got hypocrisy, you lose credibility to those that see you. If your kids, if they see us going to church, if they see us acting one way, but in the privacy of your home, if there's a harshness toward your spouse, if there's disrespect, the kids, they see that, and it throws out everything, and because of you, the name of God is blasphemed.

So with hypocrisy, you lose credibility. And third, you lose your boldness. When your private life is an illusion, you really don't feel that you're shod with your feet of readiness that comes with the gospel of peace.

[38 : 08] You're, again, what I mentioned earlier, that phrase, imitating what you aren't to escape what you are. You have no confidence, you have not sought him, and you never feel bold about ministry.

And then fourthly, just really a practical point, is that ultimately, anybody that's here that's a believer today, or when you die, we have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

And that word, when Paul uses it in 2 Corinthians, where he says, we shall appear, it's the word that means the true nature of something will be revealed, or will be seen.

And that's what was in the darkness shall now be brought to light. And we shall appear before the judgment seat, and all things are open, and all things are laid before the Lord. And if that alone doesn't encourage you that your private life ought to match up with your public life, I'm not quite sure what will.

And so I pray this afternoon as we leave here, as we go out into another week, that when people see you, when people see us, that they don't see the exterior cup that he referenced with the Pharisees who look great on the outside, but are filled with death and carnage on the inside, but rather that we've been changed by the blood of Christ.

[39 : 30] I'm going to close with this. There was an older American hymn writer by the name of Lanny Wolf, and he says this. This was a hymn, part of a hymn. It says, It matters so little how much you may own, the places you've been or the places you've known.

It all comes to nothing when placed at his feet. It's nothing to Jesus, just memories to keep. Only one life, so soon it will pass. Only what's done for Christ will last.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your text, Lord. Sometimes these verses aren't the most enjoyable, Lord. Sometimes it's a good checkpoint to say, you know, am I more like the disciple, Lord?

Am I the servant or am I the hypocrite? And Lord, so oftentimes I think I fall into that second category that I have one life at home and another life in front of others, Lord.

And oftentimes I think that, you know, I can fool people, Lord, but the reality is I can't fool you. And you know my heart, Lord, and my prayers that, Lord, you would give me a desire, that you would give each one here a desire, Lord, to live that life in private, that they would live in public, Lord, that would be glorifying and honoring to you being a servant, Lord.

[40 : 45] Lord, we know we're not going to be perfect this side of eternity. Lord, you are sanctifying us, Lord. Thank you for the blood of your Son, Lord, that makes that possible.

We thank you for the word, this morning. We pray that we would go out with boldness, with confidence, with joy. Lord, we ask these things in your Son's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.