

# *Matthew 23:1-7*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12*

## **A final warning regarding false religious leaders**

### **Prayer**

Let's bow together. Father, You are a great and gracious God. I am so thankful for Your kindness and Your mercy that You have poured out in Your Son, Jesus. We do not deserve it. We have done wretched things; our hearts and minds have thought wicked things; we have acted upon those things; we have said wicked things— but yet while we were yet sinners Your Word says Christ died for us. We are so thankful that it was not based on what we could do, but what He did. And we are thankful that You use Your Word to convict us, to reveal Your Son Jesus, but also to make us like Him. And Father, I pray as we look into Your Word today that You would use it greatly. That if there are those here who do not know You, that You would convict their hearts, that You would pierce them, that they would see the truth about themselves and about You and about Your Son. And those of us that do know You, that we would be changed, Lord God, that we would be made more like Christ. That You would work on our hearts, Lord God, so that You would be glorified. We thank You for this morning; we pray that You would bless it richly, for Your glory now. In Jesus' name, amen.

### **Sermon**

Well most of you know I used to be a pilot, and with being a pilot comes a love of aviation. I still love aviation; I love to preach the Word, but I love aviation. I love airplanes, and although WWII airplanes were not my favorite airplanes—I like airliners—but although they were not my favorite I used to look at those little cards that would have the diagram of a plane— it would not say what it is, it is a shadow of it. And in WWII they used to train our troops to identify the friendly planes and the enemy planes so that our soldiers would not shoot down the friendly planes, but they would know who the enemy is so they could clearly deal with that. And they needed preparation and real discernment; it was a life or death discernment in the moment that they needed. And folks, we as believers really need to learn how to spot our enemies too— there are enemies to our soul. And the reality is we need to learn the characteristics of those who would be against Christ and not for Christ. You know I see this in churches these days, very clearly, that maybe godly men are warning about false teachers, whatever it might be, and these godly men are being shot down instead of the false teachers! And I think it is because the body of Christ at times does not know how to identify who the bad guys really are. It is not up to us to say, "I like this guy; I do not like that guy," or whatever it might be. It is up to what God says in His Word, and that is what we are going to see today.

We are coming to the last week of the Lord Jesus' life, where we are going to see His public denunciation of the false teachers. And from this I believe we are going to learn and see really what is

# *Matthew 23:1-7*

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underneath those who would put on a veneer of religiousness and try to persuade people religiously. We are going to see what is going on, and we have today, I believe, a final warning regarding religious leaders as Jesus unveils, or reveals where they really are for our protection. Would you turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 23? And we are beginning this chapter we have gone through 22 chapters, and hopefully for those of you who have been here, you understand the context of the book of Matthew. And I have known bits and pieces of the book of Matthew before this, I have never studied through it like we have, and it has just been such a blessing to see it in its context—to see these verses I was familiar with, but really not in their real context, and so hopefully that has been a blessing for you also.

We have seen in the book of Matthew, we have seen very clearly— and would you turn to Matthew 23?— but we have seen clearly the King introduced, chapter 1, King Jesus was introduced. He was introduced as the rightful king of the Jews. And we saw very clearly that you shall call His name Jesus— Joseph was told— you shall call Him Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins. For those of you who know the word Jesus, Yeshua, means “Yahweh saves—” the Lord, the I AM is salvation. And we saw the affirmation of the reality that He is not only God in flesh, but the Messiah prophesied, the Messiah King who would redeem His people from their sins. We saw Jesus, after having the way prepared by John the Baptist, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!” We saw Jesus very clearly coming to the Jews, those who were sitting in spiritual darkness in the shadow of death it says— they were in the shadow of death! You see, if you would talk to the Jews of this day, back in the first century, they would say: “Yes, we follow the Lord; that is our God!” He is the God of Scripture that they had, but yet, Jesus says in His Word they were sitting in darkness, and they saw a great light. A gracious God came unto them, teaching and preaching as we see, and even Jesus calling for repentance— that is a turning from sin to the only Savior that there is, which is Himself.

And we saw the Lord Jesus affirm His person and His work with the miraculous. All those deeds that He did affirm the truth that He was declaring about Himself and their need for a Savior. We saw the rejection of the Jews of their Messiah. Jesus would say, “An evil and adulterous generation!” And we saw also the leaders, the religious leaders, the Pharisees and the Herodians, all sorts of different leaders, they were upset at Jesus, they wanted to destroy Him. We saw Jesus retreat from the multitudes, now speaking in parables because the multitudes had rejected Him; they had closed their eyes and plugged their ears. So He would speak in parables so that seeing they would not see, and hearing they would not hear. There is a real danger when God is speaking through His Word, that if you reject it, then He will let you go your own way. Do not harden your heart if you hear His voice.

And now three years have passed and Jesus Christ, God in human flesh is coming to the last week of His ministry on earth, the last week of His life on earth. And we saw the not-so-triumphal entry when Jesus is coming in and everyone is yelling, “Hosanna, Son of David,” ‘save now we pray,’ all these wonderful things about the Lord, but yet the Lord, we saw in Luke 21, was weeping, as He was coming in, sitting on a colt, humble. He was not the victorious king that the people wanted to relieve them of their temporary burdens. And He was weeping, over the reality as we saw in Luke, that they had missed the day of visitation, the day that God had visited them to offer salvation, and He was weeping over it.

