



# Potomac Hills

## Presbyterian Church, PCA

By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.  
Matthew 23:13–39  
Version

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English Standard

### *“Woe’s for the Hypocrites”*

The 78<sup>th</sup> Sermon in a series on the Gospel of Matthew entitled  
*“The King and His Kingdom!”*

#### **Matthew 23:13–39**

*“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. ...*

<sup>15</sup> *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.*

<sup>16</sup> *“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup> And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ <sup>19</sup> You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup> So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.*

<sup>23</sup> *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup> You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!*

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

<sup>27</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

<sup>29</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ <sup>31</sup> Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? <sup>34</sup> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup> so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup> Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

<sup>37</sup> “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>38</sup> See, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup> For I tell you, you will not see Me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

*Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son, Jesus. We ask You this morning to give us the grace to understand Your hard teaching here, these sober and solemn and shocking words are the very words inspired by the Holy Spirit, meant for the edification of Your people. We ask, this day, that You would help us to see the truth of Your word for our lives, that we would respond to it by Your grace, embracing it, confessing our sins, fleeing to Christ and being built up in Him. Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but deliver us from evil, and especially the evil spoken of in this passage. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **INTRODUCTION: “You Know How Many Guys Lust After That Sight?”**

As I shared with you earlier, General Assembly is happening this week, and I couldn’t help but wonder how this passage ... which is all about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees ... was scheduled for this week? Probably not a coincidence.

I remember once attending General Assembly, a number of years ago, and it was held at one of our larger churches. And a friend and I went out to Olive Garden for dinner, and while driving back, we could see this church, **overlooking** the whole area, **all lit up** against the night sky. And my friend just said, “You know how many guys here are lusting after that sight?”

And I didn’t say anything, but I was thinking, “Well, I know one.”

It’s a well-known secret that Pastor’s love to compare themselves to each other. We all do it. We all hate it. And we hate it because there’s always someone, somewhere, who has it better than you do! Their church is bigger, growing faster, has more money, a beautiful new building, and so on and so forth.

Or you meet people who are way more godly than you are, they pray way more than you do, they know the Scripture better than you do, their sermons are way better than yours are, the bookstore has their latest book, and in their downtime, they wrote a hymn. And we're going to have to sing it. ... You think you may have 2 or 3 spiritual gifts, but they have **ALL.OF.THEM!**

And so you meet all these people, and truth be told, you just want to slap them, but you can't hit everyone, so it's just frustrating.

So we should just stop ... right? But we don't. It's all so sad.

I'll meet a whole bunch of other pastors this week, many of whom I'm already friends with on Facebook, but I don't know that well personally, and a lot of them are going to ask ... "So, How's your church doing?" And what they want to know is ... **"How many people?"**

They ask so they can compare and see if they're doing better or worse. And a number of years ago I decided that I just wasn't going to answer them. I want it to sound spiritual ... as if I'm downplaying the numbers because they're really not important ... but mostly, I'm just messing with them.

So, I'll answer, "Church is doing great ... thanks for asking."

And they'll lean in, and in a softer tone, ask, "Great ... seeing a lot of growth?" And I'll smile and say, "Yeah, lot of growth, God is good." And they'll smile and say, "Yes He is." And then they'll lean in even more, and in an almost conspiratorial tone say, "Soooo ... what kind of growth are you getting?" And I'll keep smiling and reply, "You know, all kinds, just like your church."

At some point, he'll realize that I'm not giving him any numbers, we'll shake hands, say "Hey, good to see you." And he'll go look us up online. ... And then defriend me on Facebook.

We **so** want to look good. We don't care if we're all that **spiritual** or not, we just want everyone to **think** we are. We know we're supposed to love **Jesus**, but mostly we want **you** to love **me**. To one degree or another, we're all hypocrites. We're all Pharisees. And I'm **chief** among them.

Perhaps you've heard that charge before. Maybe from a friend whom you've invited to church. "I'm not going there; the church is full of hypocrites." And, on one level, they're right. We are hypocrites. So are they. So they should come visit, they'll feel right at home. [Don't say that, it's not nice. I mean, do as I say, don't do as I do. Chief Pharisee, right here.]

