

# Warning: Hypocrisy isn't Hip

Matthew 23:13-39

31 July 2022 | Grace Bible Church Corinda | Ben Shannon

**Big Idea:** Every generation needs to avoid hypocrisy by committing to Jesus.

**Big Question:** How do we avoid hypocrisy?

## Introduction

Most of us are inundated with warnings.

It feels like they're absolutely everywhere.

From the seemingly obvious: Laser Radiation. Do not stare into beam.

To the downright ridiculous: The coffee cup that needs to be marked with "Caution. Handle with care. I'm Hot."

And the plain funny: I love this meme of a BMW with its turning indicator on and the comment "weird green light came on!! Should I be concerned???"

To the verbal warning from a mother: "Sweetheart, danger."

Warnings are just so common that we tend to ignore them.

In the unlikely even you've opened an instruction manual lately, you would've found that there's pages and pages of warnings at the beginning that most of us skip over.

It's easy to brush them off as if they won't happen to us.

This morning's passage is full of warnings that we'd be wise not to skip over and careful to listen to.

Warnings against hypocrisy amongst God's people.

## Outline

We're in a heavy part of Matthew's gospel as we look at chapters 23-25.

In the lead up to this, we've seen Jesus has been poked and prodded from every angle with questions designed to trap him and he's come out squeaky clean.

The leaders of Israel – on the other hand – have shown their true colours.

Last week, we saw the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees highlighted and their lack of humility exposed.

In this chapter, Jesus declares judgment on those who've cast judgment on him.

This week, Jesus builds on what he said in the first part of the chapter – especially verses three and four.

He details how they fail to walk the walk even though they talk the talk and he lays out the ways that:

**Matthew 23:4** (NIV11) <sup>4</sup>“They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.”

Jesus isn’t messing around; he isn’t being nasty or mean, but it’s impossible to escape that he’s passing a just and right sentence on them.

This’s serious because the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders has consequences.

They’re harming God’s people and so they need to be warned.

It’s never good to be on the receiving end of someone’s judgment and so this’s quite a sober and confronting to hear.

Sadly, this passage has a history of being twisted (even by Hitler himself) to say that Jesus gives us justification to condemn anyone who’s Jewish.

I hope that anything like that hadn’t even entered your mind, is far from your heart and never leaves your lips.

As we work through this passage, these verses are very much a warning to us as Christians as well.

Jesus’ finger of judgment is pointed equally at us.

The big idea is that **every generation needs to avoid hypocrisy by committing to Jesus.**

It’s difficult to make sense of exactly how this passage fits together and I’ve seen at least seven different ways.

Be careful what you ask for because this certainly isn’t a simple three-part outline!

I know it looks complicated – because it is! – but this’s my best go at making sense of what’s going on.

There are two big points.

Then there are four sub-points under the first point.

And there are two sub-sub-points under the first three sub-points.

- **Lament for the Leaders** (vv13-36)
  - **Warning #1:** You concentrate on shutting people out over leading them in (vv13-15)
    - Closing Kingdom (v13)
    - Leading Converts to Hell (v15)
  - **Warning #2:** You concentrate on the minute and forget the important (vv16-24)
    - Quibbling over the fine print (vv16-22)
    - Tithing religiously but loving poorly (vv23-24)

- **Warning #3:** You concentrate on the outside over the inside (vv25-32)
  - Cleaning the outside but not the inside (vv25-26)
  - Looking beautiful outside and dying inside (vv27-28)
- **Warning #4:** You concentrate on claiming your ancestors over avoiding their mistakes (vv29-36)
- **Love for Jerusalem** (vv37-39)

## Lament for the Leaders (vv13-36)

Firstly, Jesus laments the way the leaders have been acting.

There are seven different ‘woes’ in this section.

Matthew uses the word ‘woe’ several times in his gospel.

Sometimes as a lament,<sup>1</sup> but mostly to condemn people with judgement from God himself.<sup>2</sup>

Hypocrisy is still very much on the menu as dish of the day.

Hypocrisy is putting on a false face – putting on a mask so that you look like something different on the outside to what you are on the inside.