# Matthew 23:1-7

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And then we saw the Lord Jesus come to His temple, and He cleansed the temple out of those who were making religion a mockery out of it, they were using it to make money; they had turned His house into a house of merchandise. It was a big sales operation rather than a house of prayer as the Lord would say, a place where they would focus on the Living God, but there the leaders had made it into a wicked robbers den. After He kicked them out and cleansed the temple (we saw that early in the week), the last week of His life that He was preaching in the temple; He was teaching in the temple; and He was receiving worship in the temple; and we saw the authorities got upset and they challenged Him, “By what authority do you do these things?” And Jesus would not answer them, and He asked them, “I will ask you a question—was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?” And they would not answer Him because they knew the truth that the people realized it was from God, and that would reveal that they did not believe, so they said “We do not know.”

And then we saw very clearly Jesus give three parables of condemnation for the religious leaders. You do not want God giving you a story about your condemnation— and Jesus was doing it to their faces, and they knew it. And we saw ultimately that God would rip away the kingdom from the Israelites because of their rejection, and He would give it to the gentiles— the offer to us to be in His kingdom as we see. And then we saw the groups of religious leaders gather the guts to come up to Him in the midst of the temple and ask Him questions, questions that were designed to trap Him: “Should we pay tax to Ceasar or not?” And things like that, we looked at those questions—“What about the lady whose husband died and she married the brother and on and on and on, whose wife will she be in heaven?” All these trick questions that very clearly the Lord Jesus answered perfectly and righteously, and they would not dare ask Him any more questions. And then last week— and remember this is the last week of his life— He has taken control of his temple from the wicked Pharisees, Sadducees and leaders, and He says, “I’m going to ask you a question now,” and we saw very clearly, He asked that question last week, “Whose Son is the Christ?” And they answered, “the Son of David, of course—” in the line the Messiah comes from David. But they did not realize that David also called Him “Lord.” “How could, (Jesus said), David call Him Lord and Him also be His Son in that sense, His relationship physically speaking?” And they were silent; they did not answer. But the answer to the question should have been this: “The only way that the Messiah could be in the line of David, human but also Lord, is if God came and took on human flesh,” and they were silent. They should have said, “This is how it is.” They should have turned from their sin and repented, but they did not.

And now we come to chapter 23, which is a scathing rebuke of the religious leaders of this time. We will see today, first of all, a warning for the people and His disciples, and then it moves into the seven woes for the Pharisees and scribes. It is a scathing rebuke; it is the last public denunciation the Lord Jesus will give before He is crucified. And we will see very clearly even at the end of this He is weeping: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem how I would have taken you under my wing, but you would not have it. You would not have it. (Matthew 23:37)” A gracious God who gives time for mankind to repent, but yet when that time is up, He clearly shares the consequences for rejection, and that is what we are going to see today. And God has sovereignty brought you here to hear this, as we will see. So turn in your Bibles today to Matthew 23. We are going to look at verses 1-7 today, Lord willing, but I am going to read

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

through verse 12— that is really the first block of this text: <sup>1</sup>Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples... Now remember this is in the temple complex, His disciples are with Him, and there are all the people who are interested in hearing what He is saying:

***<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; <sup>3</sup> therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them. <sup>4</sup> "And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; (and the Lord says,) but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. <sup>5</sup> "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels of their garments. <sup>6</sup> "And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup> and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi. <sup>8</sup> "But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup> "And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> "And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. <sup>11</sup> "But the greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup> "And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. [Matthew 23:1-12]***

Now we are going to get to that portion in verses 8-12 next week, so you can still call your dad "Dad," and we will see that, that is not the point we will see—the reality is in the religious sense of authority and sovereignty— we will see next week, but we are going to look at verses 1-7.

We have this initial warning for those who are there in the temple, and then He moves in verse 12 to say, "Woe to you," very clearly. 7-13 He says, "But woe to you scribes and Pharisees." He is talking to the crowds and His disciples, and then He points to the scribes and Pharisees, "But woe to you," and we have this scathing, eternal rebuke from the living God who was in their presence. So today we are going to look very clearly I believe, at a warning, a warning from the living God for us so that we can identify the bad guys—the bad guys look like good guys. Scripture says evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, in 2 Timothy 3:13. The reality is, you take 20 churches, some of those churches are going to have bad guys in them. And you need to be able to spot it; you need to know; you need to be able to listen to me and say, "Hey, is this guy right, or is he not?" We need to be able to discern the friend from the foe so that we do not shoot down the friendly; we need to not attack those who are truly following the Lord, but yet we run away as we will see from those who are wicked. So first of all I believe we are going to see a scathing rebuke and warning that the false religious leaders are self-appointing; we are going to see Jesus warns the people about these religious hypocrites. Verse 1, in chapter 23:

<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses." You are saying, "What is the chair of Moses?" We will see about that in a minute. Our passage, if you will notice verse 1 begins with the word, "then." We have had Jesus questioned, they are trying to trap Him, and then Jesus turns the tables on them, and points

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

to the reality of the fact that God has come in human flesh—at this point, after they have not responded, we see this, “then;” He moves to this warning and then statement of condemnation. “Then.”

He was authoritatively preaching and teaching, receiving worship and they had not responded, and now He turns to the multitudes and to those who had had their ears tickled, but they were not responding, and to His disciples who by and large had trusted Him. Now the term disciple as you remember it means, “learner—” that is what it means, ‘*mathetes*,’ it means learner. It is someone who places themselves under someone else, someone else’s authority, to learn in a religious sense. And if you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have submitted yourself to the Lord to learn from Him and to obey Him. That is what a disciple is.

