

Attention to Truth

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[0 : 0 0] And go ahead and take your Bibles this morning, turn over to Mark chapter 12 as we continue walking through our series here in the book of Mark. And today we're going to be looking at paying attention to truth, you know, keeping an eye on the right things.

Because sometimes we can get our eye on the wrong things. We can get our eye upon things that people do instead of what Christ has commanded.

And we're going to look at that a little bit here this morning as Jesus continues here in the temple. And we know that this Tuesday in the temple is the most recorded time frame or period here of Jesus' life.

We have all these details of questions and things that they brought to him that he answered. And it reveals to everyone who he is as he walks through this and ultimately brings to light that he was not just any man, but that he was the Messiah, Christ.

He was both God and man completely. And as he brought that fact forth to them, because even the scribes and the Pharisees, as we saw, were, you might say, dumbfounded by his question back to them of understanding the importance of this.

[1 : 2 3] And we see here as Jesus begins to wind down this day, as it's been a long day, he begins, we're going to see here, he gives some last instructions to the crowd.

This is the last time Jesus is speaking to the crowd here, you know, and those around. You know, he's going to have some other interactions with his disciples and some others. But this is last main statement to the crowd, the multitude that was there.

It said a little earlier in the passage here, talk to them about the common people. And there was the everyday person, which would be like you and I, and understand that, hey, this is where we need to be with the Lord and to understand those things.

And so he gives some instruction here. We're going to look here, and this has to do with truth. It has to do with authority. It has to do with accountability. As we're going to begin looking here, as Jesus ties all these things together, because Jesus had just revealed, remember last week, as he dealt with the idea of the deity of Christ, that Jesus kind of downplayed, in a sense, the scribes and the Pharisees who had promoted that they knew and understood all that was going on.

And Jesus, when he promoted the reality of his deity, kind of pulled that rug out, didn't he? He kind of put them in a position of, you might say, one of those awkward positions of life where you thought you had the answer, and then suddenly you find out you don't.

[2 : 5 2] And people would begin to question these things. And Jesus here is going to deal with a few of these things here about them, because as their understanding was not correct about who Christ would be, it would be easy to conclude that since the scribes and the Pharisees did not understand everything or even live out what they proclaimed.

You know, that's still a problem today, isn't it? You know, oftentimes we know what we ought to do, but to do it's a whole different animal, isn't it? You know, the scribes and Pharisees and the people of the day when Jesus walked here upon the earth are no different than you or I in that regard.

You know, we're going to look at this here this morning a little bit to understand the importance, because sometimes we'll look at others and say, well, if they don't know, then we can ignore everything about them.

And we see some of that today. We see some of that today because you have people that have been in authority as pastors and teachers, and they've done things contrary to the Word of God.

And people try to take that as an excuse to say, hey, now I can ignore all what God has to say. And people use that excuse. Well, if they didn't, I don't have to.

[4 : 07] But I want you to understand, Jesus points to something very important today. It doesn't matter what somebody else does. It only matters what you do, because you don't give account for what somebody else does.

Ultimately, we only give account for one person, ourselves. To stand before the Lord, and we're going to see Jesus walk through this with them today, because sometimes people lose respect towards the Word of God because of wrong choices and actions of those who are supposed to be an example.

You know, today we definitely don't have to see or to look far to see this of people being self-promoting. You know, they have a wrong idea of ministry. They have a wrong idea.

They become self-seeking, self-righteous in what they do. The problem often is because it'll cause others to lose respect for the Lord.

And as we see, Jesus is going to deal with this, because I think he's walking through this, because some people in the crowd would begin to think, well, if Jesus talks down and these scribes and Pharisees don't know everything they're supposed to know, and they have this self-righteous attitude, why do I have to pay attention to what they say?

[5 : 20] Well, what Jesus is going to point out, we're going to see very important this morning, is the fact that it's because what they say is from the Word of God, and we ought to pay attention to the Word of God.

And we ought to pay attention to those things and to keep a right perspective of them. And so as we find here this morning, if you found Mark chapter 12 here this morning, we're going to pick up here in verse 38 and just read down a couple of verses here.