Six of the seven woes are directed at them for being hypocrites:

Matt. 23:13	“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!
Matt. 23:15	“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!
Matt. 23:16	“Woe to you, blind guides!
Matt. 23:23	“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!
Matt. 23:25	“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!
Matt. 23:27	“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!
Matt. 23:29	“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

The Scribes and the Pharisees are hypocrites because although they give the vibe of being godly, they’re more interested in getting approval from others than from God.

Jesus declares vengeance from God and that’s a really serious thing.

They seem to fit into four big categories, each of them a different warning.

Let’s cast off and woe, woe, woe our boat as we explore these warnings together.

## Warning #1: You concentrate on shutting people out over leading them in (vv13-15)

The first warning is that they concentrate on shutting people out over leading them in.

### Closing Kingdom (v13)

They're hypocrites for claiming to be opening the door of the kingdom for people when they're actually closing it.

Jesus talks a lot about the kingdom of heaven.

Jack the Dipper's ministry in the wilderness included calling people to repent because the kingdom of heaven is near.

Back in 16:19, we saw that Jesus gave his disciples – especially Peter – the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Disciples of Jesus have the job of taking the gospel out so that people will come into the kingdom.

The Scribes and the Pharisees were doing the exact opposite.

As soon as anyone gets close to the kingdom, they slam the door shut so that no one can get over the threshold.

I don't know if you've ever had a door slammed in your face, but it isn't a very pleasant experience.

The leaders themselves won't enter and they'll do their darndest to stop anyone else from doing the same.

Their false teaching is problematic enough, but their rejection of Jesus as Messiah is the greatest issue.

We've seen that already when they've tried to trap Jesus.

At the end of the gospel, we find they conspired with the Roman soldiers to keep his resurrection a secret.

Then in the book of Acts, they beat and locked up the apostles, warning them not to share the message that Jesus had risen from the dead as proof that he can forgive sins.

Saul, before he was converted, went around trying to arrest Christians to put an end to the movement.

Deliberately turning others away from the kingdom is serious business and anyone doing that will be called to give an account.

I think Jesus would say a woe to us if we're deliberately preventing people from coming to King Jesus.

Whether that's by telling people that they're not welcome because they're not good enough, don't wear the right clothes or have the wrong cultural background, skin colour or language.

Or perhaps even barring them because we can't be bothered in sharing words of life with them.

If you're a Christian parent, you've got a God-given role not to be a barrier to your kids entering the kingdom.

Don't feel embarrassed by this.

Not teaching our kids the things of Christ is to be teaching them something – that our faith doesn't matter.

Youth, especially, can spot hypocrisy in us – usually faster than we can see it ourselves.

The best way to stop them coming into the kingdom is to be a hypocrite and fail to live out your faith for real every day.

There are people who say that people of faith are brainwashing their children.

They sound like they're taking the moral high ground when they say, "I'll let my kid decide for themselves about religion."

Except that they also give their kids 18 years of training that there's no God.

That's no different to Christians who teach their kids that there is a God and then let their kids decide for themselves because we can't make them become Christians anyway.

Only one of them is stopping others from entering the kingdom of God though.

By the way, you might notice that verse fourteen is missing in your Bible.

If it is there, it probably shouldn't be because the earliest and best copies of Matthew don't have it and it was probably added in later.

In fact, there's disagreement over it whether it should go before or after verse thirteen.

The Scribes and Pharisees close the kingdom.

[Leading Converts to Hell \(v15\)](#)

They're hypocrites for working hard to bring others in, not to the kingdom but to hell.

I expect that most of us know that most Jews were Jews because they were born Jews and could trace their family tree back to Jacob and his sons.

There were also people who came from other backgrounds who, for a range of reasons, wanted to become Jewish.

Imagine when Asher and Elijah were thrown out of Rome and had to pack up their lives and families, and move somewhere else.

They get chatting to their new neighbours who become interested in their religion and want to attend the local synagogue.

A God-fearer is the name given to a bloke who'd worship in the synagogue like a Jew, but wasn't willing to do everything needed to become fully Jewish.

A proselyte is a pagan who converts to Judaism and literally goes under the knife to become a true Jew.