But, on another level, they're totally wrong. Because to be a hypocrite on the **same** level as these Pharisees in Jesus' day were ... would mean that you're not a Christian at all. Because at some deep level, hypocrisy **turns** you from Christ, exalts **self** over Christ, and ultimately, hypocrisy pushes you into a form of **denying** Christ. And so this level of Pharisaical hypocrisy has dangerous spiritual consequences. And we need to guard against it. And that's what our passage today is all about.

We have been working through the Gospel of Matthew for some time; God has a Word that is timely and helpful as we turn to Matthew 23. I want to remind you of several things as we come to this passage. You will remember that in Matthew 23 Jesus is speaking in the last few days of His public ministry before He is crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem. So these final words are very important. In Matthew 22, He had spent a good deal of time discussing a range of theological issues with the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees. In Matthew 23 He turns His attention to the crowds who are in the temple. As far as we know, the scribes and the Pharisees have left Him, by and large. There may have been a few in the crowds, but now Jesus is directing His focus of preaching to the crowds themselves. And as He does so, He brings a

withering critique against the ministry and the lives of these who were the key spiritual leaders in Israel in His day.

Now I want you to understand that Jesus is not just waiting for them to get off earshot and then blasting them behind their backs. Jesus had spoken to them very frankly throughout His ministry about His assessment of their own hearts and of their ministry. What Jesus is doing now is intended as a very important warning for His followers that they not fall prey to the temptations to which the Pharisees and scribes had fallen prey. And so His words are not simply a reflection of a man who has had enough and has lost his temper and is just flailing away in every direction, blasting in every direction he can, because of His anger with a particular group. No, these words are **deliberate**, they are **calculated**, and they are even loving and gracious, as we will see later on.

In this great passage, Jesus Christ pronounces curses upon the religious leaders of His people who were hypocritical, who were outwardly holy, but who inwardly didn't love God and didn't care for the souls of His people. He specifically catalogues the sins that they had committed. And then He delivers what is simultaneously a gracious response and a terrifying warning. So as we come face to face with some very harsh language, let's keep those things in mind, as we turn to Matthew chapter 23, Beginning in verse 13, where we see Jesus pronounce judgment on ...

**v. 13–15: FALSE LOVE** <sup>1</sup>

*“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. ...”*<sup>15</sup>  
*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.”*

First, in verse 13, He says, you keep people from eternal fellowship with God and you refuse it yourselves. How? By opposing the gospel message. The Pharisees and the scribes, not only rejected Jesus themselves; they did their dead level best to keep other people from embracing the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. And Jesus says the Lord will visit curses upon you because of this. And the sad thing is, my friends, there are ministers who prevent people from coming into the kingdom by their false teaching.

Dr. Ligon Duncan, the Chancellor of Reformed Theological Seminary, writes about hearing the testimony of a young man preparing for the ministry. He had lived a life of **gross sinfulness** and while he was at a wedding, he heard the minister read the words of 1 Corinthians 13. And without comment, God's Word struck his heart, convicted him of his sin, and showed him that there was a greater reality than he had ever imagined, and he began the process of seeking God, simply by hearing the word of God read. And so he went to the minister of his home church. He hadn't been there in many years, but he went to the minister of this church and he said, "What must I do to be saved? What must I do to be born again?" And the man said, "Born again? Don't get caught up in all that stuff. You don't need to be born again." The young man was very discouraged and really confused, but then in the providence of God, he came across a PCA minister named Bob Cargo who shared with him the truth of the Gospel of Jesus

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<sup>1</sup> **The Exposition of the text is adapted from the sermons, “Scribes, Pharisees, and Us”** by Dr. Sean Michael Lucas, First Presbyterian Church, Hattiesburg, MS, 1/27/14, [www.fpcpca.net](http://www.fpcpca.net) and “Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees” by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, 7/4/99, [www.fpcjackson.org](http://www.fpcjackson.org).

Christ and he was redeemed, saved from his sin. But there was this other minister who was standing in the way of the gospel work in his heart. The Lord Jesus is saying, may the curses of God fall upon every man like that.