But if you found there in verse 38, let's stand together in honor of the reading of the Word of God here this morning. And we see here in verse 38, notice, and he said, and he said unto them in his doctrine, beware of the scribes which love to go in long clothing, in love salutations in the marketplace, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at the feast, which devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers, these shall receive greater damnation.

Let's pray. Heavenly Fathers, we come before you today, and Lord, we just lift this time to you as we look into your Word. Lord, help us not to lose sight of who you are and what you've done for us.

Lord, help us to not base our trust upon what other people do, but our trust in you upon what you have done. Lord, of what you've provided. Lord, help us keep our eyes upon you, upon your truth.

[6 : 51] Even in the day in which we live, Lord, we can be distracted by the choices of others. But Lord, help us to draw close to you, to be attention to your truth, what you've revealed to us, Lord, that we will give account.

And Lord, we pray just have your hand upon each heart here today. Lord, you know each one. You know the needs, the challenges, the struggles. Lord, we know what you've given to us. Lord, we pray just have your hand upon this time that you might stir hearts and minds towards you, that we might love you more.

In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. You know, as we see here, Mark kind of gives us a short little three verses here in Mark that reveal some things here as Jesus begins to teach.

And we need to understand that Mark kind of gives us the cliff notes of this last course that Jesus taught here. It says he taught in his doctrine. It means that Jesus taught in how he was instructing them.

You know, doctrine is just that. It's teaching. It's instruction. And Jesus was instructing the people of something very important that they needed to keep in mind as they walk through these final days.

[8 : 00] You know, to understand that Jesus was going to give these instructions to everyone at this point. You know, because we know that Jesus' teaching about himself may have caused others to be to have a diminished or misunderstanding of the authority that had been placed over them.

You know, when we realize that God always establishes authorities. Authority is part of God's establish. We have God as the ultimate authority over everything.

We know that God establishes authority through family. You know, we have moms and dads that give authority and structure into the family. We have the church that we have a structure set.

You know, you have a pastor and you have those that are put in place to guide and to direct. It doesn't make any of those greater than somebody else, but it is the structure of authority.

Because God's not the author of confusion. And without authority, you have confusion. Without somebody to guide and direct, somebody that's responsible, you'll always decay into confusion.

[9 : 13] God establishes authority. From the very beginning, God has done so. And so we need to understand that God's authority is important because the scribes were the ones with the authority as to tell the people about God.

That was their job. The scribes were to interpret the law. They were to give understanding to the people about what God has said. And we see here the importance of this and how this plays together because Matthew in his account gives us some insight into this passage.

Because Matthew, we need to understand, remember when we talked about the gospels, the gospel of Mark is written mainly to a Gentile audience. In other words, there's some things left out of the gospel of Mark.

And you might say, well, why didn't Mark talk about them? Well, because the Gentiles wouldn't have concerned themselves with it. Okay? It was foreign to them. They wouldn't have understood the pretense or the context of what was being said.

But Matthew's gospel was written to the Jews. And so Matthew here gives us more record of what Jesus said here and kind of lays it out for us to understand a little better here in this.

[10 : 30] And so we understand that the scribes were the authority to the Jews. And they were there and the people looked to them to give what God's word said, how to understand it, what to do.

They would even might be, you might say, the scribes were the lawyers of the day. They were the ones in authority that people would go to to take care of legal matters or to make judgments in legal matters.

You know, how does the law apply? Because we need to understand it's not like today where we have a separate legal system from the church. I mean, you have these different structures set up.

In the days of Jesus, the Sanhedrin, the people, the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, all these that we're going to see here talks about it. They sit at Moses' seat.

Now, that's a seat of authority, a seat of a place of responsibility. And we're going to see this play together because, as we see here, first, the aim of the leaders.

[11 : 32] Because notice here in verse 38 with me that Jesus talks about what their direction is. He says, beware of the scribes. You know, the aim of the leaders is obvious.

It's beware. Now, this word beware is a warning, but it's a warning in a little different sense than oftentimes you think of beware. You know, oftentimes beware is like, whoa. This is a beware that says, hey, pay attention.

The word used here is one that says to be attentive, to have your eyes open, be observing. You know, to be knowing what's taking place, to understand the full picture.

Because the leaders here filled the seats in places of authority. Matthew tells us this in Matthew chapter 23 in verse 2.