The religious leaders would travel far and wide outside of Israel – over sea and land – to convince pagans not just to be God-fearers, but to become full-on proselytes.

We'd call them missionaries.

They were pretty committed and zealous in what they were doing, but what were they converting people to?

A set of rules they could use to try and please God?

Or to the hope of Messiah?

Without getting converts to trust in Messiah, any success that they have is still a loss because their converts are still headed towards hell without Jesus.

For all their keenness and sincerity, they were still converting them to a belief system that wouldn't save them.

We tend to talk about what we loved, what we're excited about.

Have you ever seen people who are zealous about something that's wrong?

We tend to see this most clearly in other people.

I'm impressed by the commitment of Jehovah's Witnesses in coming to people's door to share their message.

Or in the age of the pandemic, hand-writing notes and going to the expense of mailing them to people.

Most Mormon men press pause on their lives to use two of the best years of their 20s going on a mission.

But all of their zeal's for absolutely nothing if they don't trust the real gospel given by the real Jesus of the Bible.

For ourselves, that's why we need to keep checking ourselves and making sure that the gospel we preach lines up with the Scriptures.

At times in the past, Christian missionaries have tried to convert people into being Westerners rather than to faith in Jesus.

They taught language and culture but not clearly that Jesus died for our sins.

Zeal for the wrong thing has a negative effect on the people we share the gospel with.

Only the true gospel of Jesus has the power to save people from their sins and give them hope for eternity.

Mission zeal without true gospel heat sends people into the fires of hell.

The first warning is to be carefully of shutting people out rather than letting them in.

[Warning #2: You concentrate on the minute and forget the important \(vv16-24\)](#)

Or to put it another way, they don't keep the main things the main things.

Quibbling over the fine print (vv16-22)

They were hypocrites because they quibbled over the fine print and didn't care about the main clauses.

I'll be quick to add that there's nothing wrong with looking at the fine print.

You should.

The problem is that they wanted to look like they were being holy while using the fine print to get out of actually having to be holy.

Jesus directs this third woe to the blind guides, rather than hypocrites.

The leaders think that they're leading blind people to the truth, when in truth, they're blind to the truth themselves.

So it's the blind leading the blind.

And earlier in gospel, we saw that Jesus said that when blind people lead, they end up falling into a pit.<sup>3</sup>

The whole issue of oaths came up in the Sermon on the Mount, so I'll only cover it quickly here.<sup>4</sup>

The Scribes and the Pharisees drew fine distinctions between valid and invalid oaths.

They said that an oath was only binding in certain circumstances and not in others, depending on what you swore by.

An oath was legit if you swore by the gold of the temple, but not if you swore by the temple itself.

Or you had to keep your word if you swore by the gift on the altar but not by the altar itself.

That's really convenient if you don't want to be bound by keeping your word.

Before the 1996 election, John Howard was asked how he was going to pay for everything they'd promised.

He said that is government would cover the "core" promises.

And sure enough, when he got into government and the first budget was handed down, there wasn't funding for everything they'd promised.

His defence was that they'd covered their "core" promises and so therefore anything they didn't fund must've been "non-core".

That's using fine print to weasel out of promises.

Jesus calls this out for exactly what it is – a word game that was designed to get you out of having to keep your word.

The gold is really only valuable because it's in the temple.

**Matthew 23:17** NIV11 <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred?

In verse 21, Jesus argues that since the temple is God's house, swearing by that is no different to swearing in God's name.

Every oath ultimately depends on God.

So stop being a hypocrite who just wants to look good and let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no'.

We can be guilty of putting much of our energy into making sure that we're technically right.

That way we can look like we're telling the truth.

Yet Jesus says that if you just tell the truth, then you don't have any chance of being a hypocrite.

Don't focus on the little at the expense of the biggie.

### Tithing religiously but loving poorly (vv23-24)

The Old Testament gives some fairly detailed instructions on how the people of Israel were meant to tithe.

Tithing is giving a percentage of what you take in and dedicating it to the purposes God has set down.<sup>5</sup>

There was still quite some debate about exactly how much the Israelites were meant to tithe and it gets a little complex.

Which suited the Scribes and the Pharisees who took this part of God's Law very seriously.