You may notice that we have no verse 14 in our text. It seems to be a later addition to later manuscripts and so it's omitted from most of our Bibles today. You can probably find it in a footnote but it wasn't part of the original and isn't found in the oldest and best manuscripts. That said; let's move on to verse 15. And there, Jesus goes on to say, you make your converts into worse hypocrites than yourselves. The Pharisees were very evangelistic. Don't get the idea that the Pharisees didn't care about conversion. They did. They wanted lots of people converted and they wanted them to be just like themselves. And so the Lord Jesus said, "You know what? You go out and you convert people and you make them twice as bad as you are. They pick up on all of your worst tendencies. They're hypocritical. They're legalistic. They're unbelieving. They become lovers of appearing holy, but not lovers of God." And so He condemns them for this.

Now I want you to see a very important truth in this text and that is we need to appreciate that **the truly loving thing** for a man of God is not to ignore soul-killing error, but to confront it and denounce it. Jesus' words are strong, even in our nonchalant world where we think we have heard everything and seen everything, where we have been there and done that, but when we read Jesus saying these kinds of things ... it's shocking.

But we have to remember that these are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's not name-calling. He's not simply venting anger and frustration. His words are well chosen; and in fact, they are pastorally chosen for the sake of His people. And that's the very first thing I want you to see today. The truly loving thing for to do is not to ignore soul-killing error and hypocrisy, but to confront it and to denounce it. It's always easier to try and pretend like it's not there, because then you get less criticism. But that's not the kind thing, that's not the loving thing to do for those who are deceived by that kind of error. And Jesus loved the Pharisees and scribes enough to tell it like it is, to show them their own hearts, and to call them to repentance. We see it in this passage.

So the first thing He calls them on is false love because their love for others is leading them astray. But even more than that, He condemns them for ...

#### **v. 16–28: FALSE RIGHTEOUSNESS**

<sup>16</sup> "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup> And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' <sup>19</sup> You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup> So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

<sup>23</sup> "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup> You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.” <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

<sup>27</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.” <sup>28</sup> So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

Now here we have most of the woe’s that Jesus pronounces, but I’m not going to deal with them individually, because they’re all very similar. I’m holy, you’re not. I’m righteous, you’re not. My oaths are valid, yours aren’t. I tithe, you don’t. I’m ceremonially clean, you’re not. And Jesus calls them out on it.

Let’s be frank. This is a **brutal denunciation** of the most widely respected spiritual leaders in Israel in Jesus’ day. What an impact this would have had on them. I can hardly convey to you how the people in the crowds and the multitudes that day might have responded to Jesus’ message. If they had heard Jesus before, they would have been familiar with the fact that Jesus was a man who calls it like it is. However, if this was **the first time** they were hearing Jesus, can you imagine someone without credentials from your seminary coming into your church, and denouncing all of the most respected leaders as hypocrites? What would your reaction be? Well, surely this man is unloving. This man is unkind. This man is going too far. He’s saying mean and unkind things. Surely he’s wrong. This is **precisely** what Jesus was doing. He was **denouncing** those religious leaders who held sway over the people of God.

But His denunciation is purely pastoral. He’s not just venting, He’s not just fed up and going to let ‘em have it. Jesus is calculated and deliberate and ultimately loving in what He says in this passage. **Seven times**, He pronounces woes on the scribes and Pharisees. **Seven times**, He calls them hypocrites. **Four times**, He calls them blind. **Once** He calls them fools. **Once** He calls them the offspring of vipers. His words are **indeed** strong. But He’s not engaging in name-calling. This is **calculated, spiritual confrontation**.

What in the world was Jesus doing? Two things at least.

**First of all**, Jesus was showing them, and us, **God’s attitude** towards hypocrisy. You see, the people would have thought these men were close to God. In fact, the saying was if only two people go to heaven; surely one of them will be a Pharisee. That was the people’s estimation of these men. Jesus is saying, “I want you to know what God thinks about the hypocrisy of these men. Don’t be fooled. God is not mocked. He knows. He sees. He judges. They can’t fool Him. And neither can you.” Jesus is showing the people God’s opinion of religious hypocrisy. You see the people might be tempted to think, well, God has allowed these men to minister in the life of the kingdom of heaven. Well maybe He doesn’t know. Maybe somehow they fooled God. And Jesus is saying, I want you to know, without a doubt, that God knows **exactly** what these men are all about.