It tells us this, saying, the scribes and the Pharisees sit in where? Moses' seat. Now, we don't have time this morning to get into this, but this goes clear back into the Old Testament when Moses brought the children of Israel out of Egypt.

[12 : 37] And when they were in the wilderness, they established 70 men that were brought out from among the people to sit in judgment and authority. This is what they're talking about here.

This had continued through this time. And to understand what they're speaking of, of those that are there. And it says this in verse 3. All therefore whatsoever they bid, you observe, that observe and do.

But do not ye after their works, for they say and do not. You know, I want you to understand what Jesus is saying. He says just because somebody can tell you what you need to hear, and they don't do it, it doesn't discredit the truth.

The truth is the truth no matter what somebody else does. And he's bringing to light here something very important. Because notice what happens in verse 4. It says, You know, it's no different today.

It's true today that those given authority quickly develop an attitude that everyone else should be held to a standard but not themselves. You know, do you see that today with people?

[13 : 50] You know what, it's no different today that we have to guard ourselves from that because it's easy when you get some authority to start abusing the authority. To use it wrongly.

You have to always be on guard for those things. And we see here that they develop this wrong attitude. Because notice what Jesus tells them though.

He says all, in verse 3 here of Matthew 23, He says, All therefore whatsoever they bid, you observe, that observe and do. You know what Jesus says? If they're speaking the truth of the Word of God, pay attention to the Word of God and do it.

To follow the commands of God. Because he said, You know what, you're going to have people who tell you the truth and then they don't obey the same truth that they told you. That's a reality.

That's part of life. And we're going to look at why that is a little bit here a little later. But I want you to understand not to lose respect for the Word of God or even the place of authority.

[14 : 54] Jesus doesn't tell them, Hey, you can ignore everything the scribes say now that you know they don't understand everything. Jesus said what?

To observe and do. Let me put it this way. Jesus said this, You do what's right because you're the one that's going to stand to account and let God deal with the other. To deal with things appropriately and to think properly.

Because today many people have strayed away from God because of actions of others. Because they get the idea that says, Well, they didn't do it, then it must not be true. It doesn't change the truth.

We have to hold to the standard that God has given. And it applies to those especially in regard to the Word of God. You know, we are to observe or to guard what is said and then to obey it.

You know, we need to be careful not to let truth and its authority be diminished because of the actions of somebody else. How somebody else uses it or applies it.

[15 : 56] Because people do that wrongly all the time. They did it in Jesus' day. They do it today. Our focus ought to be upon the truth of the Word of God. You know, Jesus calls them hypocrites.

You know? And when He calls them hypocrites, He reveals that very clearly because notice there in verse 4 of the passage there in Matthew chapter 23, it says, For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders.

But notice this, But they themselves will not move with one of their fingers. You know, that's being a hypocrite. Say, hey, this is good for you to do, but I'm not going to worry about it. That's what Jesus is saying.

He says, These guys are going to place burdens upon you that they wouldn't put upon themselves. They'll put expectations that they won't put upon themselves. They say, and they do not.

You know, I want you to understand that placing burdens through heavy expectation is how they used and maintained their authority. They began to use this as a tool to control people.

[17 : 03] The same has been in the past here, and just even in America in the last generations, you'll see this same tool being employed. Heavy burdens placed upon people that they will not keep themselves.

An expectation of using that. They placed upon men heavy burdens, heavy and grievous, because they were built and maintained on rules that needed to be followed.

You know, I want you to understand that Jesus gives us commands. He gives us direction. And sometimes people will take that and use that for manipulation and control to say, how are you measuring up to the standard?

I want you to understand, there's some things we ought to do, but we ought not to do them to measure to a standard. We ought to do them because we love God. Jesus says, if you love me, keep my commandments.

He doesn't say, keep my commandments to be right with me. He says, if you love me, keep my commandments. It changes the weight of that responsibility, doesn't it?

[18 : 08] Because if you're always trying to measure up, you will never measure up. You will never measure or reach the standard. Take a look over in Matthew chapter 11 for a moment, because when it comes to God, God is totally contrary to how men perceive and try to grab a hold of authority.

