

Matthew 23:1-15

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[0:00] Good morning. We are today looking at Matthew 23. So it's a small preamble because we've been away from Matthew for a few weeks, so it feels like a long time.

! But, if you recall, the Jews have been asking questions of Jesus for quite a long time. And they've been trying to trap him. These questions were nothing to do with finding out facts. They were all to do with trying to put Jesus in the trap and asking an impossible question where whichever answer he gave would either put him out of sorts from the Jews or would put him out of sorts from the Herodians.

So, no fact-finding, really. They were simply trying to achieve something political and religious. In the last chapter, you remember that after one of the questions, he then asked them a question and he said, Whose son is Messiah? And they said, Son of David. And then he asked this, he then came back to them with this awkward question taken from Psalm 110.

But if he was just the son of David, who is David speaking about through the Holy Spirit when he said, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand. And from this, what he was doing was making the point that the Messiah was human, fully human, but was also fully God and was eternal, had always been and always would be.

And it was this connection of humanity and divinity that Jesus was unlocking for them in such a way that they should have known it anyway because they had all read Psalm 11 and 10.

[1:51] So, what we concluded is that this ought to have closed their investigation of Jesus.

You may recall that in previous teachings we've realised that the Jews investigated any contender for the post of the Messiah. And they would start simply by observing to see whether there was anything in it.

And hopefully it would just die natural and there would be nothing to follow up. But when somebody was a proper contender, they would ask questions and they would get terrified and they would try to strip him up and see whether everything stacked up.

And this started, right, around Matthew 12, where they then committed what is often referred to as the unforgivable sin.

As Joe pointed out to Matthew 12, it wasn't that the sin was unforgivable, it was that the Lord would not forgive it. Which is a different take on things. They had done something that the Lord said, I am not going to forgive that.

[2:58] And then, they carried on their investigations and they reached this point now where the investigations are all over and they have given up.

Mainly because Jesus has a far superior intellect to them. They can't trap him. Every question they ask, they finish up court in a very trap they've set.

And so, they were meant to look stupid, basically. And they were meant to look scripturally illiterate. So, we then move on to this chapter 23.

Which is, I want to do something unusual. And that is to say, normally we do the study and we give the application at the end. What I want to do is give the application now and then kind of teach things with it.

Because the application is, don't be like this. It's that simple. What we're about to read over this week and next week are things that really get up the Lord's nose.

[4:06] And so, the thing is, if you are not born again, you kind of have an excuse for getting up the Lord's nose. Because you don't understand

spiritual things.

But if you're born again, you don't have an excuse. You can look at the things that upset the Lord and just decide not to do them. And so, as we go through these things, just think, if it talks a heartstring and you think, actually, I'm a bit like that.

Then, don't be. And if you need help to not be like that, come and ask. Come and ask a prayer. Take it to the Lord in prayer. Ask the Lord to change you.

A reoccurring thing for many of us husbands is that we sometimes get cross with our wives and then we speak to them in a way that we shouldn't.

And it's a never-ending battle. Yeah, I know. It's just a class to me. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know if I'm going to live in a life. But it's a never-ending battle to get control of your tongue.

[5:15] Now, I don't know how well you succeed with that. I think I've quite often failed. But my constant prayer is, Lord, I don't want to be a man like this.

Change me. And I think the application for today is, as soon as we put these things, we go, yeah, I would like that. Lord, change me. So that's the application.

Now, let's do the study. Let's do the application. Let's read. I'm going to read through to the third world.

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds. So this is after the investigation is finished. After he put them in their own traps successfully. And then he says, then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples. This is a mixed crowd. So you describe to the Pharisees that seated themselves in the chair of Moses. Therefore, all that they tell you, do and observe.

[6:18] But do not do according to their deeds. For they say things and do not do them. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders. But they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men. For they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. They love the place of honour at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues.

And respectful greetings in the marketplaces. And being called rabbi by men. But do not be called rabbi. The one who is your teacher.

And you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father. For one is your father. He who is in heaven. Do not be called leaders.

