

EXTERNALISM: THE WAY OF THE HYPOCRITE
April 17, 2016 morning service
Matthew 23:23-33

Externalism. It's the way of the hypocrite. You see, the Pharisee and the hypocrite, they want to be seen. Look at me. What's outside. For the hypocrite, the external always trumps the internal but when you come to the word of God the Bible says it's the inner man where the renewal is. It's out of the heart that the mouth will speak. It's the internal that we have to deal with. Even Peter in I Peter 3:3 talked about ladies and their husbands saying, "Ladies, remember that adornment is more than external with the braiding of hair and the wearing of jewelry. It is also internal." He says there that is the hidden person of the heart. That's who we have to deal with is the hidden person of the heart.

Today Matthew records the second quartet of woes for the hypocrites. We saw the first four and we come today to the second quartet. There are four more woes about hypocrisy in the church and the masks and the external. My mother, God love her. She asked me months ago, she said, "When you boys go off to the seminary, do they have any classes on what to wear when you preach?" I said, "Well they talk about that a little." She said, "Well why is it in the last few years everybody's wearing baggy blue jeans and they've got their shirttail out and their one sleeve's rolled up?" I said, "Well, mom, that's just cultural style that we go through and that kind of stuff." I said, "You know, man looks on the outside but the Bible said God looks on the inside." She said, "I know my Bible." She said, "I know where God looks but I'm not God and I can't see in there but what I am seeing on the outside is giving me some trouble." Well God doesn't look on the outside first but He looks on the inside. Now God does take a peek at the external but that external is that reflection internally if there's going to be godliness there. The Pharisees that were ungodly hypocrites, they were all about the externals and very light on the internals. That's what these last four woes are about. Listen to the word of God in Matthew 23 verse number 23.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! [What? Hang with me. I'll explain it to you in just a moment. Number two.] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. [Number three.] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. [Then the fourth one.] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our

*fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. [Verse 33.] You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?*¹

My Lord, what a question. What an accusation. Serpents, you bunch of snakes, how are you going to miss hell? Hypocrites. They can plague us. Hypocrisy can eat us alive. Jesus gives four illustrations here and I’ll just enumerate them very quickly today. Number one is the tithe of the hypocrite. Notice He says to them that you tithe the mint, the dill, the cummin, but you’ve neglected the weightier versions of the law, the justice, the mercy, and the faithfulness. They were tithers and he said, “You should do that. You should tithe.” You tithe the mint. You take nine little leaves of mint and you put it over here. One for the Lord. The dill, that little seed. You take nine over here and one for the Lord. Amen. The Talmud in Jewish history records a certain rabbi had a donkey that would not even move to carry a load if he was not told that the load first had the tithe taken out of it.

Let me just say a word to all of you about giving. If you make a thousand dollars you ought to begin giving the Lord \$100. You ought to be a tither. I’m told about 23% of Baptists – we do better than that. This is a giving church but anywhere across America in the church there’ll be less than 40% of its membership would be 10% and above. It’s a great place to start. Some people argue with me and they say, “You know, pastor, in the New Testament you don’t have to tithe.” Well Jesus says right here that they should have and they did. It was a good thing. You can argue with the tithe. That’ll be fine. If you’ll honestly ask the Holy Ghost what He’d have you give and just start right there, I’ll be a happy preacher. I dare say you will very infrequently get off with 10% if you do what the Spirit of God tells you to do. We’ve got great givers in this church, 10, 12, 15, 20%.

You ought to be a tither. I’d encourage you to do it but I want you to hear me. You can give 15% of everything you make and be the biggest hypocrite that sits at Olive Baptist Church. It is not the tithe that makes you righteous. Jesus said, “You tithe of these small things but you’ve neglected justice.” That is the separation unto righteousness. You’ve neglected mercy and showing that to people and being kind and merciful. You’ve neglected faithfulness.