And notice I said here throughout this discourse that this is a warning in the beginning, but you might be saying, “Verse 1: I do not see the word warning here; verse 2: I do not see the word warning here or beware—” take a look with me to a parallel portion in Mark chapter 12. And this is where we see that really it is a warning. Mark chapter 12, verse 38. These are portions of parallel passages of what we are going to see today, and you will recognize it as you hear the language, it is a different person giving us an account inspired by the Spirit of the same events but from different angles. It is like if you were to have four different witnesses at an auto accident, you would have four different accounts but if they were true but, yet they could be different and all be true, they are just filling in different pieces of that account, and that is what we see here. Mark chapter 12. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Verse 38

<sup>38</sup> ***And in His teaching He was saying: "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, <sup>39</sup> and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets, [Mark 12:38-39].*** Beware. The real context is a warning. Beware. Beware. And it is implied in the context of Matthew although it is not stated directly; it is implied by what he says. You see that the book of Luke also, Luke 20:46 <sup>46</sup> ***"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets, <sup>47</sup> who devour widows' houses..." [Luke 20:46-47]*** as we see.

Again, He is speaking to the crowds and to His disciples. This is His last public warning on earth before the crucifixion; it is very important. It is a pinnacle, it is a climax of the reality of His disdain for those who had taken His truth and twisted it and manipulated it and led the Jews into sin and bondage. Now in our passage it talks about the scribes and the Pharisees. Who are the scribes and the Pharisees? Let’s just quickly review that so we know who these guys are.

The scribes were not priests. They were from other tribes; however, they were learned in the law. They were those who studied the Scriptures, they were the Spiritual legal-beagles in a sense. They were the authorities on how to interpret the law. They were experts. But yet as we will see, they were those on their way to hell. The Pharisees, they were the strictest sect, as Paul would share in Acts 26:5. The word Pharisee meant “separated ones.” They were the self-righteous, legalistic, nationalistic, isolationists on their way to hell. The Pharisees had hypocritically separated themselves from those they called sinners

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

and common Jews; they had taken the law out of its rightful context and added in their tradition; they were hypocrites as we will see later on in chapter 23, they were clean on the outside, boy they looked good, but on the inside they were full of dead man's bones. They were hypocrites on the way to hell.

Now at this time there were probably 6,000 Pharisees at the time. The vast majority of scribes and Pharisees obviously had not responded to Jesus Christ. And they hated Him, as we see in Scripture, and they wanted to kill Him. But there were very few and we see only a couple examples in Scripture that did turn, like Nicodemus. But that is an anomaly; the majority of those who continued in that group rejected Christ and wanted His death. Remember the Lord Jesus has not been unclear about His warnings in the past. Remember back in Matthew chapter 7—turn there for a second, verse 15. And this is the Lord speaking; if you are bored with it and do not like it then something is wrong! It means sin is in your heart, just like it was with me! And God is a gracious God to convict us of sin. Matthew 7, verse 15. The living God is speaking here in human flesh.

<sup>15</sup> **"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.** <sup>16</sup> **"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? [Matthew 7:15-16]** Beware of the false prophets. They are not true; they are false; they come to you in shepherd's garb— they look like they are the good guys, but they are the bad guys.

Skip up to what Bob read in Matthew chapter 12; let's take a look at verse 34. He is talking to the Pharisees about blaspheming the Holy Spirit, where when the Spirit of God convicts your heart of your sin, when you suppress that down— you really are convicted and you suppress that down— there is no forgiveness then; if you really do not receive the gospel there is no forgiveness. Verse 34. <sup>34</sup> **"You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good?" [Matthew 12:34a]** That does not sound too nice. Skip up to Matthew 15. Matthew 15, verse 1. Matthew 15:1. And we see very clearly here,

<sup>1</sup> **Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying,** (He says here,) <sup>2</sup> **"Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."** (That is a silly thing, right—we looked at that earlier. They were all about the externals. "They do not wash their hands! They are not religiously clean!" And Jesus says here) <sup>3</sup> **And He answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"** (Why do you transgress God's Word for the sake of your tradition?) <sup>4</sup> **"For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.'** <sup>5</sup> **"But you say, 'Whoever shall say to his father or mother, "Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given to God,"** (These guys, these Pharisees, they were greedy people— they would not even help their own parents. They were holding back the money and saying, "Oh, I gave that to God!" Jesus is saying they are wicked. He is saying, and thus, middle of verse 6,) <sup>6</sup> **he is not to honor his father or his mother.'** **And thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.** <sup>7</sup> **"You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,** <sup>8</sup> **'This people**

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

***honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. <sup>9</sup> 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' [Matthew 15:1-9]***

Skip up to chapter 16, verse 11. Jesus had been saying, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees!” And leaven is related to bread, and they are saying, “What is He talking about? Did we not get enough bread? What did we do?” And they are all confused about that, and He says to them, Matthew 16, verse 11:

***<sup>11</sup> "How is it that you do not understand (Jesus says to His disciples) that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>12</sup> Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. [Matthew 16:11-12]***

Beware of the teaching of false teachers. Beware. Be warned. And here we have the culmination of His warnings with a condemnation attached at the end in our passage. We have His last public warning. So what does He say here? Back to our passage, in 23:

“Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair or (*kathedra*) of Moses...’” That is where the Catholics get their term ‘cathedra,’ that is when the pope speaks ‘ex cathedra,’ it is from his chair; it is authoritative even though we know it is not—it is just like these Jews and false teachers. But what does it mean, chair of Moses? Notice, very clearly, He is speaking of Moses; He is referring to the law, the chair spoke of a place of authority. They had seated themselves in a place of authority concerning the law of Moses; they had elevated themselves; they were the ones who were the experts; they had seated themselves. They in this society who were the ones religiously authoritative over the law of the scribes and Pharisees, and notice He says they have seated themselves. That is the real condemnation. They had seated themselves. They are self-appointed. He does not say God placed them there. The scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves, which helps us see as we will see in a moment their underlying wickedness as false teachers; it helps us identify what they look like.

Now, just a little background again on scribes. The term scribe is used in the Old Testament to speak in a generic sense of someone who is copying, you know, like the king’s scribe who was recording things for him, or whatever it might be but the term used this way was really never brought forth until Ezra. But Ezra was a priest, but he also was called a scribe; he studied the Word of God. And the term Pharisee, we do not see Pharisees, there is no place in Scripture where either scribes or Pharisees are prescribed by God. They are not prescribed by God in any way in Scripture—they are *described* by God but not *prescribed* by God. And here Jesus said, “They have seated themselves.” They have taken the authority over the Word, specifically here the law of Moses. They are self-appointed. They appointed themselves. And every false teacher is ultimately self-appointed. God does not appoint false teachers, as we will see. They are self-appointed; they raise themselves up in the ministry; they are self-appointed.

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

Let me show you, let me give you an example from the Old Testament. Turn to Jeremiah chapter 14, and I will share the reality of this. Jeremiah. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations. Jeremiah 14. Jeremiah 14:14. And the context of Jeremiah is he is warning Jerusalem about their sin; they are going to go to judgment, and the false teachers are saying, "Everything is cool with God; there is nothing wrong! Peace and safety!" And Jeremiah is saying, "No, everything is *not* cool with God, you are in your sins and He is going to take you to judgment!" And the false teachers are saying everything is great! Jeremiah is saying, "No, it is not." And now God comments on the false teachers. Jeremiah 14:14. <sup>14</sup> ***Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. (Notice what He says,) I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds [Jeremiah 14:14]. "I did not send them," God says. Those prophets were self-appointed folks, as we see. Go to chapter 23— chapter 23 of Jeremiah, and we will see a few other places. And you should read through the whole chapter of chapter 23; if you are looking for a church, read through Jeremiah chapter 23; let God's Word inform you what you should look for. Jeremiah 23:16***

<sup>16</sup> ***Thus says the LORD of hosts, (this is in the same light here) "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility (or emptiness); They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>17</sup> "They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The LORD has said, "You will have peace;"' And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, 'Calamity will not come upon you.' [Jeremiah 23:16-17]***

That is just like these days! You can go to churches where you can continue in your sin, and they will say "It is okay, God is a gracious God!" That is not the truth! The payment had to be made for sin and Jesus Christ did, and if you have trusted in Christ then you are going to have a changed life and a changed heart. Look down a little further, Jeremiah 23:21, he says, notice this very clearly,

<sup>21</sup> ***"I did not send these prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied. (And look at this; this is so crucial) <sup>22</sup> "But if they had stood in My council, Then they would have announced My words to My people, And would have turned them back from their evil way And from the evil of their deeds. [Jeremiah 23:21-22]***

What God says is people that share the Word of God that shows you your sin and turns you from that, unto Him, and that is what the Word of God does. And that is what a Godly church faithfully preaching God's Word should do as we have seen so many times, it will convict us, all of us, of our sin, and turn us to Christ! One last portion, Jeremiah 23:25, he says,

<sup>25</sup> ***"I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, 'I had a dream, I had a dream!' (You hear this a lot, right?) <sup>26</sup> "How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart, <sup>27</sup> who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot***

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

***My name because of Baal? <sup>28</sup> "The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?" (Very, very important) declares the LORD. <sup>29</sup> "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock? <sup>30</sup> "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," declares the LORD, "who steal My words from each other. <sup>31</sup> "Behold, I am against the prophets," declares the LORD, "who use their tongues and declare, 'The Lord declares.' <sup>32</sup> "Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams," declares the LORD, "and related them, and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet (notice this) I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit," declares the LORD. [Jeremiah 23:25-32]***

Folks, there are false teachers and they are self-appointed. God does not appoint these guys who we will see from Scripture, not from our own viewpoint— who are not following Him. Who say, for the name of the Lord, He did not appoint them! And one of the ways you can tell is, are they declaring His Word, or are they declaring and twisting it in their own words as we will see. Back to our passage in Matthew chapter 23. "Jesus says, "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves (it is emphatic, they have seated themselves, they have elevated themselves) in the chair of Moses;" Now this was an interesting time here. These wicked men had appointed themselves teachers and experts of the Word. Self-appointment is one evidence of a false teacher as we will see.

