

# Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

## What is Jesus' View of False Religious Leaders? – PART 1

### Prayer

Father, You are faithful; You are compassionate; You are gracious; You are merciful. We are so thankful for Your love and Your mercy and Your kindness and Your grace manifested in Jesus Christ. We are so thankful You sent Your Son, Jesus, to come, to take on human flesh, to live the perfect life; a man of sorrows acquainted with grief, One from whom men hid their face. We are so thankful that He came and He died for our sins and that He rose from the dead. Father, we praise You for Your Son Jesus. And I pray today that You would use Your Word to pierce our hearts; that those of us here who know You, that we would be as Your Word says, we would be reprov'd and corrected and trained in righteousness. And those here who do not know You, that they would be pierced, that they would be saying in their heart of hearts unto You, "What must I do to be saved?" and that they turn and cry out to Christ for salvation. Father, I pray we would take Your Word seriously. We would fear You, we would reverence You, we would give You the honor due Your name. We ask You to bless Your Word as it goes out. We pray this in Your Son's precious name. Amen.

### Sermon

What is your view of false teachers? What is your view of those who distort, or twist, or omit elements of the true gospel? I will be honest with you, as I look at a lot of the evangelical church today, it does not seem like there is much of a concern about false teaching. It really does not seem that way. And I have found that evangelical churches in a sense are pretty good at spotting the obvious. They can spot the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the International Churches of Christ— those obvious cults that substitute works for faith in Christ, or take away from the reality of who Christ really is, that He is God who came in human flesh. They are pretty good at spotting that, but often we do not see the things that are subtle and deceitful. And I see in churches these days a wholesale allowance at times of false teaching through books or whatever it might be. You see, sometimes I think people do not realize like Paul said (and God said through Paul) that we would know and understand that evil men and impostors would proceed from bad to worse. In 2 Corinthians 11, the apostle Paul is dealing with the false apostles who have wooed the Corinthians away from the truth of God brought forth from Paul in that relationship. And he talks about those apostles, he says in 2 Corinthians 11:13:

***<sup>13</sup> For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, (or workers of deceit) disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is not surprising (but it is for a lot of people, but he says here: Therefore it is not surprising) if his servants also disguise themselves as***

# Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

***servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds. [2 Corinthians 11:13-15]***

God's Word makes it clear that they disguise themselves. We see in the book of Jude, that God says through Jude that certain men have crept in unnoticed, who turn the grace of God into licentiousness— into a license to sin. These are ungodly men; they are corrupt men, who are on their way to hell as we will see. And there are multiple warnings in Scripture. As the apostle Paul made his final goodbye personally to the Ephesian elders, he made it clear in Acts 20, that savage wolves *would* come in among them, not sparing the flock, and men from among your own selves will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. And he said therefore, remembering day and night for three years I did not cease to admonish with tears. The reality is, God has said in His Word there are threats to our faith in Jesus Christ.

What is your view of those threats? I find it amazing in churches these days, like when that Shack book came, that people thought it was okay! It is false teaching; it portrays a false view of God not from the Word of God, and there were men, evil men, who allowed it to be brought forth. And yet the Christian church, the evangelical church, pondered whether it was okay or not; it is bad! It is bad. Obviously many evangelical churches these days do not seem to be very concerned about false teaching. What is your view of false teachers? What is God's view of false teachers?

Today we are going to see Jesus' view of false religious leaders; we are going to see two deadly woes out of seven today, and we are going to see two eternal warnings for us. Would you turn in your Bibles with me to Matthew 23? And we have been going through the book of Matthew— we are not just coming and telling you about false teachers— we are going through our study in the book of Matthew. And we have seen in the book of Matthew very clearly, the king introduced, King Jesus. He is the King of the Jews, He is the Lord! Jesus means, "The Lord is Salvation" and He will save His people from their sins. We have seen Him validated and verified; we have seen the responses to His coming. We have seen the way prepared by John the Baptist, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

We have seen the Lord Jesus come to His own, those sitting in darkness. Now the Jews were a pious people, they believed they were following the Lord of Scripture. You would talk to basically any Jew of that time and they would say, "Yes, we follow the Lord," but yet His Word says they were sitting in darkness in the shadow of death; they were still in their sins. We saw even Jesus call them to repentance very clearly, and belief. We saw Him share the truth concerning Himself, the truth concerning what they had heard, and what the living God says. We saw the warnings, that they need to enter through the narrow gate, that narrow gate being Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by Him. We saw Him affirm His teaching and preaching with the miraculous that affirmed His identity as the Messiah and the Living God in the flesh. We saw the rejection of the present generation. They rejected Him; they did not reject Him outright— they were indifferent— they marveled at His stuff, but they did not repent.

## *Matthew 23:13-15*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12*

We will see a little later what we saw in chapter 11, where Jesus says woe to these cities who had rejected— they had seen these miracles affirming the truth of what Jesus said, and they did not repent. Their judgment is going to be worse than Sodom and Gomorrah as we will see. We saw the leaders becoming hostile and angry, desiring to kill Him throughout, desiring to trip Him up. And we saw very clearly the Lord Jesus retreat from the ministry to the multitudes because they had closed their ears and closed their eyes, and so the Lord God pulled away from them with parables, that seeing they would not see, and hearing they would not hear. He started to teach very clearly to His disciples in that context.

