

HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH
April 10, 2016 morning service
Matthew 23:13-22

Wonderful, wonderful. The potter's house. Amen. There's a group of girls that'll sit right over here in the second service that's liable to have a running spell when they do that song in the second service. Amen. Thank you, Voices of Mobile. Make sure you stop out there at the product table after this service. We're in Matthew 23. For four weeks we are preaching on hypocrites in the church and we continue today after last Sunday looking at those first twelve verses. We begin today in verse 13 and read through verse 22.

Now Jesus introduced this. Then He gave eight woes. Woe to the scribe, the Pharisee, the hypocrite. Woe to the scribe, the Pharisee, the hypocrite. Eight times. We're going to look at four of them today, four of them next Sunday, and then we'll go to Matthew 7 for that concluding message about hypocrites when He says to take the beam, hypocrite, out of your own eyes so you can see the speck in your brother's eye. That's that passage on judgment, not to judge. We're going to look at that word. In the Greek New Testament it's where we get the word critical. Don't criticize. Hypocrites criticize. You may not want to come week after next because I'm going to preach on a critical spirit. If you've got one, repent and come. If you've got one and you're not going to repent, you might want to stay home that day because I'm going to criticize you when you get here. Alright? Matthew 23, we begin reading this morning in verse 13.

*"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. [Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.] Woe [the third one in verse 15] to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.' You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it."*¹

If you Google hypocrites, you'll find several lists that will pop up. Celebrity hypocrites. John Lennon will often pop up on celebrity hypocrites. Political hypocrites.

¹ Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Hypocrites will pop up. There'll be a long list. Then there'll be Hollywood hypocrites. Then you always find the list of religious hypocrites. Ted Haggard will always be in the top two or three. Preachers that have preached strong against sin and then fallen into pornography or with a prostitute or being unfaithful. The hypocrite is one who preaches one thing and practices another. He or she wears a mask. They're a pretender. They say do this but they never do it. They preach great words, teach, and exhort you but their walk does not match their talk. Jesus said, "Woe to you." Be very careful, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites.

That word Pharisee is very interesting. I don't know if you've ever studied the Pharisees. They came about two centuries before Christ. In Judaism the Hasmonean Empire was rising and when the Hasmonean Empire rose then Greek mindset lifestyle began to enter into Judaism and there came a fatness to the Jews. The Jews who were given to the Decalogue of the Old Testament all of a sudden said, "Well we know what God said but our culture is drifting in this Greek mindset to a liberal, licentiousness," and the Jews were becoming liberal. They were not keeping the law. Sound familiar? We live in a 21st century Hasmonean empire where there is a theology and a philosophy and a moral revolution that has come to America where we're talking about stuff that it will absolutely astound you the things we are talking about and then voting on and having dialogue about. People are moving.

Did you see this week the governor of Florida signed a bill? I didn't realize that it was still against the law until this week. It was against the Florida Statutes until this week for a man and a woman to live together and not be married. You weren't just breaking God's law. You were breaking Florida law. Not anymore. You had to be living in a licentious relationship. That means you were sleeping together but we haven't charged anybody with that in a long time, have we? Keith's an attorney. You've never argued that case in court, have you, Keith?

There is a drift and because of that drift in the second century, the Pharisees, the Jews stood up. The Pharisee means to be separated and the Jews were right. They were the custodians of the kingdom and they said, "We're going to separate ourselves away from this culture and away from that mindset and we are going to stand for truth." On one side you had this liberal drift. Now on the other side you had the Pharisee standing but be very careful that you don't become a Baptist Pharisee in the middle of a Godless culture because it was the Pharisee that Jesus said woe to. They spoke right, they just didn't do right. What did the Pharisee do? Well when hypocrites come in the church as they did in Jesus' day, He says eight things about them but I've only got time for four this morning if I hurry.

Number one, hypocrites in the church, first of all, destroy evangelism. Look at it right in verse 13. You hypocrites, you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people. You don't go in yourself and you don't allow those who are entering to go in. The first thing hypocrisy in the church does is it destroys evangelism. It destroys the door to the kingdom. You don't go in yourself and you don't allow others to go in. Listen to me. Listen. If you're a Bible believer, member of Olive Baptist Church, and yet you're going

out and living like hell, you're teaching one thing on Sunday but living different on Monday, people are watching you and they are saying, "Whatever that Christianity is they've got, I don't want that." And you have shut and locked the door of evangelism in the church because the lifestyle you portray does not live up to the gospel you say you proclaim. When you do, you destroy evangelism. People say, "Oh, preacher, I couldn't come down there. You've got hypocrites in your church."