Notice what Jesus tells us here. He doesn't say that it's going to be heavy or grievous. He says this, it says, for my yoke is easy and my burden is what?

Have you ever asked yourself, how is the yoke easy and the burden light when it comes to Christ? There's a lot of heavy things. Let me ask you a question. How hard is something to do if you love doing it?

Does love change the perspective? Jesus says, if you love me, keep my commandments. He says, if you love me, my yoke is easy and my burden is light. But if you're trying to measure up, it's grievous and heavy.

We have to do that because we love him. This is because they're carried in love and not duty or obligation. You know, sometimes people use control. The Pharisees and the Sadducees and the scribes use this as a means of control and to put heavy burden upon the people saying, if you don't do exactly what we do or how we tell you, you're not going to make it.

[19 : 25] I'm glad that I'm not dependent upon what I do to get to heaven. I want you to understand what you do doesn't get you to heaven. It's only by trusting in what has been done. Jesus Christ has already accomplished all that's needed to get to heaven.

You cannot do anything of yourself. But if you're saved, if you recognize him as your Savior, your love for him, we love him because he first loved us, it ought to change our spirit and attitude about these things.

Because we're going to see here, look at the actions of the leaders. Look back in our text where we started there in Mark chapter 12. As Jesus talks about them, notice what he says.

He says, which love to go in long clothing. Notice, what is their love here? Their love is not a love for God. We're going to see here their love is a self-righteous, self-centered, self-focused love.

Because it's a love about them instead of a love about God. You know, if you love God, it's going to change what you do. It's going to change where you go. It's going to change your perspective of life.

[20 : 34] It's going to change everything about your perception of the world if you're looking at it through the lens of what Christ has done for you and all the things surrounding it.

If you're filtering it through the Word of God. But notice the actions of the leaders here. The valuation of these actions of the scribes and the Pharisees and Jesus reveals something because we can end up the same way.

Because these are the way to get a heavy burden. Because you're always trying to measure up to something that God says, I'm not measuring you by that. Now I want you to understand what they were doing wasn't wrong.

It had some elements of truth attached to it. But they were twisting the truth to focus instead upon God, they were focusing on God's self. That's how subtle that shift can be.

And I want you to see here as we look through here because He reveals the nature of their actions. Their presentation of righteousness was not about loving and serving God and others, but it was a love of self.

[21 : 39] Remember, Jesus had just answered the question here just a little bit earlier before this when one of the scribes come and said, what is the greatest commandment? What did Jesus tell them? To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind.

And what's the second? To love your neighbor is what? Yourself. You know, we sum this up oftentimes in this phrase, love God, love others. God never said love yourself.

That's a whole other lesson you can do a little study on if you want. Because we have a promotion today, it's all about loving self. God never tells you to love yourself. He tells you to love Him and love others.

But notice the attire that they wore, the clothing that they wore, the very choice in clothing was to draw attention to themselves as righteous.

It tells us that they would go through the marketplace, they would wear these white, big flowing robes, and they'd have a big blue border around the bottom.

[22 : 41] Now to us, if we saw somebody in a white robe with blue border around the bottom, we'd look at them and say, you're really weird. You know, I'll just be honest. You know, if you saw somebody down here walking downtown like that, you'd be going, Okay.

But I want you to understand because Numbers chapter 15 commands them, if you go back to Numbers 15, in verse 38, it tells us, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes on the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue that shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it.

Now the problem is, that's where they stopped, because what their focus was, Look at what I'm wearing. I'm wearing my righteousness. They wanted to draw attention to the scribes, and Pharisees were like, Look at me, how righteous I am.

But they missed the point, because notice what God commanded them in Numbers. He didn't say, Do this for everybody else. He didn't say, Do this to draw attention to yourself.

Notice what he said here. And it said, And it shall be unto you a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them, that ye seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a-whoring, that ye may remember to do all my commandments, and to be holy unto your God.

[24 : 12] The attire that they love to wear, that everybody to see them in, to make themselves look righteous, God says that wasn't the purpose. The purpose is when you put it on, to remember who you're representing.

It's for you to remember, to understand that if you're saved, if you're a child of God, you have a responsibility to the Savior. It wasn't for everybody else to see, it was for you to remember.

