

Thy Kingdom Come: Kingdom Warnings

Reflect

1. Do you expect people to be true to their word?
2. Do you expect Christians to be true to their word? Is it possible to follow Jesus and yet be a hypocrite?
3. How does your faith in Jesus relate to keeping your word (faithfulness)? What about times when you have been faithless, what do you do next?

Read Your Bible

- Titus 1:15-16
- Matthew 23:13-39

Apply God's Word to Your Life

1. Titus 1:15-16 describes two categories of people. How do they relate differently to God?
2. Have you personally ever been in the second category, "corrupted" and "denying Him by your actions"? What was it like?
3. Matthew 23 records the seven woes that Jesus pronounced against the religious leaders at the time. They are God's lament at finding the leaders of His people so rebellious and clueless. What stands out to you?
4. Could any of these woes apply to us or to our leaders today?
5. What is Jesus' desire as expressed in verses 37-39? What is the remedy to the woes He pronounced?
6. Are there places in your life where you've been a hypocrite? Are you willing to lay it down at the foot of the cross?

Conclusion

The New Testament brings the scandalous story of Jesus' mission to reclaim lost people. He takes rebels like you and me and makes us holy like Him. That restoration is whole-hearted, it takes broken sinners and makes them wide-eyed saints. While we still fall short, we are warned that hypocrisy is one of the strongest attacks we can make against His work in us. It is when we act or pretend to honor God on the "outside" while being inwardly "dead" towards Him. This cuts close to home for all of us. Jesus takes such time to indict it because, when we easily lie to ourselves, we also hinder others from seeing truth. Taken far enough, self-deceiving sin can corrupt both mind and conscience again, like we'd never known Jesus. But fear not, our Savior is much greater than our sin! Grace calls us to a simple repentance that kills the hypocrisy in us. The woes of Matthew 23 are a great opportunity to let the Holy Spirit examine what's on the inside. "Where is the hypocrisy in me and how can I lay it down at the foot of the cross?"

Pray

Lord God, You are here. Let me catch my breath and bow my head for a moment in Your presence. Examine my heart. You healed the sick and raised the dead. Now do this work in me. Show me if I've been hiding from You. Reveal sick or dead places in me where Your Spirit needs to bring life. Restore in me a clean heart. Then, I will sing Your Name and tell of Your love forever. Amen.