In fact, you might even call them fussy.

They carefully tithed their main crops like they were supposed to.

And when they popped out to the herb garden to get some rosemary to put onto the roast lamb, they made sure that they tithed that as well.

Jesus doesn't say that they should neglect this small stuff, verse 23.

They weren't wrong to make the maximum application of tithing.

Don't mishear Jesus and think that he's saying that you shouldn't bother sweating the small stuff.

The fine print matters but I also realise that most people don't read the fine print because they don't care.

When we went for a loan a few years ago, I read every word of every document, even the fine print.

I wanted to know exactly what we were signed up for and so I had some questions.

Of course, when I asked the broker, what was I told?

"No one's asked that before!"

Probably because no one had actually read it.

Following the letter of the law matters, but it's not an excuse for missing the big stuff.

Jesus' big beef with them at this point is that there are other parts of the law where they're going for the minimum requirements.

They tithe well, but they neglect the parts about doing justice, showing mercy and being faithful.

Those are the main, central things that mustn't be neglected.

You're a hypocrite if you care about the small stuff but not about the big things.

Jesus isn't necessarily drawing a distinction between things that're easier or harder.

You're distorting Scripture if you leave out justice or mercy or faithfulness.

God told his people through the prophet Micah that:

**Micah 6:8** NIV11 <sup>8</sup> He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

In the past, I think I probably haven't thought that deeply about that particular combination and maybe you haven't either.

I think it's significant that Jesus brings it up in the context of him declaring God's judgement on the Scribes and the Pharisees.

Justice is something that God cares about deeply.

That people will be held account for their wrongs matters to him.

It was his justice that meant Jesus had to go to the cross.

Sin and rebellion against God can't be left without a consequence and go unpunished.

Jesus died on the cross so that the punishment for our sin could fall on him rather than us.

But the God of the Bible is also a God of mercy because he's a God of justice.

God's mercy means that anyone who puts their trust in Christ doesn't receive what they deserve – death, separation from God forever.

Jesus went to the cross so that he could pay for our sin and so that we didn't have to.

The cross is God's great act of mercy where he allows us to be forgiven and set free from all the wrongs we've done, regardless of whether they're small or big.

And the consequence is faithfulness from his people.

Not a people who go keep living however they want by sinning, but people who respond to God's grace by seeking to live faithfully.

God helps us do that by his Holy Spirit so that we have the means to do it.

Justice – Mercy – Faithfulness are weighty matters that can't be neglected.

Yet that's exactly what Jesus accuses them of when he calls them blind guides in verse 24.

Here's a picture of a gnat and a camel.

What they have in common is that they're both unclean animals but what clearly makes them different is their size.

In the ancient world, wine was typically kept in open jugs and so insects would get in.

The wine was strained through a piece of cloth to get any insects out.

Jesus asks how they can get the gnats out and miss the camel?

That'd be ridiculous.

And it'd be just as ridiculous to focus on the small stuff in the Law and miss the big stuff.

In fact, it'd be hypocrisy to get rid of the small and leave the big.

### Warning #3: You concentrate on the outside over the inside (vv25-32)

They concentrate on the outside over the inside.

Cleaning the outside but not the inside (vv25-26)

There were two different schools of thought between everybody's favourite first-century teachers about what made a dish clean.

Hillel said that you just clean the inside and you're done.

Shammai said that you had to clean the outside as well as the inside.

Not surprisingly, Jesus isn't happy with either one.

Jesus is obviously using dishes as a metaphor for people here since dishes can't be greedy or self-indulgent.

He makes the point that there's no point being clean on the outside if you're still a mess on the inside.

I wish my kids would apply that principle when they do the washing up.

But the point Jesus makes is that there's no point going around and being seen to be praying and fasting and sitting at the good seats at the banquet when you're got a sinful heart.

A hypocrite like that needs moral renewal from the inside.

Verse 26:

**Matthew 23:26** NIV11 <sup>26</sup>Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

The only way to fix a hypocrite is from the inside.

When the inside is clean, that's not the end of things.

A changed heart and mind will result in changed actions on the outside as well.

Looking beautiful outside and dying inside (vv27-28)

They're hypocrites because they look beautiful on the outside but they're dying on the inside.