I went to *Strong’s Concordance* and looked up this Greek word faithfulness and one description says, “Faithfulness, people who can be relied on.” Amen. People that say, “I’ll be there. I’ll do that. You can count on me.” And you can count on them, not just that say it and never do it, not just that preach mercy and never show it. The easiest thing you do is give your money. You see, we don’t just give it outwardly but there’s this inward beginning with justice and mercy and faithfulness that begins internally and then it manifests itself.

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Jesus uses this old proverb here. You blind guides, you strain out a gnat and you swallow a camel. Well here it is. The gnat and the camel were both unclean. You couldn't eat a gnat. You couldn't eat a camel. So what they would do is with their drink they'd take that cloth and they would strain the drink so as not to have a gnat in anything they drink. That's a bad deal to get a fly in your soup, you know? You don't want that. But that little speck. We have a word for them around here. No-see-ums. I mean, you couldn't see them. They just buzz all over you and get up your nose and everywhere else. You can't see them but you can feel them, can't you? Well they'd strain that out and say, "We're keeping the law." Yet they would – when it says swallow the camel He's not saying they swallow the whole thing. It's saying that they ate on hump day. They'd eat that cloven hoof camel meat but they'd strain out the gnat. He said, "You blind, foolish hypocrite." You're dealing with that little bitty but here you eat the meat. Dear friend, be careful in your hypocrisy that you don't minor on those little bitty gnat issues and yet major on huge sinful issues like missing justice, mercy, and faithfulness. The tithe of the hypocrite.

Secondly is the table of the hypocrite. He moves into verse 25 and 26 and He says, "You clean the outside of the cup and the disk or the platter but the inside is full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, clean the inside first so that the outside will be what it should be." Oh my Lord. So many times we get everything externally like it should be, the way we dress, the way we look, the way we appear but inside He says you're full of robbery and self-indulgence. That word self-indulgence is graft. You're taking no self-control.

This clean, external cup and this filthy internal cup speaks of the politician who is an elder in the church or a deacon and runs for political office and is elected by God's people because he's promised to be a godly man and then falls into sexual immorality and is caught. I'm telling you, he's a blind guide and a Pharisee. This is the preacher who will ask you for money. His cup is clean on the outside and he gets caught with his hand in the till stealing from God's own people. He's a fool. He's a blind hypocrite, a Pharisee.

This is the Baptist. Hear me. This is the Baptist who sits in the pew on Sunday morning, goes to Connection Group and teaches the word of God verse by verse and then goes to the ballpark on Thursday night and he's got a tongue as vile as any sinner in the stadium. You fool, you blind guide, you hypocrite. You've cleaned the outside of the dish but inside there's robbery and self-indulgence. God help us to clean first the inside. I had to read a lot about this because I don't know nothing about washing dishes. Somebody would have to show me about that. You get the picture. It's laser-focused. The table of the hypocrite.

Thirdly, we see the tomb, the tomb of the hypocrite. He speaks about it in verse 27. He says, "Woe to you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, you're like whitewashed tombs on the outside. They appear beautiful but inside full of dead men's bones. So you too outwardly appear righteous to men but inwardly you're full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." What's He speaking of here? There are two kinds of graveyards in the

first century for the Jews. There were those that would be likened unto what we know today with marble tombstones and those would be people like most of us that could afford to put a headstone when somebody dies and cut the name in it. You know, Traylor, first year born, dash, year dead. You know, most of us do it that way but there were poverty-stricken people who did not have those tombs that were of granite or rock but are made with just a dirt mound.

So what the Pharisees would do, the hypocrites, certain times of the year when they were going up to Passover, you see, if you touched a grave you were unclean and you couldn't go to Passover. So they would hire people to wash, white-wash, paint with white. They'd look beautiful and they'd clean them up. That way you'd know it was there. You wouldn't touch it and be found unclean. Jesus said to the hypocrite, "You're like a whitewashed tomb. You look sparkling on the outside but internally you're full of dead men's bones." He names two of them. He said, "You're full of hypocrisy wearing the mask and you're lawless. You do not let the law apply to you."