For one is your leader. That is Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled. And whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

[7:22] But woe to you scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites. Because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from the people. For you do not enter in yourselves. Nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites. Because you devour widows' houses. And for a pretence you make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites. Because you travel around on sea and land. To make one proselyte. And when he becomes one. You make him twice as much as some of hell.

As yourselves. And I'm going to stop there. Just because. You'll be here probably for two meetings worth of preaching. If you'll carry on. So we're going to deal with that.

We'll come back to the fourth woe. Next week. So. This starts every night. You've got to remember. That what's happening now. Is a couple of days before the crucifixion.

[8:24] Jesus is about to be killed. And what's more. When you read things like Psalm 22. You realise that he knows. What it's going to be like.

He knows every detail about his own coming death. In fact. In some. Almost inexplicable way. God has engineered his death.

Which is one of the reasons. That Jesus being God. Knows all about it in advance. He even knows. What people are going to say. He even knows. They're going to cast lots for his garments. And all those things. So he's facing death.

At the hands of these men. In a couple of days time. And he's not backing off. And you know. There are times in confrontation.

When I want to back off. But I think the lesson here is. We don't back off. Now it's not. This is not a brutal thing. This is not. Antagonistic.

[9:22] What it is. Is you don't back off with the truth. Whatever happens. You speak the truth. And we know what that can lead to.

Because of the recent events. Of Charlie Cook. But nevertheless. The truth is the truth. And that's what we should speak. Even when people don't like it.

So we notice here. That Jesus is not rude. And we'll follow that as we get further on. This is not aggression. This is heartache. That's coming out of the Lord.

More of that later. But it's actually. Whatever you do. Don't do what they've done. Because. I'm going to tell you where it leads.

And the place it leads. Is not a nice place to go. And I actually love you. I don't want you to go there. That's what's driving everything that is said. So he's not rude.

[10:19] Or arrested. But he's brutally factored. And he publicly shames the Pharisees. And this is a mixed crowd. Just people. Plus Pharisees and scribes.

Plus he knows the disciples. So a mixed bunch. And the Pharisees are the ones. Who have the reputation. They are the teachers of Israel. They're the ones who people put up on pedestals. They teach great things. And they. In fairness to them. They know the Old Testament. And they teach wonderful things. From the Old Testament. To the people. Most of which they don't do themselves.

So it's great teaching. And so he actually says this. Doesn't he? He says. Verse 2.

The scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses. Now they used to have. Synodals would have. A big seat out front. And the teacher.

[11:20] The rabbi would come and sit in that seat. And he would teach the congregation. Who were mostly standing. So it was the reverse of this. You didn't have one guy standing and everybody else seated.

You had one guy seated. And everybody else standing. Don't worry. I'm not going to start practicing that. But. He. He.

Publicly. Shames them. By pointing out all their faults. And I thought about this. I thought. I'm so glad. In a way.

That the Lord isn't here to do that. When I'm preaching. Because he could put his finger off anything about me. But the point is.

The allegations were of hypocrisy. It's pointing out. Most of what they talked and spoke about. As well as their public face.

[12:19] The pretense they put on. Was actually correct. This is how it should actually be. Except the public face should be sincere. And not active. Is he going to make it? So.

He's saying. The work they give you. And the instructions they give you. And the example they present. Or be it a fictitious example. Is right.

So. Listen to what they say. Or whatever you do. Don't do what they do. So he pointed out. Their actions and lifestyles. Don't align with their teachings at all.

And they were sitting in this seat of Moses. It's a little bit like the papal seat. Where. You know. When you sit in this seat.

You become apparently. What's the word? Infallible. We all know that. It's nonsense. But. The rabbi would sit in the seat.

[13:15] And everybody would be. Hanging on to every word. Because. He's speaking on behalf of God. And you're going to learn great things. You know. It's a wisdom. And what he's really saying is.

People who put themselves in that seat. But don't live. The way a teaching. Tells them they should live. Shouldn't really be in that seat. So these teachers.

Were not actually wrong models. Once you get past the public. They weren't wrong models at all. Where. And I'll say this with great trajee. Anybody that teaches.

It should be a wrong model. Now I don't pretend. To be able to live up to that. I know. Few men who truly fear the Lord.