And we have seen that three years have gone by and He is in the last week of His life here on earth before His crucifixion. Remember the last portion is a turning point— the last third of the book of Matthew is about the last week of the Lord Jesus' life. And in this last week, remember we saw the not-so-triumphal entry where the King of kings and Lord of lords is not coming as a victorious king or general, He is coming as a humble servant on a colt. And He is weeping— Luke chapter 19— He is weeping over their rejection; they did not recognize the day of visitation. God had visited them and was calling for repentance, and they did not recognize it, and His heart was broken over that.

We saw Him come to the temple and cleanse it from those who had made it a den of robbers, a house of merchandise, those who were profiting in their wicked greed over a so-called relationship with the living God. We saw Him cleanse them out, and then we saw Jesus, after cleansing the wickedness out of the temple, teaching and preaching and receiving worship in the temple. And we saw the Pharisees and leaders get up enough guts to ask Him by what authority does He do these things? And He would not answer them very clearly, but He exposed their unbelief with a question to them: "Was John's baptism from heaven or from earth?" And they did not answer because they are hypocrites and they are liars.

We saw very clearly, the Lord Jesus share three parables specifically directed at the religious leaders— and they knew it— parables of condemnation. How graciously God had reached out over and over again and offered them salvation, and they had turned away in their wickedness. We saw then three questions from the wicked leaders to entrap Him to ultimately deliver Him up to the Romans that they could kill Him. And in the end of chapter 22 we saw that Jesus Christ turns the tables on the questioners and asks them a question: "Whose Son is the Christ?" And the answer— they got it right— He is the son of David, He is in the line of David; He is the prophesied Messiah, the anointed One, the Christ, but yet the Lord Jesus reveals that they do not understand one very important thing: how is it that David in the Spirit calls Him Lord? How is it that the human Christ is also God? How is it that he calls Him Lord? You see, and the answer is God became a man. But they were hardened in their sin and they were silent from that point. A gracious God even still giving them opportunities to repent.

And then we move into chapter 23 which is our Lord Jesus' last, final public reproof. He is in the temple complex, and He is going to give a scathing reproof of the wicked leaders of Israel. And as we have looked at this, we saw very clearly in the beginning that He was talking to the multitudes in the first seven verses, and to the disciples, and He began to share and unveil the wickedness as He had before, of the religious leaders. That they were self-appointed, they placed themselves in the chair of Moses. That they were those who were hypocritical, that they would say one thing and then do another thing. And

# Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

that they were extremely prideful, motivated by the love and approval of men. They *loved* as the Word says, the place of honor at banquets; they *loved* the chief seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces, and they *loved* being called “Rabbi,” which means “My exalted teacher.” They loved it! They did everything for their love of man’s approval, not the love of God. The apostle Paul at the end of 1 Corinthians says **“If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be anathema...” [1 Corinthians 16:22a]**. Let him be accursed! They loved themselves. They loved themselves. Everything to be noticed by men, *theaomai*, it is a theater show because they are hypocrites.

And then from that we saw last week what leaders are not to be, as the Lord Jesus talks to His disciples. “This is what they are like, you guys; this is what you are not to be, do not be like them; do not take the term “rabbi” in the sense that they take it; do not be called “father” in the sense that you are taking that which is only due to God the Father; do not be called “leader” when you are taking away from the true leadership of the head of the church, which is Jesus Christ.” Only God’s Spirit is the authoritative teacher, we saw; only God the Father is the Spiritual Father; we are all brothers, and only Christ is the authoritative leader. And if you in any way, shape, or form are taking credit through those titles, you are like those wicked hypocrites.

And then from this point we jumped to a very serious passage— a passage which lays forth the most scathing condemnation of the wicked rulers of Jesus’ time— who by the way would look very good on the outside. A scathing condemnation, probably the most scathing we find in Scripture, from our Lord. It is a very serious passage that lays forth God’s view of those who were leading people, as we will see, to hell. It is very important that we have the same view. So what is His view of false religious leaders? And we are going to see today, out of seven, two deadly woes, and they should be two eternal warnings for us. Again, turn in your Bibles to Matthew 23, and we are going to be looking at verses 13-15, and I want to back up and read 1-15 right now. And in your own time you should be reading through Matthew 23; you should be seeing the way in which the Lord lays this out, so that you are prepared as we come to it, to test it to see if what you are hearing is so. You should take it home and look at the Word and say, “Is what he said correct?” Matthew 23:1:

***<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; 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; 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. (And***

# Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

we have looked at those in the last few weeks. And now we move to our passage today, verse 13) <sup>13</sup> **"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, 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. <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. [Matthew 23:1-15]**

Serious portion of Scripture. And if you have read through all of Matthew 23 you will realize there are 7 woes. And we have at the end of those 7 woes a prophetic transition concerning the guilt of these wicked leaders, moving into the transition from His first coming to His second coming, as we will see. Threaded with Christ's desire for them to have responded, "O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem..."

Now when you were reading you were probably saying, "Wait a second— I read in chapter 23 this week, and I was preparing in advance, and I read that there were 8 woes." And if you did, you were correct. But what we are going to see today in your Bibles, if they are honest translations, which the normal translations will, they will say in your Bibles verse 14 is not in most manuscripts. They will give you a little note. And it is not that the truth given in verse 14 is not true— we see this other truth given in the book of Mark and the book of Luke. It is thought that maybe an over-zealous scribe thought that it should be in this place, but the earlier manuscripts do not contain this verse, so today we are going to look at 13 and 15, and when we go through the books of Mark and Luke we will look at the truth seen in verse 14. But there are 7 woes that we will see, so we will look at verses 13 and 15 today.

