

The Blind Leading the Blind

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] John chapter 9 is our scripture reading this morning, where we read of Jesus healing a man born blind.

We're going to read verses 1 through 34. This is the account in the inspired Word of God. As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

Neither this man nor his parents sinned, said Jesus, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world. Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.

[1 : 14] Go, he told him. Wash in the pool of Siloam. This word means sent. So the man went and washed and came home seeing.

His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg? Some claimed that he was.

Others said, No, he only looks like him. But he himself insisted, I am the man. How then were your eyes open, they demanded. He replied, The man they called Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes.

He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see. Where is this man, they asked him. I don't know, he said.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been born blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath.

[2 : 16] Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He put mud on my eyes, the man replied, and I washed, and now I see.

Some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath. But others asked, How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?

So they were divided. Finally they turned again to the blind man. What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.

The man replied, He is a prophet. The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents.

Is this your son? They asked. Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that he can now see? We know he is our son, the parents answered.

[3 : 21] And we know he was born blind. But how he can see or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age. He will speak for himself.

His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledges that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.

That was why his parents said, He is of age. Ask him. A second time they summoned the man who had been born blind. Give glory to God, they said.

We know this man is a sinner. He replied, Whether he is a sinner or not, I do not know. One thing I do know, I was blind, but now I see.

Then they asked him, What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? He answered, I have told you already, and you did not listen.

[4 : 22] Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too? Then they hurled insults at him and said, You are this fellow's disciple. We are disciples of Moses.

We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from. The man answered, Now that is remarkable.

You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes? We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.

Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

To this they replied, You were steeped in sin at birth. How dare you lecture us? And they threw him out. Let's hear God's word preached.

[5 : 27] A couple weeks ago, our friend Marungi from Kenya sent an email in which he said that their nation was reeling in shock over a church leader on the Kenyan coast who had a powerful influence over his people, and he had indoctrinated hundreds of his followers to starve themselves to death in the name of fasting so that they could go to heaven.

So far, more than 110 bodies of adults and children have been dug up on his expansive 800-acre property.

He's been arrested. But this has led to the condemnation of churches in Kenya and calls for more stringent oversight by the government.

Well, I don't need to tell you that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not that by starving yourself to death, you can go to heaven. That's a lie of the devil.

And it's aimed at deceiving people into hell. In Matthew 23, the Lord Jesus warns us about a far more dangerous and deadly lie than that one.

[6 : 42] Because it's not just the teaching of a lone fanatic over in Kenya, but rather it was a false gospel that was being taught by the popular religious leaders of Israel.

The top Bible scholars, the teachers to whom the masses looked for spiritual direction and truth. And they were telling the people, this is the way to heaven, when in reality, it was the way to hell. And because of their powerful influence over the people, the Lord Jesus lifted up his voice and warned the people, be careful, be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, by which he meant the teaching of the Pharisees.

And so though this first century religious party called Pharisees is no more, much of their false gospel and false religion lives on in our present day.

Yes. And even in the churches that name the name of Christ. I don't have any fears that any of you here would starve yourself thinking that will get you into heaven.

[8 : 02] But some of you might think that if you just try to live a little better than you are at present, that might get you into heaven. That if you were doing more good deeds than bad deeds, that might open the pearly gates to you.

That if you start going to church more regularly and read your Bible and pray and be baptized and take the Lord's Supper, that perhaps in this way you would be able to go to heaven.

Well, these are all equally damning lies. So the teaching of the Pharisees is something we need to be warned against. It is the natural way that a sinner thinks that he can be saved.

When he becomes convicted of sins, it's often the first response just to try to clean up his life, to turn over a new leaf thinking that ought to please God and to let me into heaven.

So the Lord Jesus, God's eternal Son, who came into the world to seek and to save sinners, was deeply troubled and yes, even angered to see people being lied to in the name of God.

[9 : 21] Lies that if believed would take them to hell and so he did warn them and he still warns us today by his words recorded in the scriptures. And so we're in a series on the Pharisees and we've turned to Matthew chapter 23.