This reminds me of companies that are crying out for the minimum wage to be \$15 an hour and once it is voted in then they say, "Well our company should be exempt." These are corporations that say, "Everybody ought to get health care and they ought to be made to have this certain kind but when we have to engage it then we want to be exempt." They're lawless companies. They believe it's good for everybody else. They're like a whitewashed tomb but when it comes to application of their own life they don't want any of it. That's like Baptists that say, "Well I believe all the word of God, I just don't want it to apply to me." They're full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. The tombs.

Then lastly there's the testimony. Not only the tithe and the table and the tomb but then there's the testimony of the hypocrite. It's found in verse 29. This one is a little harder to understand but look at it. It's just not as plain. Woe to you scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous. They were building monuments.

If you go to Israel today you'll see them outside of the city walls of Jerusalem. At the Mount of Olives, you'll see some of the tombs, the monuments to the prophets and you say, "If we'd been living in the days of our fathers we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets. Now just listen. I know what my daddy did. He killed the prophets but if I'd have been alive back then, no, I wouldn't have done that." Jesus said in verse 31, "But you testify against yourself. You're the son of those who murdered the prophets." You see, they were already hatching the plot to crucify Jesus Christ when they said they would not have been a part of a past generation of murdering the godly prophets.

It's amazing to me how self-righteous some of us can get when we look back at things that we've changed in our culture. I have people that have never been alive like me in plantation days and they say, "You know, if I'd have been alive I wouldn't have participated in that slavery deal." It's real easy to be righteous three generations and

two generations ago. "You know, preacher, if I'd have been alive when black people couldn't sit at the counter down in Pensacola I wouldn't have done that. I know my daddy did but I wouldn't have done it." It's easy to get self-righteous, living in the past.

Well let's bring it up to date. Let's get righteous in 2016. We'll let our children judge us when we get to 2050. No they won't. They'll judge themselves. Dear friend, I can't confess my daddy's sin. I've got to make right maybe what they did wrong but I'm telling you, I've got to deal with my own righteousness and unrighteousness. These people were saying, "I wouldn't have done that with the prophets," but they keep the monuments and say, "I love this guy that my daddy had murdered." Jesus said, "You're testifying against yourself because you were as mean as they were."

Fill up your guilt as He says in this text right here in verse 32. Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers. You're doing the same thing. Fill it up because you're testifying against yourself. You serpents, you brood of vipers. I mean this is Jesus preaching to the church folk. Wouldn't it be great if your pastor just stood up and said, "Hello, you bunch of snakes. Welcome to Olive, you den of vipers." He wasn't out to build a crowd. He was out to build a church. He had to get rid of the hypocrites before He could build the holy. He looked at these religious people. "You serpents, you brood of vipers." Then He asked that question, "How are you going to escape the sentence of hell?"

I've never been really out to where they did the hunting but in Texas when I lived there they used to have the rattlesnake roundup. They would say at a certain time of year you could go out and under these rocks if you'd poke a stick the snakes were still kind of lethargic because it was a little cool. They'd come out and you'd gather them up but if you went out there at the wrong time of year you didn't have to poke a stick. You'd just walk in those rocks and you'd hear the rattler. Let me tell you, when you hear that sound, you better, bless God in Jesus' name, be hunting higher ground.

You ever walked up on a den of snakes? Jesus says there are churches that are like a den of snakes. You walk in and you preach a gospel and you hear that rattler. We don't ever want Olive to be like a brood of vipers, Amen? We want to hear the truth and respond to it even if it cuts us to our heart. How are you going to avoid and escape the sentence, damnation, condemnation of hell?