That's a big difference, isn't it? God says, I want you to do this, not to put on a promotion, but I want you to do this to remind yourself. Now, today, God might have commanded us to do this a little different.

He might have said, Take out that phone of yours, and every morning, put a little reminder on there, to say to remember who you represent. You know, that might not be a bad thing for us to do, first thing in the morning, is to get a little ding that says, Hey, remember who saved you.

That wouldn't be a bad day to start, bad way to start the day, would it? When they got dressed in the morning, this was the purpose of this, that they might be, remember what God has done.

[25 : 17] Not to draw attention to themselves, but to the Lord personally. The command that they were following was right, but notice the purpose got distorted.

It was worn for themselves. Remember, not for others to see or draw attention to themselves. The attention was to be towards God, but the scribes and Pharisees, they tell us, would parade through the marketplace in their elaborate robes so that everybody could see them.

You know, one commentator I read was interesting. They said the Pharisees would flare out the bottom and have these big elaborate blue bands with these strings off them, and it says they'd almost look like they were floating.

as they walked along, you know. It was a self-promotion. But that fringe and that attire was not for others. It was supposed to be for them.

To remember who they represented, to remember all the commands of the Lord and to do them. And to not seek after their own heart and their own eyes.

[26 : 24] Because you know what happens? When we get our eyes and our heart on the wrong thing, we go after the wrong things. Jesus is telling them, just because the scribes are doing this, what the scribes were doing is what God commanded them, but they were using it wrongly.

Let me put it a different way. Jesus is, as he goes through this, he's basically saying, hey, don't throw the baby out with the bath water. You know, because the water gets dirty when you take a bath. You don't throw all the contents of the bath out.

He said, because they misuse, don't think that it's not correct. It's just the way they're using it is incorrect. Notice here, the second, they acclaimed that they craved. Notice the next thing, he says, the love of long clothing.

Now, this next one, love, salutations in the marketplace. You know, salutations. You know, what's it talking about here? Well, let me give you a little insight into what it's dealing with here because as they walked through the market, it was expected when they'd walk through with their big robes and their big fringe along the bottom floating along, that everybody would stand up as they walked by.

And people were supposed to stand up and acknowledge them and say, Rabbi, Master, my great one, as they walked by. The acclaim that they sought, they wanted to hold a position of prominence with people.

[27 : 42] This is another one. The respect of those in authority is a biblical principle. But I want you to understand something very important here this morning for even us today because sometimes we can take it, but people in authority do the wrong things, we lose sight of the importance that God established that authority.

We have to always honor the authority in the place of that authority, but we need to understand there are sinful people who do wrong things sometimes in those places. You know, it's no different today.

I mean, it's kind of funny as I was preparing this and the different things, you know, we had a little clip come on of some people that were going to pray for a presidential candidate and they're like, well, we have Bishop such and such and Reverend such and such and, you know, all these different individuals and I'm thinking, you know, most of these guys have those titles and want to promote it for self-promotion.

Look how important I am. You know? It's kind of like when you're talking to people and, you know, I've even had this happen, you know, where some, well, I'm doctor such and such.

You know? I want you to understand titles are important but those things ought to be given out of respect for what they hold and not for the person. And sometimes people think they merit it.

[29 : 09] You know? There's nothing wrong in giving honor appropriately. You know? Titles do show respect of position and authority. You know?

It's kind of like when you hear kids call their mom and dad by their first name. That to me is a disrespectful thing. Because it's not honoring the authority that's over them.

Now I understand. I know my kids will tell you, well, sometimes, you know, I've got to call mom by name to get her attention because she's not answering. You know? I want you to understand your primary thing ought to be referring to them in a respectful manner.

Having that right respect and honor in place. Because it's not for them as kind of like just Mr. and Mrs. You know? Those are things that are lost sometimes within because of the, but we miss the importance.

You know, even in the military you address somebody by their rank. You know? You think about that. You know, they'll call them Sergeant such and such or Captain such and such. I want you to understand some people want to hear that acclaim but it's actually not to acclaim them.

[30 : 18] It's just to give honor to the position. You know, it's kind of like when we refer to a president as president. You know what that's doing? It's not giving promotion to them.

It's giving prominence to the authority that's been given them. And we need to be careful in our reference to those things and even things associated with it.