According to the Old Testament Law, if you come in contact with a grave, you become ritually unclean.

So, in the month before Passover, someone would go around and use lime to wash all the graves.

If you touched a grave in the lead up to Passover, you wouldn't be able to participate.

I guess it was better one person being unclean than many.

It was an effective way of marking the graves so someone didn't touch them by mistake.

You could still run into a grave though, especially if you're a blind guide.

Liming the outside of the grave did make them easier to spot, but it didn't make them clean.

Jesus says it's the same with people.

They're hypocrites because they look righteous on the outside, but on the inside they're "full of hypocrisy and wickedness."

We live in a very visual culture.

The jersey you wear really does matter because it communicates something really significant.

The phrase, "Clothes make the man" is perhaps more relevant now than ever.

We're programmed to look at the external and make judgements about people.

We do judge a book by its cover and so this can be a real trap for us.

I was talking to some people after church last week and the topic of what we wear to church came up – I'm not sure why.

Someone helpfully said that in times past that people would typically wear their "Sunday best."

That's because people thought they were going to worship the king and so they wore their best clothes.

I think that's theologically dubious because the New Testament never describes worship that way and the main metaphor the New Testament uses is of the church being a family, but I digress.

One of the problems with that sub-culture is that it's very easy for our clothes to be a mask.

The suit you wear doesn't make you morally clean.

Like a mask worn in the Greek theatre as an act and hiding what's really going on inside.

Wearing our Sunday best while having a heart that's far from God might well fool other people around you.

But it won't fool God.

It's not enough to brush up well on the outside once per week.

We need cleaning from the inside.

Be careful of just focusing on the exterior.

## Warning #4: You concentrate on claiming your ancestors over avoiding their mistakes (vv29-36)

This final warning is quite a long one.

The Scribes and Pharisees are hypocrites because they think that they're the goodies when they're the baddies.

They think they stand in the tradition of the prophets when they follow their ancestors in condemning them.

The Scribes and Pharisees says that they respect the leaders from the past who spoke on God's behalf.

We've already seen in verse two that the Scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses.

It was typical for the leaders to build monuments to religious leaders of the past: this's where David was buried, this is the well that Jacob built.

It was a sign they were connected to the great leaders of the past and stand in their tradition.

And they take the moral high ground, verse 30:

**Matthew 23:30** NIV11 <sup>30</sup> And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

Why would they even say that?

Well because there's a long history of the people of Israel silencing God's prophets when their message wasn't well-liked.

This generation says that they would never do that.

Yeah, right.

We're familiar with this idea, aren't we?

There's this idea going around that if we saw the abuses that happened in the '70s, we wouldn't have been involved.

We would've spoken out.

It's all very well with 20/20 hindsight, but I'm not sure that we can be so smug.

The tradition of their ancestors that they actually stand in, Jesus says, is of murdering rather than listening to the prophets.

And their own actions say differently to their words, revealing the truth.

They're hypocrites because they're rejecting God's Messiah.

Back in chapter 21, we're told about them deliberately beginning to plot to end Jesus.

**Matthew 23:32** NIV11 <sup>32</sup>Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started!

Jesus' words in verse 33 sound very much like John the Baptist's.

They're spreading poison, just like the snake in the garden.

What hope is there for them?

How can they escape hell if they're doing what their ancestors did?

In his mercy, Jesus says that he's going to send "prophets and sages and teachers."

He hasn't given up on them and so he's still going to send them people to teach God's words.

Firstly, the apostles like Peter and Paul.

Then a second generation like Barnabas, Silas and Timothy.

Then others they passed the gospel light onto all the way down to us today.

Their reception is going to be about as good as the one the prophets of long ago received.

**Matthew 23:34b** NIV11 "Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town."

History tells us that's exactly what happened.

Peter was flogged.

Paul was chased from Thessalonica to Berea.

Stephen was killed.

If you were ridiculed or verbally sprayed this week for standing by what God says, or not even saying anything but just being known as a Christian – even from those who claim to be your brothers and sisters – then you stand in a long tradition of people who've been treated the same way.

The people Jesus was talking to were every bit as rebellious towards God as their ancestors.