Who would say. Actually. Well Paul did say. Didn't he? I wish you would be as I am. Please don't be as I am. Honestly. There are so many holes in my defense.

[14:14] So. A number of reasons. Are then stated. And. It starts with.

They tie up. Heavy burdens. And lay them on men's shoulders. But they themselves. Are agreed to move through. With so much as a finger. They do what they do.

To impress men. To put on a show. And you remember back. To the. The story. Of the example. Of the fig tree. That we did. It was all leaves. And no fruit.

And this is what they're doing. They're probably not allowed to show. It's all leaves. And no fruit.

The word hypocrite. Is used extensively. For the rest of this.

Chapter. And. It's interesting. In the gospel of Matthew. The word hypocrite. Is used 17 times. And seven of those occasions.

[15:15] Are in this chapter. So this is. The hypocrite chapter. And you know. It's only used. Another 19 times. In the whole Bible.

So Matthew's gospel. Concentration. Is on the hypocrisy. And the Greek word. You. Is. Rupukrites. I haven't. No clue. If I was. To pronounce that correctly. But it's. A word. You. Of an actor. And the Greek. Greek theater. At the time. They would have.

A selection. Of masks. On the sticks. They would hold up. In front of their face. And if they were.

About to tell a joke. They put a big smiley face up. And if they were.

About to say something. So good. Or somber. They put a sad face up. And so. They had masks.

For different occasions. That bore no relations. With the person. Behind the mask.

[16:11] So. So. What you see. Is not what you get. And. This. Rupukrites. Simply meant.

That. What you see. Is not what you really get. It's. A false. Mask. Behind which. A different person. Is hiding. Um.

So. You can't see the real person. You've got only the one. They want you to see. Goes on to say. They broaden their phylatories. And this is all part of hypocrisy.

And I'm going to. So you may already know this. If you know what a phylatory is. That's. A phylatory. And what. What the Jews used to do.

Just to give you. They used to wear them on their foreheads. And sometimes. Also on their arms. And.

[17:07] The show that's being made. You notice it's full of. Documents. So they would fill these phylatories. With. Scriptures. Usually the Torah.

But sometimes some of the prophets as well. And they would stick it. On their forehead. And this was in response to. An Old Testament scripture.

Did I write it? No. Probably not. No. An Old Testament scripture. That said. You should wear. You should keep. The word of God. Close to your heart.

And. On your forehead. And the point was. That. They had taken. What was a. A spiritual. Spiritual. Scripture. That you need to embody. The scripture. You need to take them. Into yourself. Take it. Into your mind. Make it. The instructor. Of your right arm. All the time. They.

[18:04] Interpreted it. Literally. And so. They made these boxes. And stuck them on their heads. Now. Then. There was a bit of a competition. Would ensue. I haven't managed to find one.

But. The bigger your phylatric. The more you were saying. Look at me. I'm holy. It was a demonstration of. Ha ha. You can't be me. I'm more holy than you.

My phylatric. Is bigger than these. Oh. It was. I have to say. It's the sort of thing. That only men tend to do. No. I don't know. But you can see.

You know. This. This man. Doesn't poke his. He doesn't poke his. His phylatric. Up behind his sleeve. He wants it where everyone can see it. And. The box on his head.

Doesn't have to be that big. But it's. It's making a statement to the world. But has nothing to do. Whether the work of God. Is prison or living. In hearts. In Jeremiah.

[19:01] 31. From verse 31 onwards. One of the things. God said he could do. In his new covenant. That he made. With his people. Was. To print. His laws.

On their hearts. So. Part of following the law. Is to lift the word. Off the page. And print it. On living. With hearts. This is the opposite of that.

This is. Putting it all on paper. Sitting in the box. And putting it. Like everyone can see it. Oh. I'm so holy. Well. So what they would do.

Is they would be making. Bigger than they need you to be. And for all you know. They could be. Nemesis. I don't suppose anybody. Ever said. Come and see what's in your. Philatrix. You see. But that's.

That unbuzzled. The mystery of philatrix. And then. Deuteronomy 6. Let's have a quick look. Deuteronomy 6. 8. Okay. So if you actually.

[19:59] You actually start. At verse 6. These words. These words. These words. Which I am commanding you today. Shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently.