We could go into a lot of different things here on that but I want you to understand the same is true even within the church. You know, there's individuals, you know, I like to go by Pastor Smith or, you know, because it's appropriate for the office and place that God has placed me.

But the one thing you'll notice if you're around here very long, I don't demand it. I know guys who demand that. I don't think that's right to demand it. But it's right. It's what we ought to do.

Not because of who I am but because the office that God has placed me in. Because we're going to look here when God puts you in authority He also gives you extra responsibility.

[31 : 22] And with that responsibility you never separate responsibility from accountability. Those things are always tied together. The only thing I'll ask of you is do not call me Reverend Smith.

If you want to look it up in the Bible it's only used one place and it's only spoken towards one person. That might be a fancy title that you have from a piece of paper but it doesn't something that's not I don't think it's a good title of myself because it doesn't reflect what we do but let's move on.

Somebody messed with the clock. Alright, let's go to the next one. Attention they desire. Attention they desire the chief seats in the synagogues. You know, they sit in the chief seats both in the synagogue or at the feast.

They sit at Moses' seats which is a place of authority. They sought the position. They desired to be important. It was not a place of responsibility to them. It was a place of attention.

You know, sometimes people in leadership love to sit in places of attention. And sometimes the place you sit is giving honor to that person. There's times appropriate for that but as an individual we ought to seek to honor God above ourselves.

[32 : 37] To seek Him, desire, we ought not to desire to be important because when you're in authority, if God puts you in a place of authority you need to remember it's a place of responsibility and accountability.

It's a place that has great merit. Notice what Jesus told His disciples. Mark chapter 10 verse 43 it says, So shall it not be among you but whosoever will be great among you shall be your what?

Minister. And whosoever you will be the chiefest shall be servant of all. Matthew 23 Jesus records this same statement as He's talking about this in Matthew 23 He says, He that is greatest among you shall be your servant and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased and he that humble himself shall be exalted.

He said, don't worry about the scribes seeking self-seeking desire to promote themselves. Make sure you respect the position that they've been given. Jesus is reminding us something very important.

just because they're hypocrites doesn't negate the truth. We need to pay attention to the truth. Notice the appetite that they had.

[33 : 45] It says, devour widows' houses. You know, have you ever wondered what that's talking about? How many times have you read that and really, have you ever looked into it?

That phrase is this because remember the scribes were the lawyers. And what would happen is widows would come and they would need legal help or setting things up and they would, these scribes would do things to manipulate the law to take the possessions that they were to live on and to either take it for themselves or to give it to the temple.

And it wasn't the fact they were giving it to God. It was the fact that they were using it to get a kickback to themselves. Devour widows' houses. They were using their opportunity as a master of the law to manipulate and funneling it through the temple.

Then we have the announcements that they declared. You know, look at what the next phrase says. Notice this. It says, and for pretense, make long prayers. For pretense, make long prayers.

You know, Jesus addressed that over in Luke 18. Remember in Luke 18 where you find the Pharisee that Jesus talks about? It says, and the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself.

[34 : 58] That's a whole other message to itself. Prayed thus to himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners and unjust, adulterers or even as this publican.

I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I possess. Now remember, this was not a private prayer. This was a public prayer. What would be your response if I stood up here on Sunday and oh, Lord, thank you for I'm not like the dreadful sinners I'm preaching to.

I mean, when we put it in that phrase, it makes it sound really ludicrous, doesn't it? But that's really what Jesus said this Pharisee was praying. A self-promotion and want to draw attention to themselves by giving long prayers, not seeking the Lord, but to announce their own righteousness that they're better than everybody else.

You know, we need to know the aim and actions of the scribes are the same that they'll give account for. Because notice the last phrase of verse 40 there.

These shall receive greater damnation. The accounting that God gives to leaders, but I want you to understand God gives account to each one of us.

[36 : 14] We can look at others and it's always easier to look at somebody else and say, yeah, they're messed up. Have you ever noticed it's always easier to point out somebody else's problems and flaws?

And the reality is we need to be careful because we need to be looking at our own. We need to have that mirror of the Word of God impacting who we are instead of worrying about what somebody else is doing.

Jesus concludes with a great reminder that what others do and how they observe and do will not in any way diminish the responsibility that each of us has to give account.

