**MT 23.8-12** ~ *But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers.****9****And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.****10****Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.****11****The greatest among you shall be your servant.****12****Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

**EX:** Jesus hits at the heart of the issue—their heart. They needed to get themselves right again, and that needed to start in correcting the one key area where their sin originated—they were **prideful**. They took pride in how they were seen—as the ones in the seat of Moses. They took pride in how they were regarded—righteous Children of God. They took pride in how they were perceived—in places of honor and regard in Jerusalem. But ultimately, pride is devastating—not just to how you’re perceived by the world around you, but by its affect on your relationship with God, Himself.

**JS 4.6-10** ~ *But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”****7****Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.****8****Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.****9****Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.****10****Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

**CONCLUSION**

**ART/Leonardo da Vinci/La Bella Principessa – Shaun Greenhalgh**

What an amazing idea—that this painting, rather than being a new Leonardo original--was actually just a sketch of a no-body of a 17 year old cashier! Whether his claim was true or just another false claim, I can’t help but think of the Jewish leadership—perceived as so righteous and so holy, but in reality, no more a true child of God than this painting was a true masterpiece of di Vinci.

Christ shows that, ultimately, the Pharisees were but a poor copy—their **wickedness** shown in **behavior**, their **teachings**, and their **motive**. Ultimately, Christ provides a **warning** to them which applies to us, as well, today: the importance of **humility**. A true Christian shows the image of Christ, and that is shown in our imitation of His humility above all else!

**PH 2.5-11** ~ *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,****6****who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,****7****but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.****8****And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.****9****Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,****10****so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,****11****and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

**INVITATION**

#483 [Exp-NTG] **Fake** MT 23.1-12

01/30/2023 PC \_\_ Pchd

**QUESTION:** What was so bad about the Pharisees?

**TRN TO MT 23**

**INTRODUCTION**

**ART/Leonardo da Vinci/La Bella Principessa – Discovery**

**Sounds incredible, doesn’t it?** But here’s the issue: it’s a lie!

**ART/Leonardo da Vinci/La Bella Principessa – Fraud**

The fact is, people have studied Leonardo da Vinci for years—their entire lifetimes, in some cases! And there’s value intrinsic to anything drawn by him. That value doesn’t exist for things created by me and you! So, as a result, there’s value to be found in creating a **fake**!

**BACKGROUND**

It’s difficult for us to truly understand what it was like to be a Jew in the first Century. After all, they were already in a unique position for the Jewish people. For the past four hundred years, the voice of the prophet was silenced. For all of Jewish history up to the writing of Malachi, there had always been the Spirit of God speaking directly through His prophets. But by the time of John the Immerser, this had been silent for 400 years.

As a result, people realized they only had the writing of the prophets on which to base their teachings and faith. As a result, splits arose—some emphasized their patriotism (giving birth to the Zealots); others emphasized political power (giving birth to the Sadducees). Some thought the temple and the Synagogues were irredeemable (giving birth to the Essenes). And some clung desperately to their power of teaching in the Synagogues. That, of course, was the Pharisees.

But most people didn’t belong to any of these groups. They simply were Jews—and they interacted with the groups when they came into their sphere of influence (the temple for the Sadducees, and the Synagogue for the Pharisees). Since the average faithful Jew spent most time in the Synagogue, the Pharisees were the most influential group—and they became the picture of what it meant to many of the average Jews of what it meant to be a child of God!

But, much like ***La Bella Principessa***, there was a problem with these approach—the Pharisees weren’t really God’s people. They were **fake**! As a result, as we come near the end of Jesus ministry, He pronounced a judgment against them—both providing details on the **wickedness of the Pharisees** and proving a **warning to the Pharisees**.

This morning, I’d like for us to look at the complaints that God brings to the Pharisses in His time. For the issues we see in them are something we sometimes see in our communities and even our churches today—people who claim to be children of God, but who, in reality, are **fake**!