So with that in mind, we will see first of all that false religious leaders are eternally dangerous because they block people from coming to Christ. They are eternally dangerous. Notice again verse 13. <sup>13</sup> "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, 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." Our passage begins with the term or the word "but—" it is a conjunction. We see that He is comparing or contrasting something here. What is it that He is contrasting? He has just spoken very clearly about the wicked Pharisees to His disciples, and how His disciples should not be like them. "Do not be like this, do not take these terms, do not do this, do not take the glory that is for God alone." "But," turning to the crowd of Pharisees which were in the temple, "But woe to you..." You guys, do not do what they are doing, "But woe to you..." You can see that scene. This last week of His life He is taking control of His temple, and He is teaching and preaching and declaring truth authoritatively, and He is telling His disciples not to be like them, and then He moves from that to directly condemning them in front of the multitudes there, the great crowds. "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites."

## Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

The term “woe” which we will see seven times here in 23, is a verbal statement of condemnation and impending judgment— you do not want God saying woe to you. It is a reproach; it is an eternal reprimand by the Living God. Remember what we saw and I mentioned it earlier— turn with me back to Matthew 11:20. It is a reproach, it is a condemnation, and it is a declaration of eternal judgment— it is not a good thing. There is this wrong view of Jesus that only takes parts of who He is and exalts those elements of His character, and does not exalt other areas of truth rightly in balance as we see in the Word of God. Jesus is a loving, gracious, wonderful Savior, but yet is He is also God— a holy God, a righteous God and the judge. He will not allow sin to go, even though He was the one who went to the cross. But here we see His woes. Matthew 11:20 <sup>20</sup> **Then He** (speaking of Jesus) **began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent [Matthew 11:20].**

And remember in the context of Matthew, it is assumed that you know this, that there was the teaching and then the miracles that affirmed it. We saw that in a large picture between chapters 4 and 9. There was the Sermon on the Mount and then the miraculous, and it was bracketed by these statements that He went around preaching and teaching and healing. We see those things that affirmed. And so with that in mind, He said, <sup>20</sup> “Then He began to reproach the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because” —why?— “they did not repent.” That is what the text says. Woe to you. Here is our statement:

<sup>21</sup> **“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup> “Nevertheless I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, (Yes, there are varying levels of judgment, and He says here) **than for you. <sup>23</sup> “And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? (You are not going to heaven, are you?) **You shall descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. <sup>24</sup> “Nevertheless I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.” [Matthew 11:21-24]******

And folks, I quiver to think of how much truth some of you are hearing here—much more than they heard in the day of Sodom, much more than truth about Christ—and I shake to think of anyone here who is hearing the truth of Christ who is rejecting that truth. We will see very clearly He says to these Pharisees (back in our passage), and scribes, “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites—” it is a scathing rebuke and reproof of the false teachers as we will see.

Now we have shared this all along in the book of Matthew and I am not going to get into it, but the Pharisees were the strictest religious sect, as Paul would say in Acts 26:5. The term ‘Pharisee’ meant “separated one,” and as we have seen throughout the book of Matthew, they were religious, self-righteous, isolationist, legalistic, nationalistic men, who as we will see today were on their way to hell. The scribes were the experts in the law; they were the legal beagles of the time, but as we know they were equally evil, having rejected Jesus Christ, and they are being condemned in this statement here. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.” Hypocrites. Remember when we saw— we are not

## Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

going to get into it— they are hypocrites; they did everything to be seen by man, as we will see later on, these woes, the outside was clean but the inside was full of dead man's bones. They were not redeemed, and though they acted as though they had a relationship with the living God, and they were very "righteous," they were ultimately very unrighteous, and we will see that today.

So why is Jesus condemning them? What is the direct reason we see here? What is the first and foremost reason these are being condemned? What is the first and foremost reason? Verse 13, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because..." Now as you go through chapter 23, you are going to see "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees," and then a statement, "because..." and sometimes, in the NASB it says "for—" it is the exact same word in the Greek language—just think of the term "because." And "for" can be translated "because," right? "Because—" Well, because why? "Because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter" —an explanation here— "in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." We have a formula for Matthew 23; He declares a woe and then explains why. "You are eternally condemned, here is why, you are eternally condemned, here is why."

So why are they condemned here? It is pretty simple: they close off the kingdom of heaven to men. He says: "Because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men." The term "shut off" means really to shut, it is used almost exclusively in Scripture to speak of a door shutting. "You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven. You close it off;" it is not hard to understand. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, because you close the door of the kingdom of heaven from men, you shut it off.

And what is this idea of the kingdom of heaven? We have seen it all throughout the book of Matthew; we have seen the parallel statement in other gospels, "the kingdom of God..." So what is "the kingdom of heaven," or "the kingdom of God?" Remember we saw John the Baptist in chapter 3 saying, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Well who was at hand? It was the Lord Jesus Himself, the King! The Lord Jesus Himself preached the same message, Matthew 4:17, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" And if you will remember that kingdoms are associated with kings. The kingdom is the sphere and reign of the king. And in the book of Matthew Jesus is clearly laid forth as the King. He is the King of kings, the Lord of lords, He is the King of the Jews. He is the King of heaven, He is the one who reigns over; He is the one who reigns over also the hearts of the redeemed, and He is the one who will reign over the earth in the millennium after He brings forth His judgment.