It says the scribes here, Jesus' assessment, his accounting of them was this, they're going to receive a greater damnation or a greater judgment. The word there for damnation is just that, it's an accounting.

That God's going to make them give greater account for their choices in what they do. That judgment, that accountability. Throw over to Hebrews chapter 13 for a moment because sometimes this verse is used wrongly and a lot of people like the first part of it but they forget about another part in there and sometimes even preachers will use this wrongly, you know, and we notice here where it says, obey them that have rule over you and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls.

[37 : 31] Now notice that next phrase, that's the part you got to keep in mind on everybody's part to who, as they must give what? Account. You know, whenever you see that word judgment, damnation, accounting, you've got to pay attention because let me tell you this, if God gives you a place of leadership, a place of authority, if God gives you a place of responsibility, that could be any place from being a dad and a father to being a pastor or a deacon or just serving God someplace or in a position of authority within society, I want you to understand God's going to hold you to account of the responsibilities attached.

He says, guys, don't get your eyes on the scribes and the Pharisees. Keep your eyes on the truth. Pay attention to the truth because that's to what you're going to give account.

That's why Jesus reminds them of that authority given to them to keep an eye on the truth that's before them because the simple fact is this, one day, just as the scribes and the Pharisees would be held to account, the fact is that so will you and I, everyone will give account to the Lord.

The question is when the time comes, what kind of accounting is going to take place because everybody will stand before the Lord. The Bible makes it clear there's nobody exempt but I want you to understand when you have Christ as your Savior, it changes how that happens because the reality is this, Romans 14 says, but why dost thou judge thy brother or why dost thou set it not thy brother for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

I want you to understand the judgment seat of Christ is not for lost people. The judgment seat of Christ is for people who have called upon the Lord, those who are saved who are a child of God.

[39 : 27] And what's different about that, instead of Jesus being your judge, he's your advocate. He's the one standing beside you and not in front of you. In a courtroom, there's a big difference between the advocate beside you and the judge before you.

If you have Christ as your Savior, he stands beside you. The Bible tells us he is our advocate with the Father. You'll have Christ standing beside you at that time and you'll be judged differently because all your sin has been placed under the blood of Jesus Christ, your advocate.

But the Bible speaks of another judgment of accountability. Revelation chapter 20 and verse 10, or excuse me, verse 12 says, and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. One day you're going to give account and the Bible makes it clear that one day you're going to stand before Jesus Christ the righteous and give account.

This judgment is too late. This is a pronouncement of judgment. When you stand, Revelation 20 speaks of the sentencing because the Bible says that at this point you'll stand before him guilty.

And when you're already guilty, there's only one thing left to do and that's to pass the sentence. You're going to stand before God, you're either going to stand there to give to account that you're guilty before God and have a sentence or by the grace of God.

[40 : 42] If you've called upon Christ as your Savior, recognizing you're a sinner that needs a Savior and called upon him, the Bible says it will stand before him not in condemnation but in just with the advocate beside us judging us for reward and not for condemnation.

The reality is which one are you going to stand? Because you will stand before one or the other. And there's only one person in the room that can give an answer for where you're going to stand today.

That's you with the choice that you've made with Christ. As heads are bowed and eyes are closed this morning, what about you today? Are you making decisions because of what somebody else has done?

Are you making decisions based upon the truth of God's Word? People may do things wrongly but don't get your attention on what others do. I want to encourage you to keep your attention on the truth.

Keep your attention on the things of God. What about you today? Heavenly Father as we come before you as we have an opportunity to respond here this morning. Lord, you know each heart, each life here today.

[41 : 49] Lord, you know those who have called upon you. You know those who have not. You know those who are struggling with what others have done.

That need to let those things go and to say, Lord, I want to make sure I am in the right standing with you according to the truth of the Word of God. Lord, help us to see clearly the need to trust and pay attention to your truth and not what others do with it.

And Lord, we just turn this time to you, Lord, that we might, you might work upon hearts and lives here in a mighty way. Your Spirit would convict and convince, encourage and strengthen. Lord, you know the need of each one here today.

Lord, we ask it all in Jesus' name. As the piano plays, what about you today? Thank you.