

A Tale of Woes

“Litigating through Loopholes and Rebuking the Religious”

Matthew 23:13-36

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I. Introduction

Why? Because the charge of hypocrisy against the church is a common criticism toward Christians today, and by studying a passage about hypocrisy within real false religious leaders should lead us to examine ourselves so that we can strive to be good ambassadors of Christ in a fallen world whose watchful eyes are always on the church.

II. Context

III. Round 1: Corrupting the Kingdom (23:13-15)

IV. Round 2: Majoring the Minors (23:16-24)

V. Round 3: Investing in Impurities (23:25-28)

VI. Round 4: Participating in Persecution (23:29-36)

VII. Conclusion

1. **Beware of false teachers**
2. **Guard against hypocrisy**
3. **Give thanks to the Lord**

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Start by discussing how Christ, the Messiah, was the antithesis of a hypocrite. Discuss all the ways in which he kept his word perfectly, and how his perfect life is now applied to YOURS!
2. The culture always has a watchful eye on Christians. Have you ever been called out, or accused of being a hypocrite? What was the context? How did you handle that situation?
3. Most of the time we come to church with a really positive attitude, even if we have really had a hard week. How do we deal with our own hypocrisy, or not being real with people, when all I want to do is hide it, deny it, or fake it till I make it?
4. How should we deal gracefully with other brothers or sisters in the church acting hypocritically? Jesus commands that we take the log out of our eye before we take the speck out of someone else's. How do we go about sharpening one another and growing together as we pursue Christ-likeness with humility and love?
5. Hypocrisy means that we act as if we are the exception to the rule. Are there ways that we act as if the rules apply to everyone but us? Bring some of those up, and ask how we can approach those situations differently as we try to be Christlike examples to the world.