

Bible Study Class
Clayton Presbyterian Church
Lesson 20 Jesus
The Last Week of the Life of Jesus II

Opening prayer: Lord, let us listen for Your will for our lives and help to recognize the times that we need to turn to You for Your help, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Today we are going to use Matthew 23 and John 12. I have inserted some cross references as well.

Jesus' Last Public Discourse. Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Read Matthew 23:1-12

1. What did Jesus tell His disciples to do in relationship to the teachings and commands of the scribes and Pharisees? He tells them to follow what they tell you to do, but not to imitate their actions. Why? They were the only authorized interpreters of Moses Law but they didn't practice what they preached.
2. What did the scribes and Pharisees do in relation to their own teachings and commands? They did everything for show. This was a tradition, not the law. Why? They wanted to be respected, yet they placed burdens on the people.
3. What motivation did the scribes and Pharisees have for doing the works they did? They wanted to appear more religious than the common people. What were some of the things they did? They wore phylacteries were strips of parchment on which were written four passages of the law, placed in a leather case and worn fastened to the forehead and left arm. They made theirs much bigger. They made the fringe of their robes longer so that it would show off better. What did Jesus say would be their "reward" for doing them? They would receive greater condemnation.
4. What did Jesus teach in regard to the following titles? A. Rabbi which means master or teacher and since Jesus was their Master, they should not call themselves Rabbi. B. Father should only refer to God. In the Old Testament we have references to Father Abraham, this was a title of respect and honor. Jesus was teaching His disciples they were to serve without seeking honors. C. Teacher Jesus' disciples are not to seek out personal authority as "master" over other disciples, because as "the Christ," Jesus alone is Master.
5. Who is the greatest among those who would serve God? The greatest one must be your servant. Explain. True greatness stoops to serve.
6. What will happen to one who "humbles himself"? True disciples who humble themselves will be exalted in due time. To one who "exalts himself"? Pharisees who exalt themselves will be brought low. Explain. Jesus criticizes those who make religion a matter of praise-seeking ostentation, whether they do so by seeking position, or by the clothes they wear, or by assuming or accepting titles of honor or distinction.

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Read Matthew 23:13-28

7. How could the scribes and Pharisees "shut up the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus is symbolically describing the kingdom of heaven as a house. The Jews were supposed to be teaching converts to worship God, but instead they were learning Phariseeism.

8. How, according to verses 14 and 15, were the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites? They were taking over widows' properties as if they were using it for religious purposes but it became personal gain for them. The converts were becoming perverted as each generation drifted farther and farther from God's original intent.

9. How were the scribes and Pharisees "blind guides"? This woe is pronounced upon them for their ignorance and idiocy. What was wrong with their teachings concerning "swearing?" The Pharisees graduated oaths according to their own definitions. If the object by which a man swore was not sacred enough, he didn't have to keep his oath. They thought that swearing by the gold in the temple was greater than swearing by the temple. God teaches that all oaths are binding.

10. Were the scribes and Pharisees condemned for tithing "mint and anise and cumin?" Explain. Jesus did not condemn them for this care about small details of obedience, but He criticized them for being utterly unscrupulous when it came to showing justice, mercy, and faithfulness to others. The anise was used for medical purposes as well as a culinary seasoning. Cumin also was a condiment and a medicine, the bruised seed mixed with wine being used as a styptic, especially after circumcision. It was also used as an ingredient for salves and plasters such as were applied to the ulcers of cattle produced from the bites of insects.

11. What were the "weightier matters of the law?" The point Jesus is making with the mint, dill, and cumin has to do with the wrong and right way to make use of God's teaching in scripture. The goal is to live with justice, mercy, and faith. These are abstract qualities that God wants us to embody concretely. All of His teaching has the goal of making us just, merciful, and faithful.

12. How did the scribes and Pharisees "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel?" Some commentators think that this is just an idiom of the time. The Believers Commentary says the gnat, a tiny insect that often fell into a cup of sweet wine, was strained out by sucking the wine through the teeth. How ludicrous to take such care with the insignificant, then eat the largest unclean animal in Palestine! The Pharisees were infinitely concerned with minutiae, but grossly blind to enormous sins like hypocrisy, dishonesty, cruelty, and greed. They had lost their sense of proportion.

13. How were the Pharisees like dishes that were clean on the outside but dirty on the inside? Jesus here compares the Pharisees to a woman who washes the outside of her dishes and leaves the inside unclean. But in describing that inner uncleanness he passes

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from the figure to the reality, and specifies that it consists of extortion and self-indulgence. They made their outside clean by traditional washings.

14. How were the scribes and Pharisees like "whitewashed tombs" or "whited sepulchers?" Remember that touching a grave made you unclean. Men are contaminated by the same thing because the outside is rendered so white and beautiful that men are deceived into thinking that the inside is harmless.