If you'll turn there with me this morning, Jesus' last words to the crowd in the temple. After this, he'll speak only to his disciples.

It's already the last week of his life leading up to his crucifixion and he gives us this long chapter, sobering words of warning about the false religion and hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

So far, he has exposed the religion of the Pharisees and their hypocrisy in two ways. He says in verse 3 that they say and do not.

And then he said last week as we saw, that even everything that they do, they do for the wrong reasons. They do it to be seen by men. So did you live quorum Deo this week?

[10 : 28] Did you live with a sense that I am living under the eye of God and in the presence of God? As L. Martin defined the fear of God as the pressing awareness that you live constantly in the presence of God and you're making your way to your appointment with God in judgment and so nothing matters more than that you please this God.

Those, not, excuse me. So today we're going to come to the next thing that our Lord says and makes very clear about these Pharisees in verses 13 through 15.

And what he's going to tell us is that even though they were the spiritual leaders of Israel, they were going to hell. Now, he hadn't been quite that clear, I don't believe, up to this point, but now he lays it all on their line as he's with the crowd for the last time.

Now, not all errors in religion are damning errors, but theirs was. And that's why we see such strong words about them.

Let me give you three introductory points before we dig into our text. Some versions of the Bible do not have verse 14 listed for you.

[11:52] And if you're using the NIV, that would be the same for you. You'll usually see it in the footnote. The footnote says, woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites, you devour widows' houses and for a show you make lengthy prayers.

Therefore, you will be punished more severely. Now, those words are found in Mark's gospel and in Luke's gospel, but they're not in the best manuscripts of Matthew's gospel.

So, that's why they're left out in many copies of the scriptures. So, that's the first introductory comment. The second is that as we come to verse 13, if you've been with us, you'll notice there's a change in the pronouns.

Up to this point, Jesus has been teaching the crowds about the Pharisees using they and them. But now at verse 13, the they becomes you as Jesus is now speaking directly to the Pharisees in the crowd.

And then thirdly, by way of introduction, what our Lord has to say to them, He says seven times, seven woe to you. judgment to you.

[13:11] Condemnation to you. Now this was not our Lord's usual tone, was it? This is Jesus who says of Himself, I am gentle and lowly in spirit.

This is the one of whom David could write that His lips were anointed with grace. They were dripping with mercy. That was our Lord's usual tone.

How serious then this crime must be that brings from this Savior's lips the curse of woe to you. So what are the serious charges?

Well, first of all, verse 13, notice it. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces.

You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. Imagine for the moment that nuclear missiles are coming our way.

[14:19] But there's a bomb shelter sufficient for all of us to get into and be safe. But as we approach the door to enter, some men come forward and slam the door shut in our faces.

They neither enter, nor do they let us enter. And they leave us all then to perish in the nuclear blast. Well, what the Pharisees were doing is likened to that, but it's infinitely worse than that. Because what is coming for us all is the wrath of God because of the offensiveness of our sins to this holy God.

The wages of sin is death. Not only physical death, but spiritual death. And the second death, the lake of fire. There's hell to pay for all outside the kingdom of Christ.

And that's what we all deserve for our sins. But God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever would believe on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

[15:24] a complete pardon. Eternal life offered to all who will enter the kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

We come by faith in repentance and get into Christ and in that way we get into the kingdom. God has provided His own Son as the one and only door into the kingdom of heaven.

I am the way, Jesus said. I'm the only way. No man comes to the Father except through me. And whoever does come to me I will in no way shut out.

I'll never slam the door in your face. I will welcome you. But the Pharisees, these spiritual leaders in Israel, refused to enter the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ.

And they did all that they could to keep others from entering as well. Now, let's consider that.

