



Connect Discussion Guide
Sunday Message - 11/22/20 | Chuck Sackett | Matthew 23

Greater gifts are only experienced through the gift of the Gospel.

Key Scriptures:

You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? 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.' You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?
- Matthew 23:17-19

"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! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"
- Matthew 23:37-39

*"With what shall I come before the LORD,
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?*

- Micah 6:6-8

Message Highlights:

- We live in the constant tension of keeping first things first.
- It's easier to stick with a checklist approach than to truly prioritize things in life.
- There is a difference between...
 - religious activities and living life with Jesus and others.
 - entertainment and real encounters with God.
 - sharing company and experiencing connection.
 - self-service and sacrificial service.
- We can give no greater gift than Jesus...and the privilege of knowing Him.
- We Rethink Xmas as a means to help transform the spiritual landscape--locally, nationally & globally--while being transformed ourselves.

Conversation Starter:

- What is one Christmas tradition that you would have a very difficult time giving up? Why has that tradition become so important or meaningful to you?

Discuss the Message:

1. Most of us would never say that we would rather have our preferences over real connection with God. Yet, we often cling to our preferences when God might be leading us to powerfully experience him in new ways. Why do you think we do this?
2. In Jesus' day, the Pharisees worked diligently to be right with God. Yet, they struggled to connect with God when he showed up in person. How can we avoid doing the same thing?
3. If sharing Christ with someone is the greatest gift we can give them, how do we go about doing that in practical ways?
4. How do you share the gospel with those you care about who are not very open to receiving that gift?
5. Who is it that God is putting on your heart to share the love of Christ with this Christmas?

Pray:

- *Heavenly Father, we believe with all of our hearts that your Son Jesus is the greatest gift we could ever receive and the greatest gift we could ever give. The people around us need for those of us who know you to help them encounter you through the way we live our lives. We know this and we want you to work in and through us as your people. But we can't experience that without your help. We need a real connection with you, especially in this season of change and challenge. We ask that you would strengthen us by your Holy Spirit to let go of our preferences when they stand in between our connection with you. Amen.*