Read Matthew 23: 29-36

15. How were the scribes and Pharisees "hypocrites" in regard to the "prophets?" The scribes and Pharisees pretended to honor the Old Testament prophets by building and/or repairing their tombs and putting wreaths on their monuments. In memorial speeches, they said they would not have joined their ancestors in killing the prophets. It almost seems from the preceding verse that they dissociated themselves from their fathers who killed the prophets. First, they admitted that their fathers, shed the blood of the prophets. But Jesus used the word sons in the sense of meaning people with the same characteristics. He knew that even as they were decorating the prophets' graves, they were plotting His death. Second, in showing such respect for the dead prophets, they were saying, "The only prophets we like are dead ones." In this sense also they were sons of their fathers. Zechariah son of Berechiah isn't Zechariah the prophet but a figure in the Hebrew Bible described as a priest who was stoned to death by Jehoash of Judah. It is described in 2 Chronicles. I can't explain the difference in the father's name.

2 Chronicles 24:20-22 Then the Spirit of God moved Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest to speak up: "God's word: Why have you deliberately walked away from God's commandments? You can't live this way! If you walk out on God, he'll walk out on you." But they worked out a plot against Zechariah, and with the complicity of the king - he actually gave the order! - they murdered him, pelting him with rocks, right in the court of The Temple of God. That's the thanks King Joash showed the loyal Jehoiada, the priest who had made him king. He murdered Jehoiada's son. Zechariah's last words were, "Look, God! Make them pay for this!" Message

Matthew Henry's comments on this passage. Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, being filled with the Spirit of prophecy, stood up, and told the people of their sin. The work of ministers is to show the sins of men and preach the will of God. They stoned Zechariah to death in the court of the house of the Lord. King Joash was later killed by his own servants.

Read Matthew 23: 37-39

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16. What did Jesus say concerning Jerusalem? It is highly significant that the chapter which, more than almost any other, contains the woes of the Lord Jesus, closes with His tears! After His bitter denunciation of the Pharisees, He utters a poignant lament over the city of lost opportunity. The repetition of the name—“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem”—is charged with unutterable emotion. She had killed the prophets and stoned God’s messengers, yet the Lord loved her, and would have gathered her children to Himself—as a hen gathers her chicks. Why could it not be fulfilled? She was not willing. What was going to happen to Jerusalem instead? Primarily the house here is the temple, but may also include the city of Jerusalem and the nation itself. There would be an interval between His death and Second Coming during which unbelieving Israel would not see Him since after His resurrection He was seen only by believers. The next time the inhabitants of Jerusalem would see Him after His death would be when they would look on Him whom they pierced and mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son. In Jewish reckoning there is no mourning as bitter as that for an only son.

Observing the Offerings and Widow’s Mites

Luke 21:1-4 As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ³ “Truly I tell you,” He said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.” NIV

17. Why did Jesus say the widow who put two mites into the treasury had put in more than others who had “put in much?” The comment on how teachers of the law victimized widows leads to a story on how a poor widow set an example of acceptable giving. The widow’s “two very small copper coins” were each worth only a small fraction of a day’s wage. Proportionate to her total financial worth, however, the woman’s gift was far more valuable than the gifts of the wealthy.

In the court of the women there were thirteen chests with trumpet-shaped mouths into which offerings might be dropped. The money was for the benefit of the Temple. An inscription on each chest showed to which one of the thirteen special items of cost or expenditure the contents would be devoted. She could have kept one of the mites for her living, but she gave all she had. God looks on the heart and the quality of our motives while we look at quantity.

Greeks Seek Jesus. He Foretells that He Shall Draw All Men unto Him.

Read John 12: 20-26

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18. What did certain Greeks ask of Philip? They wanted to see Jesus. Commentators say that these men came from the west just as the Wise Men came from the east at Christ's birth. They may have been Greek converts and were drawn to Philip by his Greek name. What did he do? He told Andrew and the two went to Jesus who may have still been in the court of the women. Since it was a part of the sanctuary no Gentile could enter. The question they ask in verse 21 reminds us of the language of discipleship we have seen earlier in the gospel. They want to "see" Jesus. On one level it refers to an opportunity to talk with Jesus and ask questions. However, the verbs of seeing often mean far more. They are invitations to belief; these are foreigners who now stand ready to join the flock of Christ. What was Jesus' response to their request? Jesus doesn't really answer the Greeks. The "hour of glorification" points to his return to the Father through his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his exaltation. Therefore, something has changed; the Greeks signal the closing of a chapter for Jesus. His ministry in Judaism is finished and he now belongs to the wider world.

19. What did Jesus say must happen to a grain of wheat before it can bring forth fruit? What application did He make of this teaching? As the germ of life in the grain of wheat can only pass into other grains by departing from the original grain and leaving it dead, so the life which was in Christ Jesus could only pass into his disciples by his death. One grain of wheat makes multiple grains. However, if the grain tries to save itself it only rots.

20. Where did Jesus say His servants would be? What makes that possible? Jesus here recommends to his disciples that they follow him in fruit-bearing self-sacrifice, promising them the joy of being with him and the honor of the Father. The joy of being with Christ is the chief expectation of the Christian.