Well let's lay the ax to the root of that, alright? There are hypocrites in every church. They're everywhere but now let me encourage you, there are hypocrites at Wal-Mart but you keep going. There's hypocrites at Target but you keep going. Dear friend, if you're in here today and you're letting a hypocrite stand between you and God, you're a fool. God'll deal with the hypocrite but you hypocrite be very careful you don't say one thing and do another because you destroy evangelism.

Number two. Verse 14 says not only do hypocrites in the church destroy evangelism, hypocrites in the church abuse power. They abuse power. It says you devour widows' houses. There were widows that died and the Pharisees, you see, they were not just the religious leaders, they were the legal counsel and they could decide inheritance. When the widows' husband died and they had a home, they would devour that home. They would take that home from them and then they would make long prayers. "O Lord Jesus." They could pray, they just couldn't pray down heaven. They prayed up garbage but they couldn't pray down glory. They abused their power.

You be very careful if you're placed in a position of any power. If you're a father, you have children, you be very careful. If you're a deacon in a local Baptist church like Olive, you be very careful. You've been given power. You say, "Well deacons serve." Yes they do but the deacon is a leader, he's in a position of service. Don't abuse that power. Pastors and staff have been placed in positions of power. Be very careful you don't abuse that power because notice what Jesus said. This ought to scare you until your socks run up and down your legs like a window shade. I want you to look at this. You do that and you will receive the greater condemnation. Greater than what? Greater than the regular sinner because to whom much is given, much is required.

Hypocrites in the church. They destroy evangelism, they abuse power, number three, hypocrites in the church poison the fellowship. They poison the fellowship. Look at it in verse 15. Woe to you scribes, you Pharisees, you hypocrites. You'll go around on sea and land. You'll spare no expense traveling and having a crusade to win one to proselytize. That's what we do in the verb to make a proselyte. A proselyte was one that had renounced their godlessness and come to Judaism. Today we would have someone lost come to Christ to be saved. But be very careful because when he becomes a proselyte you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourself. What's he saying? He's saying this. When you get him into your religion, when you get him into your Judaism, for those of us that contextualize us as Christians where Jesus is speaking, when you get him into your Christianity, you turn him into a son of hell rather than a servant of heaven.

How in the world do we do that? Listen. We tell him the gospel and then when he comes in we live a lifestyle that is contrary to scripture and that new believer will follow you because they're not listening to what you say, they're watching how you walk and when you walk in hellish disbelief they will walk in hellish disbelief and you make them twice the son of hell that you are. Woe.

We're meeting tomorrow tonight with the 2025 Vision team. What are we going to do for the next ten years at Olive Baptist Church? In 2015 when we started – I'm telling you, one of the big things we've got to do is we've got to prioritize again with the young culture making disciples. We've got to do a greater job than we've ever done. Do you understand the kind of world that these wonderful young people that are up here, do you understand the kind of world they're going to grow up in if we don't have revival in America? Friend, when we get to 2025, you get nine years down the road from now, ten years down the road from now, I mean if we don't have revival, go twenty years down the road to 2035. In twenty years I possibly could still be alive but I may very well be in heaven, these will be leaders in our church right here. They won't be coming from a college group. They're going to be the minister of music somewhere.

Do you understand what they're going to live in? Friend, we must, we must build into this. And then our grandchildren for those of us that now have young grandkids. Can you imagine then when our grandkids are the age of these wonderful young people standing up here and they're getting ready to go off to college? I'm telling you, if you do not get them rock solid with deep roots into the word of God and the Spirit filled life, I'm here to tell you, they will melt. The church will go away.

We're going to have to learn to stand like Christians have stood in communist China. We're going to have to learn to stand how Christians stood in socialist Russia. We're going to have to stand like people today are standing across Europe where Islam is coming in waves and where they'll take a knife to your throat. I'm telling you, we must learn to stand and if you don't get your feet on a solid rock – we've got to make disciples because if you just make it easy believism, I'm telling you, the day's coming when it gets hot in the persecutorial kitchen and people will quit. People will quit if you make them twice the sons of hell that we become so easy and we poison that fellowship and make no disciples.

Number four. Hypocrites in the church. You do understand these first four things are just the introduction to this sermon. That's why I'm hustling. Hypocrites destroy evangelism, abuse power, they poison the fellowship but fourthly, in this longer text from 16 to 22, hypocrites in the church worship money. Jesus comes here and He says, "You look at the altar in the temple and you look at the gold." He said, "You come and you worship the gold." He said, "No, no, no. Listen, it's the altar that sanctifies the giving." Jesus is not saying don't give. He's going to deal with that next Sunday when He talks about tithing. He deals with it right here and He tells us tithing is what you ought to do but you ought to go beyond it to the weightier matters, but a hypocrite will worship money. It'll become the most important thing in the world.

