

## Matthew 23:23-24 Woe to Those who Neglect the Weightier Matters

Introduction: Jesus said, "Woe to you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites." Sounds familiar doesn't it? This is the fifth time Jesus has pronounced woe upon them. This time it is for neglecting the weightier matters.

### I. The matter of tithing.

- A. The Mosaic Law required all Israelites to tithe.
- B. It required a lot more than most Christians realize.
  - 1. It required 10% to support the Levites, Numbers 18:20-21, 24.
  - 2. It required another 10% to support the religious feasts, Deuteronomy 14:22-23.
  - 3. Every third year it required 10% to support the poor.
  - 4. The Law required a temple tax to support the temple.
  - 5. It asked free will offerings above all that.
- C. The scribes and Pharisees got an "A+." (A plus)
  - 1. They gave all the required tithes plus free will offerings.
  - 2. Plus they tithed also of mint, anise, and cumin which was not required by the Law. (Anise is dill.)

### II. The weightier matters which they had neglected.

- A. Judgment
  - 1. The word is used here in the sense of justice and fairness.
  - 2. God was not impressed with their little handful of mint when they were grossly unfair in their dealings with others.
  - 3. Anybody who would devour widows houses would take advantage of anybody.
- B. Mercy
  - 1. They were without mercy in their dealings with others.
  - 2. God was not impressed with their little dab of dill when they were unconcerned about the feelings of others.
  - 3. A little kindness would have been worth a whole lot more than a little dill.
- C. Faith
  - 1. The Law was designed to bring the Israelites to faith in the Messiah, the Christ.
  - 2. Those who did not place their faith in Him had missed the whole point of the Law.
  - 3. Yet it was not only to bring them to faith in Him but also to faithfulness to Him.
  - 4. God was not impressed by their little bag of cumin when they had neglected to put their faith in the Messiah and had neglected to be faithful to Him.
- D. No amount of spices could make up for what they had neglected.
- E. That is what Jesus meant when He said that they strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel.
  - 1. They placed great importance on things that were relatively unimportant to God and placed little or no importance on things that counted with God.
  - 2. They would take great pains to strain a gnat out of their drink lest they offend God by drinking something dead.
  - 3. But they did not hesitate to go on in their unbelief toward the Messiah nor to go on dealing mercilessly and unfairly with others.

### III. Lessons for us to consider.

- A. Consider that even us Christians may place too much importance on the wrong things.
  - 1. We can place too much importance on people's dress, especially our own. (What God sees in our heart is a lot more important than what others see on our back. You don't

- have to dress up to come to church.)
- 2. We can place too much importance on what others think about us. (What God thinks counts the most.)
- 3. We can place too much importance on the material things of life. (The spiritual are far more important.)
- B. Consider the importance of placing your faith in Jesus.
  - 1. One who neglects to do so will spend eternity in the fires of hell.
  - 2. One who trusts Jesus will go to heaven.
- C. Consider the importance of being faithful to Jesus after you are saved. (It is more important than visiting friends and family, more important than physical rest and recreation, more than anything else in the world.)
- D. Consider the importance of dealing right with others.
  - 1. The Christian should deal fairly with others.
  - 2. Don't cheat a neighbor; don't cheat in a business deal; don't cheat Uncle Sam; don't cheat in games, etc.
- E. Consider the importance of being merciful to others.
  - 1. The Lord has been merciful to you.
  - 2. If you catch yourself being too hard on others, beware!
- F. Consider even your giving to support the Lord's cause.
  - 1. The scribes and Pharisees tithed and the Lord said they ought to have done so.
  - 2. They tithed 10% to the Levites, 10% to the festivals, etc.
  - 3. Let us not only tithe, but let us give much more than 10%.

Conclusion: Remember that all the money in the world will not make up for being saved and surrendering your heart and life to the Lord.

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