Read John 12:27-36

21. Why was Jesus' soul "troubled?" Jesus admits that it was difficult for him to live up to the principle of sacrifice which he had just enunciated. Had it not been thus difficult for him, he would hardly have been a fitting example for his disciples; for certainly it is and has always been difficult for them. For what purpose had He come to this "hour?" To give his sacrificial death that all might live through Him.

22. What request did Jesus make of the Father? He prays that He may glorify the Father by suffering according to the will of the Father. He refuses to ask for deliverance. What response was given? A voice from heaven says that He had glorified it and would glorify it again.

23. What did the people make of the above response? The crowd thought that it thundered. Others thought that an angel spoke to Him. What explanation did Jesus give of

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it? The voice was not spoken to encourage Jesus in his hour of suffering, but to aid the Jews to believe on him, and to warn them of the coming judgment which would follow their disbelief. Fourfold comments that the hearing of this voice reflects the belief of the hearer. To the mass, therefore, the voice was a mere sound; to others, the utterance was articulate though incomprehensible, while to John, and perhaps to all the disciples, the voice communicated a thought.

24. Who is the "ruler of this world?" Satan. The Greek word here implies "crisis" the battle for control of this world was coming to a head. How would he be "cast out?" The death of Jesus would cast Satan out. Satan is cast out by the process of the advancing kingdom of God. The defeat of the world that opposes Jesus was God's victory and the victory of the people of God.

25. What was Jesus referring to when He said, "if I am lifted up from the earth?" Explain. The people believed that when Messiah came that He would remain forever. When people heard Him refer to His death, some of them turned away refusing to believe that the Messiah could die or that He could leave them once He came. Jesus of course was speaking of the Crucifixion however, rather than argue and debate, He tells His listeners to make the best of the little time that they have left with Him in earthly form. The verb used for lifted has a deliberate double meaning. It means both a literal elevation as in being raised up on a cross and exaltation being raised in rank or honor. Jesus promised that when He was lifted elevated, exalted on the cross He would draw all peoples to Himself.

26. How would "all people" be drawn to Jesus? When Jesus dies, he fulfills the sacrificial law. This opens the door for people other than the Jews to believe and have salvation.

27. Why did the people ask Jesus to identify "the Son of Man?" What was His response? Having heard him style himself the Son of man in verse 23, they think that He had used it to distinguish himself from the true Messiah, and ask with more or less contempt, "Who is this Son of man?" Thus, blinded by their preconceived opinions and misconstructions of Scripture, the people wavered in their loyalty to Jesus, and Watkins says, "This question came midway between the 'Hosanna' of the entry into Jerusalem and the 'Crucify him' of the trial." They believed part of the Old Testament but had paid little attention to Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22. John emphasized that if someone believes, it is because God has revealed Himself and His truth to them. Jesus had revealed Himself to them through the many signs and through His teaching.

28. How could the people become "sons of light?" Believe Jesus. Jesus stressed His own truthfulness, and the need man has to follow Jesus - or else live in darkness.

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Read John 12:37-43

29. Did the people, as a whole, believe in Jesus? Since many didn't believe we have to conclude that only a few truly believed. What prophecies were fulfilled by them in that regard? *Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? NIV Isaiah 6: 9-10 So he told me to go and give the people this message: "No matter how much you listen; you will not understand. No matter how much you look, you will not know what is happening." Good News.*

John emphasized that if someone believes, it is because God has revealed Himself and His truth to them. Jesus had revealed Himself to them through the many signs and through His teaching. God would strengthen them in their decision, either for Jesus or against Him.

30. Why did the rulers who believed in Jesus not confess their beliefs? At this point in Jesus' ministry there were many who believed on Him secretly. They saw the signs and heard His teaching, but they were afraid, they would not openly confess their allegiance to Jesus. They liked the praise and approval of fellow humans. But ultimately, they had to decide.

Read John 12: 44-50

These are the last public words of Jesus and most commentators say that He is passionately shouting at this point.

31. What reason did Jesus give for coming in the world? He came to save the world. Jesus emphasized the themes of all His previous preaching in John. It included a reminder of His teaching, a challenge to decide, a warning to those who decided against Him and a promise to those who decided for Him.

32. What will judge people in the last day? Jesus stressed His own truthfulness, and the need man has to follow Jesus - or else live in darkness. Why is this such an appropriate standard of judgment? Because Jesus lived it. He followed God's will. The Father had sent the Son into the world to bring life and immortality to light in the gospel. Jesus therefore here declared that men will be tried by the gospel law and that some will be saved and some condemned by it.

Closing prayer: Go with us as we depart to serve you better. In Jesus' name Amen. ,

Matthew 23:1-12	John 12: 20-26
Matthew 23:13-28	John 12:27-36
Matthew 23: 29-36	John 12:37-43
	John 12: 44-50