Hear me. Blind guides can only see gold. They cannot see the glory of God. Blind guides can only see the monetary and the materialistic. They cannot see the majestic of the Lord God. You're sanctified not by what you give, you're sanctified by how you're broken before God. When we get broken before the Lord, then the gold, the material can be used because we've come to the altar in the right way. Give your money to the Lord but, oh my Lord, don't miss the altar of sanctification.

Now I want you to think with me an application of these four things. Do you realize that in the scripture there were some good Pharisees? There were some great Pharisees in the Bible. Nicodemus was one of them. He's the one that got John 3:16 laid on him for the first time. He's the one that the Lord said, "You've got to be born again." The Bible says about Nicodemus, he was a seeker of truth. The 19th chapter of John says that he was a disciple. He was a follower of Christ. A Pharisee that is separated unto God can be a good man.

Secondly we find Joseph of Arimathea. The Bible says that he looked for the kingdom. You remember Joseph. He's the one that came to Jesus when He was crucified. The Bible says about Joseph of Arimathea, he also was a disciple, a follower of Christ. This was a Pharisee. Thirdly we find Gamaliel. Gamaliel was that one that taught. The Bible says that when they brought charges he called for tolerance not to kill Him. He called for tolerance. I'm telling you, Gamaliel was a good Pharisee. Then the Bible says in Luke 13:31 there were unnamed Pharisees, a group of Pharisees that came to Jesus and said, "Be very careful. Herod is trying to kill you." They saw Jesus as a teacher of truth. I believe those unnamed Pharisees saw him as the Messiah and they said to Him, "Jesus, be very, very careful. They're coming after You. Old Herod the Tetrarch is going to try to kill You."

Go read that 13th chapter after verse 31 sometime. Boy Jesus laid some strong truth on them in Luke 13. You know, you can't kill Jesus until He's ready to die and once you kill Him, you can't keep Him dead but timing is everything. He had to die just at the right time, just at the right place because there was a whole book of prophecy that had to be fulfilled.

Here's my question to you today. This is my challenge to Olive Baptist Church. I'm looking – you've never heard this phrase in your life. I've never said it before in my life. I'm looking for some godly Pharisees at Olive Baptist Church. Most people say you don't want any. I'm telling you, I want Pharisees that are godly. What is a godly Pharisee? There were some in scripture. Wouldn't we let Nicodemus join Olive? Wouldn't we let Joseph of Arimathea in? Sure we would. They were Pharisees but they had come to bow at the feet of Christ. I'm telling you, the Pharisees put us to shame on Bible knowledge. How do you become this godly Pharisee and overcome the spirit of the ungodly Pharisee? Five things. I give you these and I'm going to give an invitation.

Number one. If you're going to be a great Pharisee you've got to be separated. Listen to me. The Bible still says come apart and be ye separate, says the Lord.

There's an old godly way in this life and it looks good to this world. It's the craziest world we've ever lived in. You can't even figure out where to go to the bathroom anymore. It's nuts. It's absolutely nuts.

I read a psychiatrist this week who said you should not read to your children. Here was his rationale. He said if you read to children it gives that child an advantage over other children that are not read to. You think I'm making this up. I'm telling you, I read the article. So we can make all the playing field level, you should not read to your children so they can grow up and decide for themselves. Are they a boy or are they a girl? Should they have on a black coat or a white coat? That's easy to figure out. I'm a biology minor at Samford University. I got that before I got to Samford. I got that in 9th grade science class. We didn't even have sex education. We did. We had it down at the IGA where Delton and Jean Traylor lived. Back in the meat market we had chickens and you learn about that. How's that work? I know there's some little people in here today so I'll be very careful.

You see, we've lost our mind. We are in the process of God Himself giving America up to a reprobate mind. You've got to be separate. Come apart and be separate without being a godless Pharisee. Only the Holy Ghost can make that happen.

Number two. Not only have you got to be separate, you've got to be scriptural. Not what man says, not what they taught you in some theology class, what the word of God says. If you're going to overcome the spirit of the Pharisee, you've got to be separated. You've got to be scriptural. Number three, you've got to be spirit filled. Come to the end of yourself and be filled with the Spirit of the living God.

Ya'll remember that sermon I preached here a few weeks ago? It was really good. Their rock is not like Our rock. You remember that out of Deuteronomy 32? I was looking this week in *Christianity Today* on the 50 top Christian books of this year and a guy wrote a book and the title of the book was *Their Rock is Not Like Our Rock*. I said, "He stole my title." But we both stole it from Moses in Deuteronomy 32. You see, you've got to get to the Rock and then you've got to fall on that Rock and you've got to cry out as I did over in my office this morning, those three things I do every Sunday before I ever walk over here that I've told you a hundred times. What I do is I give my hands up to the Lord and I praise Him. Glory be to Holy God. I put my hands out to the side and I say, "Lord, I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Lord, I die to myself." I pray this prayer. I say these words out loud every Sunday. "Lord, I want to be dead to Ted." Then I say, "O Spirit of God, fill me. I receive the unction that you've promised in I John 2:20. O God, fill me and flow through me."