The righteous blood of everyone who was killed in God's name speaks against them.

From Abel who was killed by his brother all the way down to Zechariah son of Berekiah, who the Jews of Jesus' day murdered.

You can read about that in 2 Chronicles 24:21.

And we're kidding ourselves, we're self-deluded if we think that we're any different.

As people who've descended from the first rebel, Adam, each and every one of us rebels against God.

It's popular at the moment to acknowledge that mistakes were made in the past and that's a good step.

But I think it's common for us to have an arrogant undercurrent to our words that implies we would've acted differently.

Perhaps.

Hopefully we don't make those same mistakes, but we're fooling ourselves if we think that we won't make others.

The times change but human nature remains the same.

Every new generation doesn't just fall into following Jesus.

God doesn't have any grandchildren.

That's why each new generation needs to repent and commit themselves to the Lord afresh.

And then with equal difficulty, remain committed to the Lord.

Rather than vainly thinking that we're better than those who came before us and so won't make the same mistakes or have the same hypocrisy.

That's the end of the woes, these sober warnings that we need to listen carefully to and not ignore.

## **Love for Jerusalem (vv37-39)**

Jesus ends with a note of compassion for the city of Jerusalem.

That might seem a little bit odd.

Speaking of the people of the city is one thing, but speaking of the city itself?

The city of Jerusalem has a special place in God's plans.

The city also stands for the nation of Israel as a whole.

They've killed the prophets God sent in the past and now they're about to kill his greatest prophet – Jesus.

It's a city that has turned against God in rejecting his Son.

Time and again in questioning Jesus, they've challenged him and refused to accept that he's Messiah.

Yet despite this deep and hurtful rejection, Jesus still cares for them.

They've given up on Jesus, but he hasn't given up on them.

He's like a mother hen who calls her chicks to come and find safety under her wings.

Whether the danger is from birds of prey or fire, the mother hen offers protection to her young.

The city is turned against Jesus though.

“And you were not willing.”

They’re the problem, not Jesus.

It comes down to you and your rejection being the problem.

So, Jesus tells them that their house is left empty.

My hunch is that he’s talking about the temple here.

At the start of chapter 24, Jesus is about to leave the temple.

I think this is a bit like Ezekiel 10 where God’s glory leaves the temple.

Once again, God’s glory (Jesus) is leaving the temple.

Jesus won’t be back to the temple until the day that he returns in glory.

In AD70, the physical temple in Jerusalem we destroyed.

But that’s not the end of hope.

Through Jesus’ revelation to John, we learn of the New Jerusalem.

On the day he returns, all people will repeat the words of Psalm 118:26, ‘Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord’ .

## Conclusion

Jesus gives us some strong warnings in this passage and it would be wise not to ignore them.

They’re not just warnings for other people, but us as well.

He’s speaking to those who give, care about mission, make vows and care about the letter of the law.

Religious people who are seeking to be faithful to God.

People who are hopefully like us... and yet who we’re hopefully not wanting to be like.

Yet also people who’ve lost their way and become hypocrites.

Who have ways that we don’t have Jesus at the centre of what we do.

If we’re not careful, if we don’t follow those warnings, then that could be us too.

May God give us the grace to commit to following Jesus in our generation and keeping him the focus of all we do.

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<sup>1</sup> 18:7; 24:19; 26:24

<sup>2</sup> 11:21; 23:13-15

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 15:14

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 5:33-37

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 14:22-29, Leviticus 27:30.

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**Big Idea:** Every generation needs to avoid hypocrisy by committing to Jesus.

**Big Question:** How do we avoid hypocrisy?

## Discussion Questions

1. What is the structure of this passage and how does it fit into the flow of the Gospel of Matthew?
2. Who is this passage of Scripture meant to speak to/about?
3. Which of the woes do you find the LEAST clear/most difficult to understand?
4. Explain the meaning of one of the woes you MOST clearly understand to the group.
5. How does the warning in one of these woes cause you to consider how you need to 'tip the rudder' of your life?
6. Do you think Jesus is speaking of sending prophets and sages and teachers in the past or future?
7. Why do you think verses 37-39 are there?