To your sons. And talk of them. When you sit. In your house. And when you walk. By the way. And when you lie down. And when you rise up. You shall bind them. With a sign. On your hand. And they shall be. As frontals. On your forehead. On your forehead. So. They shall be. As frontals. On your forehead. Not stuck in a box. And glued to your forehead. See. That.

It's a symbolic scripture. That they've interpreted. Literally. And completely forgotten. To interpret it. In the spiritual way. That it was intended.

In doing this. What they've then done. Is they've made themselves. Out to be holy. And then they will say. To people. You need to do this. I'll go up. I'll pick up.

[20:57] It's a random example. You need to be giving. More money to the church. And what they do. Is they do nothing. But take money from. The congregation.

They give you. Opposite of what they're. Telling others to do. So they burden people. And quite often. They burden people. And really haven't got much. In order to fill their coffers. So that they can live well.

Now unfortunately. That happened in a lot of churches. In these days too. They'll never be here. I don't know how long I've been living.

But I've never been that to happen. Even long after our God. In Matthew 6. Turn to Matthew 6. I'm just going to read.

The first. The second verses. So this is. This is. He's just said. They prayed publicly. And they prayed. So that they will catch. The attention of men.

[21:53] This. Some public persona. Whereas in Matthew 6. Verses 1 to 2. It says this. Beware. Of practicing your righteousness. Before men. To be noticed by them.

Otherwise. You earn no reward. With your father. What a waste of time. Give out all this praise. And make enormous effort. And you make no favour. With God. Whatsoever. When you do that. So when you give to the poor. Do not stand the trumpet. Before you. As the hypocrites do.

In the synagogues. And in the streets. So that they may be honoured. By their men. Truly I say to you. They have their reward. In form.

For when you give to the poor. Do not let your left hand know. What your right hand is doing. So that you give him. What we in secret. And your father. Who sees what is done in secret. Will reward you.

[22:49] When you pray. You are not to be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand. And pray in synagogues. And on street corners. So that they may be seen. By men. Truly I say to you.

They have their reward in form. But you. When you pray. Go into your inner room. Close the door. And pray to your father. Who is in secret. And your father. Who sees what he's done in secret. Will reward you. And then he goes on to say. Tony touched on this. When he preached last. When you are praying.

Do not use meaningless repetition. As the Gentiles do. For they suppose that they will be heard. For their many words. So do not be like them. Your father knows what you need. Before you. Even ask him. Pray then in this way. And then we are given. Not a formula. But a guidance passage. As to what our prayers.

[23:43] Should approximate to. When we pray. At the heart. What should be in our prayers. When we pray. But we should use our intellect. Now of course. You've got the Jewish tradition.

That used to take place. Around the way in war. Where they would just be. Making lots of prayers. And lots of dirty words. Actually. And so. Now they thought. They were getting close to God. Through this. God says the opposite. He says. He says. Pray in. Your own. Secret space. Now that doesn't mean.

We don't do. Corporate prayer. By the way. I'll mention that in part. Corporate prayer. Is where you're getting. The same. Secret space. And pray. But it's still. Not related. To the idea. Of parading around the streets. Trying to call attention. To us as men. Is it? When you pray in secret. Whether there's one of you. Or hand you. Or whatever. What you're doing.

[24:40] Is you're giving the Lord. The opportunity. To answer your prayers. And you're also. Coming into agreement. In the Holy Spirit. About what you should be praying. And when you are.

All in agreement. Because the Holy Spirit. Has touched you. And put you in agreement. Now when you pray. You can expect. To see answers. You might not see.

Immediate answers. But you will see answers. And we've had quite a lot. Of experience of that. In this church. In recent times. And for me. It's starting on.

To want to do more of that. Because we need. We've got. Quite a few people. Who run around. We've got. People who need. To get saved. And there are things. To pray for. What we should look for.

In the church. Is men. Who are. Good. Wrong. There's nothing wrong. With being a good. Wrong. Wrong. But it has to be. In the heart. And people.

[25:37] Should be recognized. For their. Being good. Wrong. Wrong. Because. People. See. Christ. In them. Not simply. Because. They demand it. And I've been.

