

Focus passage: Matthew 23:1-4, 23-28

1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, 3 so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. 4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! 25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. 27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

What stands out to you from this passage?

What do you think is Jesus' issue with the Pharisees and scribes? What are they doing wrong and what are they neglecting to do?

Are Christians often accused of being hypocrites? If you think so, why?

We all will sin, but it those who present themselves “white-washed” as though they are without sin who are acting as hypocrites. How then should we present ourselves to the world?

*Jesus elsewhere warns the disciples of the influence of these leaders. **Read Matthew 16:5-12.***

If false teachings were found in the very leadership of the Jewish people, where do you think you might find leaven today?

Even in the church there are good and bad teachers. How can we guard ourselves?

*For some paths to follow in order to guard yourself, **read and discuss Phillipians 4:8-9, 2 Timothy 3:14-17.***

How can you apply this Scripture to your life?