Number one, you've got to repent. I want you to listen to me. The only way to miss hell and gain heaven is by repentance. You say, "Well I've done that." No, no, no, listen to me now. There is more to repentance than walking down this aisle and saying some words and getting wet. Repentance has a change of life in it. There's fruit of repentance. Jesus is talking to hypocrites that all said the right stuff and they looked the right way and they'd bend down to the baptismal fount but their love style was like a snake. You've got to repent and come to radical obedience. You say, "Preacher, I mess up." We all mess up. Ye that's without sin is a hypocrite. You think you are. Nobody in here's without sin. From the preacher up. That's not the deal but when sin enters the life, you fall on your face and cry out, "O God, clean me up." You see, you

know whose you are and you know who the righteous one is and you know who the righteous one is not. You're not trying to play a game. You're trying to live to the glory of God.

I sat with an elderly gentleman Saturday morning just before lunch. He's become one of my dear friends. He's from Mississippi. I love this man. He looked me in the eye and he said, "Preacher." He's a member of a small church over in Mississippi. They lost their pastor awhile back. He called me. He said, "Would you pray about coming to be my pastor?" I said, "Well I'm pretty satisfied." He said, "Well I didn't ask you if you were satisfied. I asked you if you'd pray about coming to be my pastor." I said, "I'll pray. I won't pray long but I'll pray." He was messing with me bad, I'm telling you.

He told me sitting before lunch on Saturday, he said, "Ted, I've been teaching Sunday School since 1954." He said, "I just figured it out about five years ago." He said, "I've been teaching the Bible and working hard." He said, "I live right but I've just been carrying this burden and I worry about it and I try to get the truck out of the ditch." He said, "You know, it's not even our job to get the truck out of the ditch." He said, "My job is to teach the word of God and trust Him and let the Lord get the truck out of the ditch." He said, "I work hard but that's not my job." He said, "Once I began to rest in Christ I have found the favor of God just roll over." He said, "I didn't do anything and I'll tell you I didn't do anything. I'm not capable but the favor of God." He said, "The harder I work and the more I trust and let God do God's part and me do my part, the favor of God comes in my life."

That's repentance. That's trusting God with all your life. His wife liked to died last year. I came in and called her name. I said, "Where is she?" He said, "She's out walking the dog." I said, "What? She can't walk from here to the door." He said, "Oh, I'm telling you, God's moved and touched her. We just began to trust that to the Lord and we found a doctor and he got the medicine." She came bouncing in there. He said, "It doesn't matter if she gets well. Whether we live or die, we're going to praise Him but we've just found the favor of God in her life." I'm telling you, I did not walk out of there encouraged. I walked out of there under conviction but I haven't been teaching the Bible since 1954. He told me when he turned 70 he got it. I said, "Well I've got a few more years until I have to get it evidently." He reached up and put his arm around me and said, "I love you, preacher. I'm going to pray you'll get it." He said, "If you ever do, God's going to start using you better than He's using you now." I said, "Amen."

You see, he wasn't playing a game. Friend, this following Jesus is not a game. It's not wearing a mask. My job's not to impress you and your job's not to impress me. Our job's to serve Him and when we serve Him, He puts people all around us that'll encourage us and He lets a few demons in just to keep us honest. Amen. You see, you've got to decide if you're going to be the snake or the servant. You're one of the two. You're either playing a game or living by faith. Hypocrites are playing a game and what do you think's going to keep you from hell itself?

J.T., nobody I bury ever has the family come to me and say, "You know, pastor, he was lost. He went to hell." They all run back to something and they say, "Well, you know, there was this time when I think he thought about God once." Repent, repent, repent. Run the spirit of the Pharisee and the hypocrite out of your life. Take off your mask and just get honest before God.

Here's what we're going to do. Jon's coming to the piano right now. We're just going to get quiet before the Lord for about two minutes and I don't want you praying for anybody except yourself right now. Don't pray for me. You don't need to confess my sin even if you know it. I'll confess my sin. You don't need to confess your spouse's sin. You deal with your own sin. So I'm going to ask everybody just to get quiet and bow your head. Jon's playing and I want you just to talk to the Lord for just a moment. You may want to slip out on your knees. You don't have to. Just lay your head over on that cap rail. Don't pray with anybody, just by yourself. Come before the Lord just now.