Many. Many. Church meetings. In the palace. Where somebody. Who's up in front. Is demanding. To be more of them. I've even. I've even. Been in places. Where the.

Leaders. Ask. You know. I'm your land. You need. To serve me. First. And.

I'm your land. God. Therefore. You need. To give me. Money. And. There's this. Awful. Sense. Of superiority.

When. In fact. The. The. The. Model. For church. In. Is. In Latin. Primus. Into Paris. First. Among. Equals. It's a privilege.

[26:32] To do this. And it doesn't. Make me superior. To anyone else. In the room. It's not. It's not something. For me. To shout about. It's only for me.

To praise the Lord. For. And. Heaven. Forfeign. That we should. Ever. Stand up here. And demand. Money. From people. Demand. To be served.

First. At the feast. Because. He's already said. The greatest. Among you. Is the servant of all. So instead of being. The first served. He should be.

The first one. To do the washing up. Or the first one. To dish out the food. Or to cook the food. Or to clean the toilet. As our brethren. Has gone. Because it's leadership.

By example. Not by demand. That's what he said. In verse 11 and 12. Isn't it? Mm-hmm. Back to Matthew 23.

[27:25] So let's just. Reel down. Verse 6. They love the place of honour. Of language. That's just what. I've been talking about. I'm the man of God.

Give me the place of honour. Should be. I'm serving the Lord. You have the place of honour. You know. If you do. This is an aside. You give you. Nothing. Nothing you remember. It's like this.

If you do a study. About the last Passover meal. Jesus. If you do a study. Jesus. Jesus. Sat. Judas. In the place of honour. Now. I'll unpack that another time.

But when you put the way. He was actually sitting. In the place of honour. At the point. Just before he denied Christ. That should be more of our mentality.

Not that we want to occupy. The place of honour. But we want to honour everybody. And arguably. The very worst among us. We should put them in the place of honour. Because maybe that would convict them.

[28:23] So. Let's come down to. The woes. I've never left anything. Do not be called rabbi. For one is your teacher.

And you are all brothers. It's one of the reasons. I don't. When I write to people. Or if I. People say. What do you do? I say. Well. I'm part of the church.

Quite often. I don't even refer to the fact. That I'm. Called. The pastor of the church. I say. Who really? I want the title. Because as soon as I've got the title. I've got to live up to it. And the only pastor really.

Is Jesus. And there is no one. Who can live up to that. Level. Of pastoring. So. I'd rather just say. You know. We serve the Lord. Now. When you set up a charity.

You have to put labels on people. And you say. We've got these labels. Don't pay too much attention. To the labels. And then we go on. And what else is it? Do not be called rabbi.

[29:18] Do not call anyone on earth. Your father. You know. Women Catholic Church. And women in church. Are a bit of a pick on this. Right? They elevate men as their fathers.

You know. Their spiritual fathers. No. Now. We should seek to be fathers. What? I should seek to be. A father figure.

For everyone in this room. But then. Other men in this room. You can also seek to be. Fatherly. Towards me. But the only one I actually.

Lift up my hands. And worship as my father. Is my father in heaven. And. If we then. Look at. The woes. If we come down to verse. 13. Woe to you. Scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrites. Because. Because you shut off the kingdom. And. And. And.

[30:11] And. People. For you do not enter in yourselves. Nor do you allow those who are entering in. To go in. Oh. What he's saying.

You are stopping people getting into heaven. But. This word woe. In. In Greek. Or in Hebrew. I'm not sure which. It's in Hebrew. It's a. It's kind of. For you. And it's a. It's an onomatopoeic word. And. Do you know what. I'm actually lost. It's never onomatopoeic means. Do you know what onomatopoeic means? You know what onomatopoeic means.

If you don't want to tell me. Because you probably try. Onomatopoeic is when a word sounds like what it does. So. Bang. An onomatopoeic is an onomatopoeic word.

[31:11] This. Is an onomatopoeic word. That describes grief. It's a. It describes. God's.

Heart. Turnover. And so. When he says. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees. He's kind of saying. Look what you're doing.