And folks, nothing new is under the sun these days in the churches. There are false teachers who have raised themselves up—what do I mean?—they do not meet the qualifications; they do not meet the qualifications of what the Spirit of God laid forth in His Word, which the body of Christ would affirm, they have raised themselves up in spite of the Word of God. They are self-appointed. I will give you an example: any woman teacher or pastor is self-appointed. Because God's Word says, 1 Timothy 2:12 "I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man," they are self-appointed no matter what they say! They are self-appointed. And I see the evidence of churches of many self-appointments by their actions and their disobedience to the Word of God, and that is really the key as we will see. They are not preaching the Word and turning people from their sin. They are letting sin go, "It is okay; it is okay, God is a gracious God." They turn the grace of God which is true, into licentiousness, which is a license to sin. So the first thing I would say is false teachers are self-appointed. Self-appointed. That is the point I think Jesus is making. They have seated themselves. Now it is interesting what He says at this point because we are going to have to understand it in its context.

We are going to see at the core that they are hypocrites, but it is an interesting situation because they are those in the context of the nation that God had set up and ordained— Israel— they had a covenant, so we are going to see how Jesus relates this warning to them. Verse 3: "Therefore," because they have seated themselves on the chair of Moses, "therefore—" and this is relating to the Word of God, the chair of Moses— "Therefore all that they tell you, do and observe," or literally, do which is an action of doing, keep, obey "But do not do according to their deeds; for they say *things*, and do not do *them*. <sup>4</sup>

## Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

"And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with *so much as* a finger."

So at this point Jesus commands His listeners what to do, in light of their self-appointing themselves. "Therefore all that they tell you..." and we will see, He is not saying the false teaching that they tell you— He has already condemned them for their traditions; He has said that it is wicked— He is talking about when it is within the context of Scripture. "Therefore all that they tell you, do." As we will see. He is not giving a blanket, "Do anything a false teacher tells you." This was an interesting time because God had made a covenant with Israel; they were His people by name. So He says, "therefore," in the context of what Moses said in the law, "do what they tell you—" "all that they tell you, do and observe." Very clearly He is not saying that they should obey the wickedness, because earlier what did He say? "Beware of the teaching of the Pharisees," right? Sadducees and Pharisees, beware. So very clearly He is not saying "do everything" in the context that they say, but when they speak about the Word and it is right, do it. That is what He is saying. But look, very clearly, what He says here. He says, "Therefore all that they tell you, do and observe," but notice the contrast here: "But do not do—" that is the action— "According to their deeds; for they say *things*, and do not do *them*." Here you go. Now we understand. They say but they do not do. Do what they say when it is Scriptural, but do not do what they do.

Here we have the heart of His warning. These religious leaders are hypocrites; they have a mask in the front, they have an outward appearance, a veneer, of godliness, a veneer of following the Bible. But on the inside as we will see they are full of dead man's bones, and we are to be warned. He says do what they say but do not do what they do because they say things and do not do them. They are hypocrites. They are hypocrites. Take a look a little farther down in Matthew 23:13,

<sup>13</sup> ***"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,*** (He uses the word "hupokrites," hypocrites) ***because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.*** (You are not going to heaven! And you shut it out for other people! You are the most wicked people there are— beware! Beware, and then woe to you scribes and Pharisees. Verse 14) <sup>14</sup> ***"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, even while for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you shall receive greater condemnation.*** <sup>15</sup> ***"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about 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.*** (Serious condemnation. Jesus says in verse 25,) <sup>25</sup> ***"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.*** <sup>26</sup> ***"You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.*** <sup>27</sup> ***"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.*** <sup>28</sup> ***"Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and***

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

**lawlessness. (Verse 33) <sup>33</sup> "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell? [Matthew 23:13-15, 25-28, 33]**

They are hypocrites. They say one thing and do another. They tell them what to do from the Word, and when that was Biblical they did not do it. They did not do it. Their walk does not match their teaching. False teachers along with their wicked teaching at times may say the right thing. There are false teachers who may say something Biblical at times. Now again, this was a special time when God had made a covenant with Israel; He had instituted the temple sacrificial system and the priestly system. This passage is not telling us to stay in bad churches. It is not telling us to do that, as we will see. When the leaders are wicked, we need to get out, even though they might speak the truth once in a while. And the New Testament affirms this reality that we need to leave and get away from these wicked, false teachers. Let me give you an example.

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 11. And those of you who are in our Wednesday study in the book of 2 Corinthians, Paul, a righteous apostle, is trying to woo the church back from these false teachers who have been deceiving them. He is trying to woo them back to the Lord. 2 Corinthians 11. And I cannot go through all of this, so I am just going to go through a few verses and you can check this out at home. Paul says, "I am afraid, I am afraid," 2 Corinthians 11:3: <sup>3</sup> **But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ [2 Corinthians 11:3].** And he is going to talk about these false apostles that are plaguing the Corinthian church. Verse 12,

**<sup>12</sup> But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.** (He is saying, "I am going to cut off these opportunities, these false teachers." Notice what he says, verse 13,) **<sup>13</sup> For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers,** (workers of deceit) **disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.** (Verse 14) **<sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds. [2 Corinthians 11:12-15]**

The Pharisees had disguised themselves, and Jesus was showing them what they really looked like so that you could spot them. If you go back, 2 Corinthians chapter 6, we see the apostle Paul base this exhortation to the Corinthians to get separate from these guys. "You have yoked yourselves with these teachers; you have united yourselves with these bad guys, and you are pushing the truth down." And here is what he says to do. 2 Corinthians 6:11:

**<sup>11</sup> Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide.** (Paul was bringing the Word of God! He says,) **<sup>12</sup> You are not restrained by us,** (evidently the false teachers were saying, "Hey that Paul guy, he is holding you back,") **but you are restrained in your own affections. <sup>13</sup> Now in a like exchange-- I speak as to children-- open wide to us also.** (The context is, dump the false apostles, open wide to us, with the

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

truth that we are giving, and notice what he says,) <sup>14</sup> **Do not be bound together with unbelievers;** (these are those false teachers) **for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?** <sup>15</sup> **Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?** <sup>16</sup> **Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people."** <sup>17</sup> **"Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you."** <sup>18</sup> **"And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.** <sup>19</sup> **Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. [2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1]**

I think the context is therefore, get away from these wicked men. Get away from the sin that is associated with false teachers. The Israelites were in a different situation at that time. And even though God was acting; He was going to pull away from them in discipline. He was going to pull away their leadership and oversight. False teachers are hypocrites. They are full of dead man's bones. Their souls need to be redeemed; their sins need to be taken care of. And so we see very clearly, they are hypocrites. They are hypocrites. Maybe some of you are hypocrites. Maybe some of you are trying to do the stuff on the outside; you are working hard! You are trying to do the Christian thing, it is all external, it is all outside; you come do this and this and this, but on the inside you are still full of sin. You are still full of sin. We will see very clearly Jesus is gracious. He is the one who cleans the inside, and then the outside will be clean. When you come to Jesus, recognizing your sin, you cry out to Him, "Lord Jesus I have sinned!" You turn to Him from sin— that is repentance. "Lord, God, I am sorry! Lord God, I confess, I repent of my sin; I agree with You, and I believe Your Son, that You died for us on the cross; I believe You paid the penalty." 'Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.' God's Word says (Romans 10:13).

Well as we continue, notice their hypocrisy is manifest in laying burdens, religious burdens on people. It is just like the cults next door, the Jehovah's Witnesses, really just burdens, they are working their way to heaven. It is like the Mormons, it is these cults who are working their way to heaven; they have got loads on their shoulders. Verse 4 back in Matthew 23, notice the conjunction: <sup>4</sup> **"And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger."** They are hypocrites; they say you have got to do all this stuff, but they are not even willing to do it themselves. Heavy loads. Religious burdens. And again, some of you have placed yourself under a heavy load; you are trying to follow God; you have got all this weight, all these things that you think God wants you to do, or someone has told you God wants you to do: "I have got to do this, I have got to do this," it is a heavy load. It is a weight; it is not a relationship with God. Remember what Jesus said back in Matthew 11:28,

<sup>28</sup> **"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.** (He says,)

<sup>29</sup> **"Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me,** (and it is the only time in Scripture that

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

Jesus describes His insides,) **for I am gentle and humble in heart;** (that is amazing, an amazing God) **and you shall find rest for your souls. [Matthew 11:28-29]**

If you have been trying to work your way— even coming to a good church where you are hearing the truth, but yet you have not been redeemed— you are trying to do everything I am sharing— you *cannot* do everything I share unless you have been redeemed by Christ. It is a heavy weight and a burden. And Jesus says come to me. Come to me. And He will give you rest, rest for your soul. He will clean the inside of the cup and then the outside will be clean.

So then, back to our passage. These bad guys are self-appointing; they are hypocrites putting heavy loads, and notice what we see next, they are self-elevating; they are motivated by a love for man's approval, a love for man's approval. Let's read through our passage, verse 1:

**<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; <sup>3</sup> therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds;** (You see, the Lord Jesus had to affirm the reality that the Scriptural portions should be obeyed, but yet in context He was going to warn them about these wicked men. You see, but He says,) **for they say things, and do not do them.** (According to their deeds) **<sup>4</sup> "And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.** (Now verse 5) **<sup>5</sup> "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men;** (they do everything to be noticed by men. This is great insight from the Living God into the heart of bad guys, so that we can spot them and not be taken captive— either eternally led to hell for the unsaved, or temporarily side-tracked for us true believers. He says, "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men;) **for they broaden their phylacteries,** (we will talk about the phylacteries in a minute) **and lengthen the tassels of their garments. <sup>6</sup> "And they love the place of honor** (they love the place of honor, they love the place of honor) **at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup> and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi. [Matthew 23:1-7]**

They love it. They love it. In contrast to what they do not do— they do not do what they are supposed to do, they preach it but they do not do it— and in contrast to this, Jesus says here is what they do do. They do everything for man's approval. They do not obey the Word— they say it but they do not obey it— but what they do do in contrast, is to be noticed by men. Everything to be noticed by men. Motivated. Now the term, "be noticed," it is the Greek word 'theaomai,' it is where we get our word 'theater,' it means it is a show! It is a show; they do everything to be noticed. False teachers do it to be noticed. They do it to be beheld by men. Remember what we saw in Matthew chapter 6— let's just briefly look there quickly, Matthew chapter 6. Jesus says,

**<sup>1</sup>"Beware of practicing** (or "doing," same word) **your righteousness before men to be noticed by them;** (beware! Of doing your righteousness to be noticed by men)

## Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

**otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup> "When therefore you give alms, (these were religious things, the context was religious actions; it was praying, it was giving, it was fasting. Beware, the Pharisees, they were hypocrites, they did it for everyone to see) "When therefore you give alms, (that is giving) do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. (Or really glorified by men; the hypocrites want men to give them glory) Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. [Matthew 6:1-2]**

And later we see the hypocrites are on their way to hell. They get what they want; like that now, they got their reward— that is the accolades of man— and the end result would be hell because of their sin. "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men;" Matthew 23.