You've got to be separated. You've got to be scriptural. You've got to be spirit filled. Number four, you've got to be a servant. You've got to be a servant. You see, Pharisees didn't serve anybody. You've got to learn that the higher God raises you, the lower you bow. Isn't that what Jesus did? He was the very Son of God and He came to humble Himself and give His life a ransom for me and for you. You've got to be

separate. You've got to be scriptural. You've got to be spirit filled. You've got to be a servant and then there's one last thing. You must be – hear me now. Listen. Everybody listen. Look right here. Listen to me. If you're going to overcome the spirit of the Pharisee, you must be subject to authority. Yes, sir.

You see, the Pharisees became the authority and when you become the authority you've become an ungodly Pharisee but when you get subject to authority – Dr. Rogers used to tell us all the time, Adrian always said, "You are not ready to be over what God has put under you until you are under what God has put over you." Hear me one more time. You are not ready. Daddy, you're not ready to be over what God's put under you which is your children until you are under what God has put over you. That's not just with the authority of God in your life. God puts other authorities in your life. See this group over here that was singing? The authority sits on the front row over here and if he tells Sissy from Alabaster to sing when Nancy from Tuscaloosa wants to, Nancy better get under authority. If you sing in our choir, you're under the authority of Jon Tyner. I have people sometimes say, "Well, you know, they won't let me sing a solo. I'm going to leave." I say, "Well here's three good churches that you might enjoy."

You see, friend, if you won't get subject to the authority God's put in your life, you'll soon raise the spirit of the Pharisee and be the hypocrite. You know what Pharisees do, don't you? They kill Jesus and the spirit of the Pharisee in the local Baptist church kills the spirit of Jesus. Oh yes it does. That's why you've got to get under authority. We don't like to talk about it in our marriages but God set a headship in the home. Gentlemen, you better get under the authority of God so you can lead your home where it needs to go. You say, "Well, I just leave all that spiritual stuff to my wife." What are you going to do if she dies first? You say, "Well I'm just going to come ask you, pastor." I ain't going to help you. You've got to have sense enough to know what to do.

So here's my question. Where you sit right there today, are you under every point of authority that you're supposed to be under? For some of you, that means giving your life to Christ and being saved. For some of you it means getting over yourself and being broken. For some of you it means joining a local church and bringing yourself under the authority of that church.

That group was singing that first or second song and I opened up my hymnal to 550 and I told Dr. Breland, I said, "Look right here. I'd rather have Jesus as men's applause." You know my testimony. That's where God called me to preach. When I got over men's applause, I got ready to get under the authority of God. Let me tell you, I still like men's applause. I've been blessed. I've been cussed. I'd rather be blessed but let me tell you, applause is fickle. They'll applaud you one minute and boo you the next. You ever been to a ballgame and watch that? That old boy's running around there. "Yea!" And then the next play he fumbled it. "I'd have had him out of the game." That's the reason you're sitting home eating popcorn. Fickle. Friend, you do not live for men's applause. You get under the authority of God. The Bible says if you'll humble yourselves God in due time will raise you up. Amen.

Well we're going to go home now. I want you to stop by that table out there in the foyer. I want you to get a bag of that stuff. I want you to come back tonight at 5:30 and I want you to hear these girls give their testimony of how God broke them and they got right with Holy God. You say, "Pastor, I want to join the church." Then come see me when we get done. You say, "I'd like to get saved." Come see me. I'm going to be standing right here. I'm not going to give a come forward invitation in this service. I don't believe you're ready for it but if God's wooed your heart and you say, "Well I really am," then you come see me after this service.

Now, Jon, come right here. I want you to just stay in your seat and while he plays softly this song I want you to don't dare get up. I'm going to throw a rock and hit you if you get up. I have a rock right there. A lady gave me one on the way in today. It's small. I want you to stay right in your seat and I want you to fellowship with two or three people right around. You just tell them how you love them. I want you to fellowship and then I'm going to pray here in a minute and we're going to be gone so just fellowship amongst yourself. You say, "Preacher, that's weird." Just do it. Get under authority and fellowship. Don't get up. Amen. Isn't that good? Now talk to the one you didn't want to talk to. Amen. "Preacher, I need a church." Come see me. "I need to be saved." Come see me after this service. That'll be the way we do it. Now stand up and fellowship with two or three you wanted to go see. Head to the table. I'll see you tonight at 5:30. I love you. Go take off the mask and love Jesus.