You're just wrecking it. Turn back. Turn back. It's very relevant of. Ezekiel 18. You just saw there. Ezekiel 18. I've got posted in 19 and 13. I'm sure. We'll be in. And there's no idea. And there's no idea. And there's no idea. And there's no idea. Yet he said, why should the Son not bear the punishment for the Father's iniquity, when the Son has practised justice and righteousness, and has observed all my statutes and dungeon?

He shall surely live. The person who sins will die. The Son will not bear the punishment for the Father's iniquity, nor will the Father bear the punishment for the Son's iniquity.

[32:18] The righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, and observes all my statutes and practices that are practices of justice and righteousness, he shall surely live.

He shall not die. All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him, because of his righteousness which he has practised, he will live.

Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked, he declares the Lord God? Rather, that he shall turn from his ways and live.

And this expression of woe is like that. It's, he's got to say these things, he's got to bring the facts to the surface, but there's nothing in his heart that is enjoying this.

He's kind of saying, we're all going to hell. And notice in the woe that we're reading, he's painting them as doorkeepers to salvation.

[33:26] We are doorkeepers to the kingdom of God. We are an entry point for someone that comes across our heart, where we say, I'm in the kingdom of God, I wish you'd come and join me, which is what we do when we're evangelising, isn't it?

We're doorkeepers to salvation. We don't save them, but we hold the door open for them. And you say to them, you're doorkeepers, but what you're doing is when people want to come into the kingdom, you're turning them away.

I cannot imagine what kind of judgment that could bring upon people. When you want to know about religious matters, you go to them, and they steer you away from the truth.

So to James, chapter 3, in the first verse, let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will encourage greater judgment.

That chapter goes on to talk about harnessing the tongue, and we can catch up with how the tongue is used. But let not many of you become teachers. I have to say, there are occasions when the scripture keeps me awake.

[34:55] Anyone who teaches the word should be afraid of getting it. And I mean literally afraid. I see and hear an awful lot of preachers who have no humility before God, and they are so convinced that they write about everything, that when they preach, there's an arrogance to it.

And there is no fear of the Lord. There is no sense of, this word is precious, this word is life-changing, this word is life-giving, this word also brings judgment, and I should handle it carefully. These teachers are teaching, deliberately, to manipulate people to carry out their desires, not to become deeper into the kingdom of God.

They're manipulating them to get more money from them, and so on. So, he's picked out, from, we need to go back to Matthew, he's picked out, that they are, found wanting in their areas, and they're hypocritical, in that they teach, they teach people, stuff that is supposed to encourage them into the kingdom, when in fact, it's pointed to them in exactly the wrong direction.

It's a dreadful, dreadful crime. Second word, do you know this still goes on today, although, not as much as it used to, I suspect.

[36:34] Won't you describe to the Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour with those answers, and for a pretense you make long prayers, therefore, you will receive greater condemnation. First thing I'd like to point out, you may notice, that in most of your versions, this verse is in brackets, and there's probably a footnote, that says that, many of the older manuscripts, don't contain this.

And the reason I haven't made a big deal of that, is, you can find the same scripture, in Mark 12 verse 40, and in Luke 20 verse 47, and it clearly doesn't have brackets around it, and therefore, in concept, this concept, and this, a version that the Lord has, to this practice, is contained in the word of God, and so I've never seen any reason, to be a deaf.

But widows in those days, were often, left, with wealth, after their dead husbands passed on. Some of these husbands, would be wealthy people, they would have land, they would have houses, and they would have assets, from which, the widow, could take rental income, and be a source of income, for the widow, going on.

And so this practice, of, preying on the widows, both praying and praying, if you see what I mean, P-R-E-Y, and P-R-A-Y, this practice of, giving, these widows, lots and lots, and lots of attention, because we happen to know, that they're loaded, was fraudulent.

There was no sincere motive, for doing it. It was just something, we did, because you can't, and we might be able, to be able to get, to give someone, on our hands, or we might be able, to hand over, some of the precious articles, stuff that we can sell.

[38:27] So, this practice, was very well known, on Gedulets, years ago. When a widow died, they would pay her, loads of attention, and, and, using emotional manipulation, like, of course, you know your husband, would have liked, or supported this, that kind of stuff, and I can see people, in the most nauseous, and look at the forest, but, but, it's a dreadful, dreadful, dreadful thing, to prey, on the widow.