Hypocrites were not saved, they were on their way to hell, and they want glory from men. That is the motive underneath false teachers; they want people to give them accolades. Then we see in other passages, certainly it is for other reasons too— the sexual benefits, the immorality, all those different things, they do it for that, the greed. Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness, but here we see another aspect; they love man's approval; they love the elevation that comes from being a teacher. They love it. It is a false teacher. We see the Pharisees in John chapter 12, they loved the approval of man rather than the approval of God, John 12:43. And I want to ask you: do you serve, believer, first of all, do you serve for the approval of man? Or God? If you are a believer you are in great sin if you do; you need to confess it. But those who do not know Christ, they serve for what people will say, not for what God has declared.

And notice He gives an example here: "They broaden their phylacteries." And what are phylacteries? They were these little leather cases that held the Scriptures that they were told in Deuteronomy 8 that they were to bind to them, and they took it literally they did not take it to their heart, and they would make these tubes bigger so that people could see they were men of the Word. And someone said earlier, they got their phylacteries from a phylactery factory, (laughter). But they would broaden them; they broaden these phylacteries so they could be seen! How spiritual they are. And they also lengthen the tassels of their garments. The tassels refer to the four corners of the outer garment that the Israelite was to wear, according to Numbers 15:38 and Deuteronomy 22:12, they made it larger to be seen by men, to be noticed. It is a show, it is a theater show, "Look at me I am so spiritual!"

Folks we had a family here that turned out to be apostate. What do I mean? They really were not saved. And when they were here they did so much stuff. They were good at what they did too, but it was very evident it was outward. When you called their house, their recorder would say something like, "Hi, Psalm something says...," and they would go on and on, and all this stuff in this fake voice. You know we did not see the sin at that time, so we just said okay. And then they left in sin. And I was always uneasy about it. And it was very clear afterwards that the same time they have got the Bible running in their house and verses everywhere, that they were sinning at the same time. They do it to be noticed by men.

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

I want to ask you, what is your motive for serving Christ? Is it to be seen by men? What is your motive? Those of you who want to teach, what is your motive for wanting to teach? Is it because God has equipped you and you have a burning desire to share His Word in obedience, or do you want to be noticed by men? What is your desire when you serve here? Is it for people to see how well you are cleaning? What is your desire? The bad guys did everything to be noticed by men, that was their complete motivation.

One last illustration. I pastored a church that was in a dead denomination— and then people got saved—what I mean by a dead denomination was that no one was saved originally, they just did the rituals. And their board had gotten saved through a Bible study, and they called the seminary and said they wanted someone to come teach them the Word, help them lead this ungodly denomination. And we came there, and this church was full of plaques! So-and-so's door, so-and-so's pew, so-and-so's this— it was all about what they gave! And we tore those things down the first day! And you know what, the people who were saved did not have a problem with it. But the people who were not saved had a great problem with it. Because it was all about being noticed by men.

What about you? Do you do your righteousness to be seen by men? Do you love, as we will see, the approval of men, or God? And again, we all sin, folks, we as believers can fall into it. We can fall into the trap, true brother and sister, to want the approval of man rather than God. Do not do it. ***"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven [Matthew 6:1].*** Let me share Paul's heart just as we finish up here— turn with me to Galatians 1, Paul's heart. The apostle Paul did everything to be noticed by men. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees. He was the religious dude of dudes. He was the guy. And when he got saved he changed, because God changed the inside of the cup, because He forgave him of his great sin. Galatians 1:9, Paul says:

***<sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.*** (Let him go to hell—that is what accursed means, 'anathema') ***<sup>10</sup> For am I now*** (he says, explaining) ***seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. [Galatians 1:9-10]***

You see, we have got teachers all throughout the church who are striving to please man with the music, with everything, rather than teaching the Word of God which convicts us of our sin and helps us to be right with the Lord. Paul says, "I'm not striving to please men!" We see it in 1 Thessalonians 2, he says, ***<sup>4</sup> but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts [1 Thessalonians 2:4].*** Brothers and sisters, we need to be on guard against that sin. We need to be on guard. If we are doing things to be noticed by men, it is a trap; it is sin, and it is wrong. It is inconsistent with the nature of those who know Christ. It is consistent with the nature of those on their way to hell.

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

Well lastly here notice, these religious leaders love man's honor and respect, they love it. Verse 6 back in Matthew 23: "6 And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 and respectful greetings in the market places..." They love being elevated by man in front of them, they love the place of honor at banquets, "Come on up here, Rabbi so-and-so," "ohhh, ohhh, my phylacteries are crooked..." they love it, they love it! They love the place of honor at banquets. This is what drives phony religious leaders. Spot it. Spot it. Do not shoot down the good guys. Run away from the bad guys. They love it.

We see a characteristic of someone who does not know Christ is a self-love. John 14, I will read it for you, Jesus says in verse 23, He says **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."** 24 **"He who does not love Me does not keep My words;** (that's just plain and simple, right?) **and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me [John 14:23b-24].** 1 Corinthians 16:22, Paul says that the end of this letter, 22 **If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. (-anathema) [1 Corinthians 16:22].** The only way you can have a love for the Lord is to have your sins forgiven, and then you will love Him. You will love Him, for who He really is. God who bore your wickedness and sin for you, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

They love it. And notice also in our passage, they love the chief seats in the synagogue. The synagogue was the gathering place, meeting place. It was after the temple was torn down when they were exiled in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, they gathered in meeting places called synagogues, and that tradition continued. And they loved the chief seats, the seats of authority; they loved the religious authority that was given with that. They loved it. Religious authority in front of men. We see this in 3 John, verse 9, John writes, 9 **I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say [3 John 1:9].** Bad guys love the prominence before men. Jesus is warning them, His last warning publically folks, and we should take heed to it.