You see because of sin each one of us is separated from the kingdom; we are not, because of sin, in the kingdom of God. We are separated, but when we place our faith in Jesus Christ, repenting of sins, we are transferred into the sphere and reign of King Jesus, Colossians chapter 1: <sup>13</sup> ***For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,*** <sup>14</sup> ***in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins [Colossians 1:13-14].***

When you turn to Christ from sin, believing in Him, recognizing you deserve His wrath and judgment and yet He has paid the price in your place; He has died and risen from the dead. When you turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, when you turn to Him, and believe in Him in that context, you are transferred

## Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

out of darkness into light. You are transferred into His kingdom because of the forgiveness of sins that is brought about in Christ by the power of what He has done, as we see. The kingdom of heaven— and also as we have seen clearly in Scripture, an entrance into— is associated with salvation. When you enter the kingdom it is associated with salvation, we have seen that in the book of Matthew. When you are forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ, you enter into a relationship with the Lord Jesus— you become one who is in His kingdom. You are under the sphere and reign of the King; you were in rebellion and in your sin before; you are now in the realm and reign of the King.

So very clearly our passage is basically saying, as we know from Matthew, they were blocking people from becoming saved. There is no worse sin I believe. There is no worse sin than blocking someone from becoming saved. This is the first thing the Lord Jesus says; we have to recognize what God's view is of false teachers. We need to see it the way He sees it. You shut off the kingdom of heaven from men. You shut the door. Woe to you; you shut the door of salvation. Woe to you. And notice He gives a further explanation, middle of verse 13, "...for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." He says "Woe to you, you shut it off and here is how you do it."

First of all, it is because you are not saved yourselves. He says, "...for you do not enter in yourselves." False teachers are not saved. They disguise themselves as workers of righteousness; they are imposters, they are evil men. Do not be endeared to someone who is giving a false gospel. Do not be endeared to anyone who is a false teacher. They do not enter. They are not saved. They may say, "Lord, Lord, did we not do this..." they may give their long prayers; they may do many religious things, but as Jesus would say in chapter 7, "You will know them by their fruits." You see the fruit of their ministries, ungodly people who are not following Christ, sin is rampant. You will know them by their fruits. The people who think they know Christ but do not know Christ. They are imposters.

And God makes this clear in many places, and I am not going to go through all of them— there are so many places. Titus chapter 1, verse 16, he is speaking of the many that are to be silenced by elders, that are not to be allowed, who teach things they should not teach. Titus chapter 1:16, he says concerning them: <sup>16</sup> ***They profess to know God, (they say they know god, but he says here,) but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed [Titus 1:16].*** The Word is clear that false teachers will not enter the kingdom of God, they are not saved. If someone comes with a different gospel, they omit portions of the gospel—they twist it, they omit it, whatever it is—we will see this in a minute, they are not saved. They do not enter in. They do not enter in. Bob read this in 2 Peter— let's go there, I want to share it again. Their judgment is ready. 2 Peter, chapter 2. God does not miss a beat. You may be plagued by these wicked men, but God does not miss a beat, just like He did not miss a beat with the angels who sinned, just like He did not miss a beat with Sodom and Gomorrah. He is not missing a beat with them. 2 Peter, chapter 2.

<sup>1</sup> ***But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers*** (That is important for our understanding theologically. In the past God had prophets; there were false prophets who mirrored that, now there are teachers, now there are false teachers who will arise) ***among you,*** (and he says) ***who will secretly***

## Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

**introduce destructive heresies, (it is in secret) even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. <sup>2</sup> And many will follow their sensuality, (that is their fleshliness) and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; <sup>3</sup> and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; (and look at this) their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. [2 Peter 2:1-3]**

And you can read the rest of this passage. It is clear; God doesn't miss it, they are going to be judged. They will arise; they are going to come; they are not saved— they are wicked. They are wicked men, and we see even some are women. We see it in the book of Jude very clearly. Jude says in verse 4 that, **“For certain persons have crept in unnoticed... [Jude 1:4a]** ungodly men. Ungodly men, who deny the master, they deny the Lord! They turn the grace of God into licentiousness; they deny the actual Lordship of Christ in practice by what they do. They give a license for sin, saying it is God's grace. Yes, God is gracious, but God saved us to start being more like Him, not to be sinning more.

So they shut out the kingdom, first of all, “for you do not enter in yourselves—” you are not entering! That is one of the reasons they do it, because they are not saved. It is part of their nature to do wickedness. I think that is part of it right here— they are not saved. But secondly, because of this rotten corrupted nature, having rejected Christ—and they certainly did— here is what they do: “nor,” back to 23, verse 13 at the end, “nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.” They are not entering the kingdom— they are not being saved, they shut the kingdom up, notice— “nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.” The term ‘allow’ means permit— you do not permit it.

This is a very interesting statement, and if you think too much about it you are going to get messed up. Seriously. “They do not allow those going in—” Well, wait a second, if they are going in, aren't they going to go in? Do not think about it too much! Just think about it in context, what Jesus is saying— they do not permit those who are entering to go in. The scribes and Pharisees do not permit those who are entering to go in—that is in the context, those who are being saved! It is a relationship with the King! It is not just, “I am saved,” it is a relationship with Christ. No one is saved apart from a relationship with Jesus Christ, and they inhibit that at the level of Christ as we will see. They prevent it— well how do they do that? What do you mean by that? They get in the way of those who I believe are responding to Christ, we will see this. They get in the way. And they are going to be culpable, and so are those who are turned away. You say, what do you mean?