And, in fact, far from trying, to extract money, from her, they should have been there, making sure, she's okay. And, if she had those financial needs, there are lots of other needs, that she might have, like, companionship, and full company, and, inclusion, things that are going on, and armoring, the shoulders, even there.

and, in truth, when she offered the money, she said, no, no, no, that's for you, I wasn't left out for you, we don't want your money. You know, I find it interesting, as I've grown up, with, two wonderful kids, one of my children, is really generous, and the other one, is not so much.

And, I've noticed, that the one, who is really generous, never appears to have any lack. And, the one, who is not so much, always seems to have been in lack. But, when you have a wise attitude, to things like this, now, this church, is a little bit like that, we have not once, asked for money.

And, we find, you know, there is money in the bank, you can ask you, what is the money, and there isn't, there's no issue, over money. So, we don't have to, put out the begging board, because God, is good, and God provides.

[40:22] If we find, that that changes, that might be, an indication, that we stray, from the will of God, not an indication, that we should, put out the begging board, begging God.

See what I mean? He can shut us up, by drying up the finances. And that's good. It's good for all of you. It's good for us, because we'll stop, standing up with this, packing rubbish.

If God has spotted, with the special rubbish, he can dry up the finances. Unless, of course, I've got out the begging board. We're a bit hard up. We need to improve. Do you see what I mean?

The debt piece. Our attitude to finance, needs to be, in the fear of the Lord, and trusting in the Lord, his provision, and also needs, for us, who need this church, we don't have anybody, crew leader, who are the people.

But the ones, who started all this, should also be prepared, for our own resources, in the end, which we did, to get off the ground, and, we'll do again, and we'll do, going forward, if ever that's needed.

[41:25] Because, they're not our resources, they're his. Amen. And so, he's basically saying to this lot, he just developed a fool's, that's not me, or, that is fairly appropriate.

The part, So, when they're dealing with people, they appear to be compassionate, that he's not sincere, and they are actually motivated, by mercenary coaches.

So, this third woe, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around, and see them out, to make one proselyte, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much, a son of hell, as yourself.

What this refers to, is, people who are, in some kind of status, as some leadership role, travelling far and wide, because, somebody has a good reputation, usually, for being filthy rich.

Right? And so, we travel, on ceiling, on land, we go miles, to find this one person, who's loaded, to persuade them, to come and join us. Why do we want them, to come and join us?

[42:45] For the good of their soul, for the good of their health, for the good of their fellowship, and now, because, because, he's loaded.

Somebody once said to me, really rich people, don't have any real friends, and people don't love them, for themselves, they love them, for their money, and that's, quite often, largely true.

And so, what they're trying to do, is they're trying to, bring people, to create the, like optics, you know, oh, so and so, who's famous for this, or famous for that, or famous for the other, is now one of us, and it gives us, a little flag, a little flag, so we've attracted, the attention, of somebody, who is significant.

We should rejoice, when we manage, to save the tramp, off the street, when we, manage to save the family, at the moment, at a church, we are praying, for, working husbands, to get saved.

And that's, right, the problem, what we should, never be doing, is going out, and looking for, rich people, to come and join our church, so that we can, benefit from their, rich, riches.

No, God happens to send, what? We're a code. But, God's church, should never be, a place, where this happens.

[44:02] We should, embrace people, regardless, of, what they have, or, of their reputation. And so, he says, you make them, sons of hell.

What he actually says is, you are, our sons of hell, and you're going to, turn these proselytes, into, similar, sons of hell. You're winning the name, for the wrong reasons, countering them, feeding their egos, and bringing them in, the problem, if the world would be, rather than bringing them in, because they are, searching in their heart, for an answer from God, and they want to, revere him. Our role, is to be made away, from such sin, not to encourage them, deeper into it. So, what we should have, is, I don't care, how much you've got, do you know Jesus? It's, as simple as that. So, my final, sentence is, let us hate, with passion, that which God, hates with passion. And this passage, he is being passionate, at the very word, of the world, when you understand it, means, he is, oh, now, great, for tears, like this. Father, we thank you. Thank you.