**BD1: The Wickedness of the Pharisees (vs. 1-7)**

1.Their behavior: they don’t practice what they preach **(23.1-3)**

**PSYCHOLOGY/Racism/Attitudes vs Actions**

**Honestly, this is a bit encouraging, isn’t it?** We don’t often see people being less awful in these kinds of studies. But it shows something true about people—we often say or believe one thing and do something different. That’s the definition of hypocrisy, and it’s the dime-store definition of a Pharisee!

**MT 23.1-3** ~ *When Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,****2****“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat,****3****so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.*

**EX:** Its interesting: Jesus doesn’t start by preaching against the teachings of the Pharisees here. Rather, when He’s pointing out their **wickedness**, He points to their **behavior**—**they weren’t practicing what they preached**!

**MT 7.1-5** ~ *“Judge not, that you be not judged.****2****For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.****3****Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?****4****Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye?****5****You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*

**AP:** Today, I wonder what God would say if He could speak, individually, to each of us. How often do we speak of the evil of lying, and yet lie? How often do we speak of the importance of integrity, and yet we cheat? See, there isn’t a problem with Christian teaching—the issue is often with Christian **behavior**!

**PS 51.6** *~ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.*

2. Their teachings: They place heavy burdens upon the people **(23.4)**

**ILL—Tax Season** (one of the most exhausting times of the year; the current tax code is 6871 pages; with all those laws, it’s hard for even the honest person to keep them!) As Jesus continues, He turns His attention to the Pharisees’ **teachings**—that they placed heavy burdens upon the people!

**MT 23.4** ~ *They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.*

**EX:** See, the teachings of the Pharisees were difficult—they expected much out of their disciples. Even to this day, we see the same among Orthodox Jewish communities—it’s just flat out impossible to keep all their commands! But with the Pharisees, the issue wasn’t just that their teachings were difficult—its that they were a burden that even the Pharisees weren’t capable or willing to keep!

**MT 15.7-9** ~ *You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:* ***8****“‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;****9****in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”*

**AP: How many customs and traditions have worked their way into places called His church?** I’ve seen congregations where a suit is okay, but a sports coat is not. I’ve seen people whispering behind a visitors’ back because of the color of their hair or a tattoo on their ankle. But there is no teaching of Christ that binds these things! That’s why its so important that we approach God in worship with humility and with deference. We must be careful that we aren’t speaking where God has not spoken!

But even worse is when we expect from others what we’re not willing to do, ourselves. When the church speaks against unbiblical marriage, and yet is accepting of unscriptural divorce and living together. When we speak against theft and laziness, but we are unwilling to perform the work to help those in need.

**RM 2.1-5** ~ *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.****2****We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.****3****Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?****4****Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?****5****But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*

3. Their motive: They do everything for show **(23.5,7)**

**ILL—Advertisers at the High School** (drove by, saw lots of local businesses labeled on the fence; why? Likely because they believe in it, but also: it’s inexpensive advertising!) In those cases, I’m grateful for what they’ve done, but I wonder—what’s their actual **motive** for giving?

**MT 23.5-7** ~ *They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,****6*** *and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues* ***7****and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.*

**EX:** Jesus, here, points out clearly where their motive lies: how others see them. They went out of their way to appear to be good and godly, but in reality, their **true motive** was clear—they **did everything for show**.

**MK 10.35-45** ~ *And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.”****36****And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?”****37****And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”****38****Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”****39****And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized,****40****but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”****41****And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John.****42****And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.****43****But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,****44****and whoever would be first among you must be slave[*[*e*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+10&version=ESV#fen-ESV-24626e)*] of all.****45****For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

**AP:** Today, this danger still persists. It’s easy for us to get a big head over how others see us. It’s easy for us to put on our **“Sunday Best”** both in clothing and in attitude. But your Christianity isn’t defined by how you appear in public, but by who you are in public and in private.

**MT 6.1-4** ~ *“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.****2****“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.****3****But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,****4****so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

**BD2: The Warning Given to the Pharisees (vs. 8-12)**

**EX: Why did Jesus bother? Why bother going on this railing rebuke against the Pharisees?** The reason is two-fold. One: He loved them—and He desired them to change. Two: He knew that they needed a **warning** if they were going to have any chance of changing!