Let me show you some examples. Matthew 9:31, let's go back and look at this, and we see this in practice with the Pharisees and scribes, how they get in the way, how they get in the way. You see, they were the authoritative teachers, they were those, the religious leaders, they were those who had authority, Matthew 9:31 says:

**<sup>31</sup> But they went out, and spread the news about Him in all that land. <sup>32</sup> And as they were going out, behold, a dumb man, demon-possessed, was brought to Him. (That is, brought to Jesus) <sup>33</sup> And after the demon was cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the**

## Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

**multitudes marveled, saying, "Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel." (They are going, "Wait a second, this is pretty amazing!" But notice what the Pharisees say right away.)<sup>34</sup> But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." [Matthew 9:31-34]**

They came right in and contradicted the truth that was manifested in Christ. We see the same thing in chapter 12. Come to Matthew 12:22. They block off those who are entering, those who are looking at Christ, those who are pondering about Christ who *is* the way, the truth and the life, who is the way that we enter into eternal life. Matthew 12:22:

**<sup>22</sup> Then there was brought to Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. <sup>23</sup> And all the multitudes were amazed, and began to say, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" (They are saying, "Hey, is this the Messiah?" They are pondering the possibility that this is the Christ. And notice what the Pharisees do, they block off the kingdom.) <sup>24</sup> But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." [Matthew 12:22-24]**

Let me give you another example, turn to John chapter 9—a fabulous example where the Lord Jesus heals a blind man born from birth. What an amazing, wonderful thing! John chapter 9—I am not going to go into the whole thing, but you ought to read it because it is so wonderful because the Pharisees and leaders cannot deal with the reality that the guy has actually been healed. And Jesus eventually finds him, and he eventually comes to faith I believe, this blind man. John chapter 9:13:

**<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees him who was formerly blind. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> Again, therefore, the Pharisees also were asking him how he received his sight. (They are questioning him, this blind guy— it is crazy when you read it.) And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see." <sup>16</sup> Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them. <sup>17</sup> They said therefore to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet." (Now later on he is going to come to faith in Jesus, at the end of the chapter. He says here, "He is a prophet.") <sup>18</sup> The Jews therefore did not believe it of him, that he had been blind, and had received sight, (the Jews did not believe because the Pharisees were questioning that. They did not believe because they were twisting it, but notice,) until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, (and it was verified). [John 9:13-18]**

So they were actively trying to dissuade people from believing the truth. They were shutting off the kingdom. They were twisting the reality of what Christ had done; they were attributing it to Satan or

# Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

saying it did not happen at all. They were denying those realities. And then when they could not outright deny it, they attacked Christ Himself as we will see. Very clearly the Pharisees were hindering those who were hearing the preaching and teaching, and seeing the miracles that were affirming, and these false religious leaders did this after Jesus had died and risen from the dead. Turn to 1 Thessalonians, chapter 2, familiar passage for those of us who went through that on Wednesday night. 1 Thessalonians, chapter 2. Remember we saw the wonderful statement from the apostle Paul. We saw it in verse 13:

**<sup>13</sup> And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, (you accepted it as God's Word; you really got saved! And we are so thankful) which also performs its work in you who believe. (It is working out in your lives, and he is going to give an example of how it is working out now, verse 14) <sup>14</sup> For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, (1 Thessalonians 2:14, in the middle) for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, (and now he is talking about the Jews) <sup>15</sup> who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, (and notice this, verse 16: it is an interesting verse) <sup>16</sup> hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they might be saved; [1 Thessalonians 2:13-16a]**

They are hindering the gospel message; they are hindering the truth concerning Jesus; they are getting in the way; they shut off the kingdom! We see this also very clearly throughout Scripture. You see it in the book of Acts; you see that they are not allowing, they are inhibiting the truth of the gospel going out. False teachers were blocking them from coming to Christ. Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life. He is the door, He is the only way one enters into Salvation, He is the narrow gate. Remember what Peter says in the book of Acts chapter 4, he said very clearly, <sup>11</sup> "He (speaking of Jesus) **is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the very corner stone.** (And that is speaking of the leadership, the very corner stone, Christ became. Verse 12) <sup>12</sup> "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:11-12]

Now it is interesting as we see an even clearer view of how we do this in a parallel passage. The Lord Jesus gave a similar condemnation earlier in His ministry. It is not the exact same rebuke, but it is very similar if you read it Luke 11, and in this we have a very interesting expansion, which helps us understand how they hinder and how they shut off. Turn to Luke chapter 11, verse 52. And if you read and back up in Luke— and I am not going to do it today— you go to verse 39 and you read through and you say, "Wow, that sounds really like Matthew 23: woe to you, woe to you—" it is very similar; it is not the exact same, it was a different occasion, but it is the same message, same message.

And if you look at chapter 11, verse 52, listen to this, He says this: <sup>52</sup> "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in

# Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

**you hindered" [Luke 11:52].** Sounds very familiar, doesn't it? You do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those entering! And what are they doing? They take away the key of knowledge. What is He talking about there? What is the key of knowledge? It is a figurative term—that which brings about or opens up knowledge—you take that away!