**But secondly**, the Lord is offering another warning to the scribes and Pharisees. His own disciples are going to preach this same message again to the scribes and Pharisees after the resurrection and after Pentecost. And so the Lord is once again warning these men to flee from their sins and to flee to Him and to believe the Gospel. And so in denouncing them, He is actually telling them **the things that they need to know in order to be saved**. Just as the prophets confronted wicked kings in the days of Israel, Christ is confronting wicked religious

leaders and He is doing it, not because He hates them, but because He desires them to turn from their sins and be saved.

And then finally He's telling these things to these scribes and Pharisees because He wants the crowd and His disciples to be warned that we too are susceptible to the same temptations to which they had fallen prey. Jesus is warning His people against this kind of **religious gamesmanship**. He doesn't want people to practice religion as if they were actors in a play. He wants people whose hearts, from the inside out, have been given over to Him, and who love Him with **all their heart**, with **all their soul**, with **all their strength**, and with **all their mind**. And so He's warning His people against this type of superficial, external practice of religion, which the leaders of Israel had fallen into in His day.

Let me also say that by denouncing this hypocrisy and yet **affirming** the reality of God, **affirming** the reality of the teaching of Scripture, **affirming** the reality of a saving relationship with God, Jesus is not falling into that trap of making a shallow deduction that says **because there are hypocrites in the church, therefore Christianity is not true**. Jesus Christ speaks more strongly about hypocrisy in the church **than anybody in the history of the world**. But that does not lead Him to say, therefore, Christianity is all fake.

No, He says, the presence of hypocrisy is the sign of the evil of the human heart and of the deception of Satan. And, therefore, you need to be extra aware of it. But don't you dare think it disproves the truth of my Father. We all run into folks who disappoint us from time to time. Jesus said we would. If we didn't, Jesus would not be telling the truth, because He told us we're going to run into this. The last thing Paul told the elders at Ephesus was that people from within their own midst would rise up and devour the people of God like ravenous wolves. Jesus is saying, yes, hypocrisy exists in the church. No, it does not disprove the truth of God or undercut the reality of a saving relationship with God. And that's so important for us to remember today.

So first, He calls them on false love, then He calls them out for false righteousness, because their righteousness is totally external, but utterly absent on the inside. But then, not at all finished with them, He condemns them for ...

#### **v. 29–36: FALSE ACCEPTANCE**

<sup>29</sup> *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous,<sup>30</sup> saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’<sup>31</sup> Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.<sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.<sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?<sup>34</sup> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town,<sup>35</sup> so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.<sup>36</sup> Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.”*

One more thing we see here, in these verses, Jesus makes an incredibly gracious response, even in light of the wickedness of the Pharisees and the scribes. But at the same time, He issues a terrifying warning. He makes it clear that those who reject the gospel message, those who reject gospel messengers, do so at their own eternal peril. What is Jesus' response to all the wickedness of the scribes and the Pharisees? He says this, I'm going to send you prophets, I'm going to send you wise men, I'm going to send you scribes. He says, I'm going to send you My

own disciples. And I'm doing it because I want you to turn from your sins. And you say that you would accept them, but let me tell you what you're going to do to them. You're going to persecute some of them. You're going to reject others of them. You're going to follow and hound some of them and you are going to crucify some of them. And because you do that, God's judgment is going to fall on you. See what the Lord is saying to this generation, this generation of Jewish people standing before Him. He's saying, God is about to bring a tremendous judgment. You must flee to Me and to My gospel now. Because the judgment is coming in your lifetime.

You see, His message transcends that particular challenge for that generation. We know that within 30 years of the Lord Jesus' life, an event occurred in the history of Israel the likes of which had never been seen. And the land, the people, the nation of Israel was brought to an end. Utterly decimated. But we also know that Jesus' warning is a warning for every generation. For all of us will stand before the throne. Will we stand before that throne wrapped in Christ's love and righteousness or will we stand in it in the filthy rags of our own righteousness and our sad spiritual hypocrisy? The Lord desires a people who not only look outwardly holy but who have been **transformed** by His grace, because they have **trusted** in Him alone for their salvation and by grace through faith they have been **justified**. And because they have been justified, the Spirit has continued to work in them, **transforming** them into the very image of the Son.

