



theridgechurch

LIFEgroup Discussion Questions

September 29, 2013

Matthew's Gospel: Spiritual Deception, Rejection and Doom

Focus Text: Matthew 23.13-28

1. What is the context? What has been happening on this day during Passion week? What is Jesus doing now (23.1)? What is Jesus' tone in this Scripture passage? Why do you think His tone is such? What are the Jewish leaders often called by Jesus, especially in 23.13-33? Define hypocrisy? Why is it despised by Jesus?
2. Why is it not enough simply to be sincere in what you believe? How does the Scripture text from last week and this week serve as a warning in this regard? What must we get right? What is the gospel?
3. Compare Matthew 23 to the teaching about faith and works in James 2.14-26 and the necessity of righteousness in 1 John 3.4-10. What is the supreme and better righteousness (Matthew 5.20) and how has it been made available to us (2 Corinthians 5.21)?
4. What is pride? How do we see it in the text and how do we struggle with it?

CS Lewis says, *Now what you want to get clear is that pride is essentially competitive – is competitive by its very nature....Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, of good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest.*

How can this look spiritually as well? How can we fight against a proud heart?

Instead of a proud heart, God wants our heart to be pure (Matthew 5.8). How do we have a pure heart? If purity begins in the heart, then what should our fight against sin look like?

5. What does it mean to *neglect the more important matters of the law* (13.23)? Challenge each other as a group to joyfully look for ways during the week to serve and reach out to the poor and needy, both spiritually and physically, that we would truly walk humbly with God, doing justice and loving mercy (Micah 6.8). *****If you would like to take this part further, take a look at Romans 12.9, 16.** We are called to genuinely love others. First, we must have a pure heart and truly have the love of God in heart (ie, *be born again* - 1 John 4.7; 19). Then Paul says something about living in harmony with others and not being proud, which connects with question number 4 about, but then look what he says next – *associate with the lowly*. This is an interesting phrase, which literally means *accommodate yourself to lowly things*. We must greatly consider this meaning. If we are going to truly love the needy and poor, spiritually and physically, we must consider our own lifestyle. Does the way we live, the things we have, the full calendar, etc. allow for us to truly love those in need? We must think through this, for there is a reason it also means for us to *accommodate yourself to lowly things*.]

Pray.