And what is it? How do we get knowledge of salvation? What is it that gives us that which we could not know apart from God? It is the Word of God. 2 Timothy 3, turn there with me, and I want to read verse 13. 2 Timothy 3:13. They take away the key of knowledge! They hinder people from entering. This is what they do. We have got to see it and understand it, otherwise we might be endeared towards those that God says, "woe" to. 2 Timothy 3:13. The whole book of 2 Timothy, Paul is saying to Timothy— this is his last words to him— "Hey, here is all the junk they are saying, here is all the junk they are doing, here is the Word of God; here is the junk they are doing, here is the Word of God; here is the junk they are doing, here is the Word of God. Here are the false guys, here is the Word of God." It is a comparison the whole time—Timothy, stay focused on the Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:13, and we will see this here:

**<sup>13</sup> But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse,** (that is what I mentioned earlier in the message) **deceiving and being deceived.** (That is the reality of what is going to happen. Now, he is speaking to Timothy) **<sup>14</sup> You, however,** (You do not have to be like that, Timothy) **continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them;** **<sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. [2 Timothy 3:13-15].**

"Timothy, stay with the Scripture." And then he is going to say, "'All Scripture is inspired by God,' stay with the Word of God, that will give you the wisdom to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ." And they take away the key of knowledge. False teachers lessen, they pull away the Word of God. They take it away. False teachers inhibit people from entering— twisting, perverting the truth, ultimately concerning Christ. They pervert it, they add to it, or they omit from it. Let me share some examples. Turn to 1 John chapter 4, we see concerning one area where they take away, and they are false prophets, they are called that, clearly. 1 John 4. They take away from the fact that Jesus came in human flesh; they are false teachers. 1 John, chapter 4, verse 1.

**<sup>1</sup> Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God;** (Now he is not saying there is a spiritual sphere out here or all over the place, you know, "I am testing spirits; I am thinking 'Ooh that might be a spirit, am I covered?'" He is saying, basically, if you look at it,) **because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; <sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; [1 John 4:1-3a]**

## Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

He is talking about the spirit behind those false teachers; he is saying these guys, if they do not say that Jesus came in the flesh they are not from God— you know right away. And he will say later on up in verse 6, if they do not listen to us, the apostles, they are not from God either— they do not accept the Word of God. You cannot be saved if you take away the reality of the humanity of Jesus Christ. You cannot be saved if you take away the deity of Jesus Christ. We have the seminaries that are dead who take away the deity of Jesus Christ. They are evil men and impostors, woe to them, as God would say. In the book of Galatians we have people who did not take away from the gospel, but they added to the gospel. They added works: “Jesus, plus...” And listen to what Paul says in Galatians chapter 1, verse 6. Turn with me to Galatians 1:6. He says,

***<sup>6</sup> I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him (You are deserting the Lord!) who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; (I am amazed you are deserting Him for a different gospel. He says,) <sup>7</sup> which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to (look at that) distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. <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. [Galatians 1:6-9]***

And if you read the rest of Galatians, the gospel that was being presented to these believers was a gospel that added in works! They take away, or they add. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast, as we see in Ephesians 2.

There are people who pervert the gospel by leaving out repentance! What did Jesus say? Mark chapter 1. It says, <sup>14</sup> ***And after John had been taken into custody, (Mark 1:14) Jesus came into Galilee, (and look at what it says,) preaching the gospel of God, (Mark 1:14, He is preaching the gospel,) <sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" [Mark 1:14-15].*** Repentance is not a work, it is an evidence of faith. When you trust in God you are turning from your sin to Jesus Christ, you are recognizing your sin is wretched, wicked, and deserving of judgment. You turn in helplessness, total humility, “I cannot stop, I need you, Lord God. I trust that Jesus died for my sins.” Luke chapter 24, I will read it for you, Jesus said: <sup>46</sup> ***and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; <sup>47</sup> and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [Luke 24:46-47].*** False teachers leave out repentance.

We have false teachers around here: they say “Try Jesus.” That is not the gospel! We do not try Jesus. We count the cost. We recognize that He is calling us to totally give up our lives to follow Him. We recognize it will cost us everything. We turn to Him in repentance and faith, we do not give him a try. It is a false gospel. These men, woe to them. There are also those who leave out the Lordship of Christ. It clearly needs to be understood and it is clearly involved in salvation. Romans chapter 10— and let’s turn there— Romans 10:8. And while you are turning there, Bob read it earlier, there are those who do not

## Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

turn people from their sin, Jeremiah 23. False teachers will not turn you from sin in their gospel or in their preaching. They will give you pep talks but not conviction from the Word of God. Romans 10:8,

***<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"-- that is, the word of faith (it is all about faith; it is not works) which we are preaching, <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; <sup>10</sup> for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; <sup>13</sup> for "Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved." [Romans 10:8-13]***

Colossians 2:6: ***<sup>6</sup> As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, [Colossians 2:6]***

False teachers leave out the Lordship of Christ; they have a gospel that He is not Lord, you are still Lord. "You can come to Jesus and be the Lord of your life and you will eventually move up this ladder to kind of trust Him." Folks, it is not the gospel! It is not the gospel. False teachers do not address sin. They turn the grace of God into licentiousness. Let's turn there now to Jude, right before Revelation. We should not be endeared towards evil men who omit things from Scripture, brothers and sisters. We need to call it as it is, not from our emotions or attitudes or opinions, but from the Word of God, the Word of God. Jude 1:3-4:

***<sup>3</sup> Beloved, (it is right before Revelation,) while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith (that is the body of truth that we believe concerning Christ, it is the Word of God) which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Why do we need to contend earnestly for the faith—why?) <sup>4</sup> For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. [Jude 1:3-4]***

They take God's grace, they twist it, and they allow sin in the body of Christ, and they effectively take Christ off His throne as Lord in their actions and words; they deny the Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. They do not address sin. False teachers have crept in unnoticed. These guys are out in the churches, we see them, and they are condemned as God's Word says. They say, "Do whatever you want because you are saved," and in reality they are hindering people from being saved, and God would say woe to them. They have denied the Master through their omissions, through their twisted teaching. They deny His Lordship and turn grace into licentiousness.