And lastly, they love the titles that man gives. The beginning of verse 7, "...and respectful greetings in the market places," they love these greetings, not just, "Hey, brother, how is it going?" they love the respectful greetings, "Ohhh Rabbi so-and-so...welcome!" They love these exalting greetings. And then lastly, they loved titles given by man, they love continually, habitually being called "Rabbi" by man. They love it. They loved it. Pastor. "Ohh!" Senior pastor. "Ohh!" They love it! They loved it! The word 'rabbi' means "my teacher, my master." And we are going to see next week that Jesus says, "Do not ever address someone in this manner." There is only one teacher, rabbi, there is only one Father and there is only one leader, and we are going to see the trinity is who we should be giving honor and glory to, God in human flesh, not people. They loved the "Oh Doctor so-and-so. Oh pastor so-and-so." It is just a manifestation of pride, and folks, there is no place for that in the church. And folks I see it in the church. I see it in the conferences for evangelicals, where, "Who is speaking?" Doctor so-and-so, Doctor so-and-so," all this stuff! Just teach. The bad guys love titles; may we never love titles. May we take this to heart. It is an evidence of the bad guys. They loved the self-elevating approval of men. Friend are you in ministry? Do you love how people respond to you? Do you love their approval rather than

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

the Lord? I would say examine yourself. Brother and sister may we never fall back into this. May we never fall back into this worldliness; may we watch out for those who are like this.

As I shared in the beginning, I shared about the necessity to identify the enemy so that we would not shoot down the friendlies. There are godly men saying, "Those guys are not good," and people say, "But, they love the Lord, and this and that" and they say, "Well, look at their lives; look at what they are saying; they are not good!" Folks, we need to take the Word of God and allow that to be our authority and we need to respond rightly, it is for our own protection. Beware. It takes preparation and study in the Word of God and real discernment in the moment. It is life and death.

So we have seen today false religious leaders are self-appointed; God did not appoint them. Secondly, they are hypocrites at the core, they say but they do not do. And thirdly we see that they love the approval of men. They love it. They love it. Now Jesus was sharing with the crowds— the crowds had not received Him yet, they were actually going to say "crucify him." The disciples had received Him, all except for Judas. For those of you who have rejected Christ, maybe you have tried, you have heavy burdens on you. You have tried to do the Christian thing; you have tried to do the stuff, and you are just weighed down. Jesus says, "Come to me you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28)." You need your sins forgiven; Jesus will forgive them. He died for your sins on the cross, and if you cry out to Jesus, "Lord Jesus I am sinful; I have sinned against You, and I believe You died and rose from the dead, that you bore my sins on the cross." Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

And then for those of us believers, we need to be warned. We need to be warned. We need to test those who are leading us with the Word of God, we need to test it. We need to beware; we cannot be naïve, if someone uses the Bible here and there a little bit, we need to test them with the Word of God. And if we spot them we need to be graciously willing to snatch people out of the fire, those who have yielded to those bad guys. I am going to close with Jude verse 19 turn with me there and we will close. Right before Revelation, right at the end of your Bibles. Jude has just given an entire list of all the things that bad guys are underneath, false teachers, who have crept in unnoticed, he has just given a long list, and now he is going to exhort believers at the end of this long list, I am going to read the last part of it. Jude 19:

**<sup>19</sup> These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.** (That is the bad guys; he is just summing it up. But he says to the believers,) **<sup>20</sup> But you, beloved,** (in light of the false teachers, you can read that on your own time) **building yourselves up on your most holy faith** (the faith that was delivered, the truth that we believe); **praying in the Holy Spirit;** **<sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in the love of God,** (not self-love, right?) **waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.** **<sup>22</sup> And have mercy on some, who are doubting;** (that term "who are doubting," 'diakrino', it means who are discerning back and forth, and it is a bad translation. It means "have mercy on some, making a judgment." Some translations you will have say "make a judgment," I think that is a better translation, "have mercy on some, make a judgment")

# Matthew 23:1-7

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 8/26/12

***<sup>23</sup> save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. (Jud 1:19-23 NAS)***

When you see brothers and sisters, people in the fire of these false believers, we should have mercy towards them, we should snatch them out of the fire. We should share the truth with them. We should see that which is within our ability that they are aware of the truth that they might turn and follow Christ.

## Prayer

Father we thank You for Your Word. It is just clear. It is really clear what Your Son has said today, as He has warned us and warned those back then concerning these false religious leaders. I pray that this church would be able to spot false religious leaders, whether they ever come to this pulpit, Lord God, that we would be able to spot it. And we would know what those who are following You should look like. Father I thank You for the lessons that we have seen also, for those of us who are saved, that we would not do anything for man's approval; reprove us, Lord God, that we would confess and walk rightly. And again I pray for anyone here that does not know You, that they would come to Your Son and receive rest for their souls, that they would be rescued from their eternal state. Through Christ, it is in His name we pray, amen.

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