We see here a picture of the heart of God. He doesn't delight in the destruction of sinners. But He delights when they turn from their sin and flee to Him for grace. And so we close with words of ...

#### v. 37–39: LAMENT AND HOPE

<sup>37</sup> *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”* <sup>38</sup> *See, your house is left to you desolate.* <sup>39</sup> *For I tell you, you will not see Me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”*

In these last few verses, we see three very powerful warnings to those who have not repented of their sins. In verse 37, we see a warning about unbelief, a warning about those who reject the overtures of Christ. In verse 38, we see a warning about the immediate judgment that God is going to visit upon those who do not believe. And in verse 39, we see a warning about the final judgment.

Very quickly, then, let's take a look. verse 38, ***“See, your house is left to you desolate.”*** Here we not only see the danger that many who profess the name of God and profess to be the Lord's people will reject His love, but we also see that those who reject Him choose desolation. They will forego Christ, forsake abundance, and choose desolation. I know that seems crazy. Who would forsake abundance and choose desolation? Yet Jesus says, “Those who forego Me, those who bypass Me, those who are apathetic about Me, those who reject Me, those who reject My gospel, they forego abundance, and they choose desolation.”

In this passage, Jesus makes it clear that His departure means the loss of God's presence. When He says your house is being left to you desolate, surely He is speaking of that destruction which would soon come against Israel and against Jerusalem by the Romans. He's saying that this is part of God's covenantal, providential judgment against His people. But primarily, the desolation about which Jesus is speaking is **the loss** of His presence, His **absence** by the **unbelief** of His people. You remember that it was the presence of God in the temple that made

the temple a place to serve as **a place** of intercession, as **a place** of mediation, as **a place** of devotion. But without God's **presence**, those things are nothing.

So Israel's rejection of Jesus as the Messiah was to prove to be a unique turning point in her history. Christ's crucifixion and resurrection and ascension were the very stuff of salvation for all who believed in Him. But, the very same thing, His crucifixion, His resurrection, and His ascension, were condemnation and isolation for all who rejected Him. His crucifixion was their condemnation. His resurrection was their condemnation. His ascension meant His presence would no longer be with them. And so the Lord Jesus Christ is saying, "You reject Me and your house will be desolate."

And so, we have to ask us the question today, is our house desolate? Does Christ dwell in our hearts by faith? Does He dwell in your heart by faith? Or have you rejected **Him**, are you apathetic about **Him**, is there something that you love more than **Him**, or have you not trusted in **Him** alone for your salvation?

Jesus is saying to those who are gathered around Him, after this week of passion, you will never see Me again publicly proclaiming the gospel of salvation as the Messiah of Israel until you see Me coming on clouds of glory and everyone in heaven and earth professes that I am indeed blessed and I am the one who comes in the name of the Lord. But don't forget, this is the last public message, the final sermon of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the people of Israel. And in His last words, He reminds them that **now, today** is the day of salvation. And so we have to ask ...

Are you spiritually mature? Or do you just want **us** to think **you** are?

Are you a Pharisee? Probably. You need to repent.

Do you love Jesus? Or do you really want **us** to love **you**?

Are you a hypocrite? Probably. You need to repent.

Are you an **imperfect** follower of Christ, who sometimes acts like a Pharisee, who sometimes acts like a hypocrite? Probably. You still need to repent.

Remember, the delight of God the Father is found in sinners who repent and who run to Him that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. The need is great. The time is now. Run to Him. Find His grace. Receive His mercy. After all, it's Father's Day. And He's your Father. And He loves you.

Think about that ... You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

*Our Lord and our God, thank You that You have given us a King. In this passage, we see Your Son. Open our eyes that we might see our sin and then see our Savior. We know that the only way into saving fellowship with You is through Jesus Christ, through trusting in Him alone as He is offered in the gospel, through saving faith in Him, through trusting in the glorious promises of the gospel. As we trust in Him alone, we find that we are justified, we are accounted righteous because of His life and death, His finished work. Help us, o Lord, to embrace Him and flee from our own self-righteousness. Help us to know and believe that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. Amen.*

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**Hebrews 4:14-16**

*“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*