Back to Matthew 23, verse 13. <sup>13</sup> "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, 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." The first of the seven woes has to do with inhibiting people from coming to faith

# *Matthew 23:13-15*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12*

in Jesus Christ. There is nothing worse. There is no worse sin. I cannot see any worse sin than this. Certainly those who delivered up Christ—that is a different issue— I am talking about us. We see very clearly they are on their way to hell. Evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse. They acknowledge Him as God but they deny Him with their deeds.

Now I need to clarify here. These are those who pervert, twist or omit truth concerning the gospel. There are those in the body of Christ who have a correct gospel who have wrong secondary ideas. That does not mean they are a false teacher. This is speaking about those who prevent those from going into salvation. But, anyone teaching something wrongly, they are in a greater accountability, “Let not many of you become teachers...” it says in the chapter three of the book of James. They are to handle the Word accurately that they may not be ashamed, it says in 2 Timothy 2:15. We are to respond rightly—we are to get away from them if it is wrong. We are to go to them and show them from the Word of God. Here He is speaking about those who are preventing them from entering the kingdom; it is something that twists the gospel concerning Christ.

And let me tell you, we have an epidemic of this in evangelical churches these days— It was at the seminary I went to— of twisted doctrine—we have an epidemic of omitted truth. We have an epidemic of those who leave out truth. And effectively twist the gospel. We have an epidemic of those who leave out truth concerning repentance and Christ’s Lordship. We have pastors who fully do not proclaim the Word of God; they do not turn people from their sin; they give spiritual pep talks based on Biblical truth to address the felt needs of those there, rather than their true need which is to be convicted of their sin that they would turn to Christ and be saved. They effectively block people from coming to Christ; they are evil men and woe to them. We need to see it the way the Lord sees it. We are not the Lord, we do not go to them proclaiming woe; we are to be aware (and beware) of them as Jesus would say. Congregations full of nonbelievers perfectly comfortable in their sin. They omit the conviction of the Word of God. They may not outright deny the gospel, but when you listen to their gospel it is not complete. It is wrong; it is twisted. Do you see why Jesus said woe?

Well how can we apply this to us? It is a very strong warning to anyone in a position that is teaching or preaching. Whether you are a pastor or Bible study teacher or Sunday school teacher, you better share God’s Word completely. You better not shrink back from declaring the whole purpose of God; you better not soften it because you are afraid they might not believe what you say, you better not say things like that. The apostle Paul said in Acts 20 that he was innocent of the blood of all men because he did not shrink back from declaring the whole purpose of God. You might have spiritual blood on your hands, people’s salvations hindered because you shrunk back. Do not do it. If you are a teacher, do not do it; teach it completely.

And if you are listening, have you placed yourself underneath someone who is holding back the Word of God or twisting or perverting it, someone that Jesus would say, “Woe to you.” If so, you had better get out quick. Be on guard. Beware of false prophets who come to you in shepherd’s garb, or sheep’s clothing, as we saw back in Matthew 7:15, and inwardly are ravenous wolves. There are many, many warnings. And those of us that are not caught up in that, we ought to see, like in the book of Jude, that

# Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

we should snatch them out of the fire—they are in danger of hell! So then, false religious leaders are dangerous, deserving of eternal condemnation because they hinder people from coming to Christ that they might be saved. Anyone that is hindering the gospel message in the way they present it is in this category of woe. So we see that very clearly.

Let's finish with this second woe. It is really simple; it is pretty quick. They are also dangerous as we continue, because they make converts that are twice as hellish. The results of their stuff is double hell. Verse 15. Now remember, if you are saying, "Why isn't he doing verse 14—" if you were here late or you have a memory like mine, remember verse 14 is in italics in your Bibles. It is true, we see it in Luke and Mark, but it most likely was added in later by an overzealous scribe; your notes will say in there, "Not in most manuscripts," and so we are going to skip it. We will get to it when we get to Luke and Mark, but now we are going to skip to verse 15.

<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." He is saying, "Woe to you for blocking the kingdom, and woe to you for what the result is." Twice as much a son of hell— woe to you for what you are doing to people, for your wickedness. He pronounces eternal condemnation. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," same formula of eternal condemnation. Why? "Because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte;" A proselyte was a gentile pagan convert to Judaism. He is saying basically, "You put in so much effort for one; you travel about on land and sea." And what is interesting was Israel was to be a kingdom of priests, Exodus chapter 19:6, they were to be a light to the nations, but they were not—they were sinful in their attitudes; they were sinful in their view towards others. We see it in Jonah, he did not want the Ninevites to be saved, but yet there was a shifting, a changing during this time and historians are saying there was a tremendous evangelistic effort going on during the first century, but it was not to Christ.

He said you travel about— it was well known, they did this amazing effort to try and get converts. "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..." It is like these seeker churches: you do all this show to get someone to claim the name of Christ, but you do not preach the gospel— you make them twice as much. Now they are converted to your gospel and not to Christ. And then they do not respond to the true gospel. Woe to you. "You travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte," this intense evangelism. "You make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." Instead of bringing them into the kingdom, they are twice as much hellish as you. Make no doubt these Pharisees' converts are going to hell. If you respond to a wrong gospel you are going to hell. It is clear.

What is hell? The word is *Gehenna*. The word comes from Ge and Hinnom, it means the Valley of Hinnom, it was this garbage dump on the side of the city of Jerusalem that was burning all the time. They would throw dead animals, garbage, everything, it was just this burning fire that burned all the time, it was all the garbage in there, and He uses that word to describe the reality of hell. And yes there is a hell. He says you make them twice the sons of hell. Matthew 25, we will see it Lord willing in a couple months or a month, I do not know how long it will take us to get there. Matthew 25, we will see

# Matthew 23:13-15

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12

very clearly that the fire was prepared for the devil and his angels. It was not prepared for man; it was prepared for them, but if you reject Christ, that is your destiny.

Let me share a few passages. Luke chapter 12, turn with me. Luke 12 verses 4 and 5. Hell is a real place. And if you reject Christ you are going to hell. If you die in your sins, you will be punished for your sins forever—God is a just God. But that same just God went and died for your sins in your place. Luke chapter 12:4-5 <sup>4</sup> **"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. <sup>5</sup> "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! [Luke 12:4-5]**

I was talking to a lady on the phone who was going to a bad church, and she was saying, "I cannot understand it, they do not even talk about hell; they do not talk about sin! And then when I came to the membership class they said, 'You need to believe these things;' I said you do not teach it!" "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!" Revelation 14:9, quickly let's go there. Revelation 14:9, this is concerning those who take the mark during the tribulation, but it tells you what torment in hell will be like. We are not in the tribulation, this is not us, but it tells you what it is going to be like. Revelation 14:9. When we went through Revelation, you understand that, as we went through that on Wednesday night. Revelation 14:9:

<sup>9</sup> **And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast (and by the way, the angel had already shared the eternal gospel and they have obviously rejected it, "If anyone worships the beast...) and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, <sup>10</sup> he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." [Revelation 14:9-11]**

That does not sound fun. If you die in your sins, God is going to restrain your sin forever in torment. But He sent Jesus to die for your sins, to take the penalty. One last passage in Revelation, Revelation 21:7. You see, the gospel is not just "Try Jesus." The gospel is you are a sinner. That Jesus Christ died for our sins. And that He rose from the dead and that He appeared. If you cry out upon name of the Lord He will save you. Revelation 21:7.

<sup>7</sup> **"He who overcomes (The context of what John says, 1 John 5, they overcome through faith in Jesus Christ) shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. <sup>8</sup> "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." [Revelation 21:7-8]**

# *Matthew 23:13-15*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12*

The wages of sin is death. God is not mocked. You will spend eternity in hell if you do not truly humble yourself before God and repent of your sins and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. He paid the penalty.

False teachers turn their converts into twice the sons of hell. We see the second woe: <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." We see this in a lot of the wicked evangelism going on these days, pandering to felt needs— they think they are saved and they are not.

Now folks, those who fall into this are not free and innocent, because they are going to hell, aren't they? They are eternally culpable for their actions. Believe me, just because there are false teachers does not mean you are off the hook if you are deceived— God is warning you over and over again, beware of them! If you do not heed those warnings, you are in an eternally dangerous situation. What is your view of false teachers? What is your view? Does it matter? What is God's view of false teachers? Those who prohibit, inhibit, keep people from coming to Christ through twisting the truth, the key of knowledge, taking it away, the truth concerning Christ, concerning your need for salvation, your sin, concerning who He is, His substitutionary atonement, what He did for you, that He rose from the dead, that He declares to all men now that they need to repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge.

We have seen today two woes. Condemnation on false teachers who block the way, and a second woe for what they make in their converts. How does this apply to us? We need to start taking it seriously. We cannot be endeared toward someone just because they say the name of Jesus. We need to examine the message that they are giving, and if it is wrong we need to get away from that, and if we know people involved in that we need to snatch them out of the fire, have mercy on those. They block people from being saved; that is the pinnacle of wickedness; they are not good guys. I heard this in seminary: "He is such a good guy; He wants people to be saved." He is not a good guy; it is a false gospel. He is a bad guy. He is an evil man on his way to hell. They disguise themselves, they are imposters; we need to take the Word of God and lay it across and rightly discern for our own protection because God loves us, and that we would not stumble anyone from the truth of Christ.

Some of you do not know Christ. You have allowed yourself to believe those wicked gospels—whatever it is—whether it is the cultic gospel from next door, the Jehovah's witnesses where they change Jesus to an angel rather than what He really is: God in human flesh; whether it is the Mormons, or whatever it is, or if it is something more subtle, you have believed a gospel that is about you and not about your sin and the Savior, Jesus Christ. You are on the precipice of judgment. Jesus Christ died for your sins, and if you turn to Him in humility, "Lord Jesus I have sinned against You. I have sinned against You. What I have done is wrong; You are right in what You say." Confessing, turning to Him, "Lord God I need to be saved, I believe that You died for my sins and rose from the dead, that You paid the price." Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

# *Matthew 23:13-15*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 9/9/12*

## **Prayer**

Father, I thank You for Your Word. May we take it as seriously as it was given. May we recognize when Your Son says “woe” what that really means. I pray, Lord God, that we would not in any way be endeared towards wicked men and women, that we would clearly take Your Word and analyze whether what we are hearing is true. That we would not have an endearment towards wicked men. That we would not be a part in their wickedness and turning their converts into twice as evil as themselves. Father, I pray for anyone here who is not saved. I pray they would reckon with the reality of hell, and they would fear You. And they would turn in repentance and faith, believe in Your Son Jesus. They would be a church that proclaims Your truth rightly, in the context of your Spirit by Your grace. I pray that people would respond. They would turn to Christ and trust Him. In His precious name, amen.

Available online at: <http://www.vancouverbible.org>  
COPYRIGHT (C) 2012 Vancouver Bible Fellowship  
You may reproduce this sermon transcript in its entirety for  
non-commercial purposes in accordance with  
Vancouver Bible Fellowship's Copyright Policy (<http://www.vancouverbible.org/copyright.pdf>).