[16:30] First of all, they themselves refused to enter. Jesus says of these religious leaders in John 5 and verses 39 and 40, you diligently study the scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life.

these are the scriptures that testify about me. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

Now again, these were the scholars. They poured over their Bibles, the Old Testament scriptures. They knew them forward and backward. And they thought that because they had the knowledge of God, they therefore had eternal life.

entrance into the kingdom of heaven. And Jesus says, but no, those scriptures testify about me. They all say Jesus is the key. Jesus is the door. He's the way into the kingdom of God. They point it to me.

[17 : 38] And yet, you will not come to me that you might have life. You will not come to me as the door through which you can enter the kingdom of heaven and receive eternal life.

And so they studied the scriptures but they missed Christ. They missed the Messiah who is the key to the whole book. Think of it, a Bible without a Savior.

Commands without the Lord Jesus and His grace. that's very possible not only to the Pharisees but to us to read the scriptures without Christ.

And Jesus said to them, woe to you experts in the law because you've taken away the key to knowledge. That's Jesus. And you can study the Bible all of your life and miss Jesus.

Many seminary professors do it and they get paid for it. These Pharisees did it and they missed Him. The whole Old Testament was saying the Savior is coming.

[18 : 51] The Savior is coming. But now that Jesus Christ the Savior had come they hated Him. They were jealous of Him. They were envious of Him and so they refused to come to Him to have life.

they themselves would not trust in Jesus and so enter the kingdom of heaven. But worse than that the Bible Jesus says that they also kept others from entering the kingdom of heaven and they did that in four ways.

First of all by their bad example. This just wasn't a group of nobodies that was refusing Christ. This was the cream of the crop of the spiritual leaders.

Think of all your favorite authors, Bible preachers and authors that you love to listen to sermons and go to their conferences. Think of all those men were holding one opinion.

You would be swayed by their example and that's the way it was with the Pharisees. People looked to them for guidance and they were meant to leave a good example.

[20 : 01] What shall we do? the people were asking. The very ones who were set to set a good example were setting a bad example and just by their example of themselves rejecting Christ they influenced others to reject him just because our leaders say he's a phony messiah and not the real one.

We must wait for the real one. And so they hindered others from entering the kingdom. Mothers are you using your influence over your children to lead your little ones to Jesus?

Do they know that Jesus Christ is precious to you? Do they know that he's the most important person in your life? Is your example drawing them to love him, trust him, obey him, and live for the Lord Jesus?

Jesus. They use their influence just by their bad example to keep others from coming to Christ. But their hindering of others went beyond just a bad example.

There were active attacks on Jesus Christ. Secondly, active attacks. The Pharisees were constantly slandering Jesus, speaking against him, spreading lies about him, poisoning the people against Christ and his gospel.

[21 : 30] And that's why we had John chapter 9 read for us. Here's this man born blind. They'd never heard of a man born blind being healed, but Jesus healed him.

But he healed him on the wrong day, according to the Pharisees, because it was a Sabbath day. And as you remember from maybe our first week, they felt that certain things were work that was forbidden on the Sabbath.

So Jesus made mud, didn't he? And put it on his eyes. And the man went and he washed on the Sabbath day. And so they felt that Jesus had to be a sinner because he was breaking the Sabbath. And so they bring the man to the Pharisees to investigate the healing. And since it was sinful to heal on the Sabbath, they come to this conclusion.

They tell the man, this man Jesus that healed you is not from God because he doesn't keep the Sabbath. Now, of course he kept the Sabbath. He's the one who gave the Sabbath command.

[22 : 45] He's the eternal God. It's his command. And he's Lord of the Sabbath. He was keeping it. And then they couldn't believe that it was really the man born blind.

So they peppered his parents with questions. Is this your son? Is this the one you say was born? How is it that he can now see? They said, we know he's our son. We know he was born blind, but how he can see? And who opened his eyes? We don't know that. Ask him.

He's of age. He'll answer for himself. Now, they only said that. They no doubt had heard from their son how he was healed and who did it. But they only said that because they were afraid of these Jewish leaders.

They had already decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be excommunicated, put out of the synagogue.

[23 : 45] And that's more than just, well, I can't go to that church anymore. anymore. The whole Jewish society was turned against you. And if you had a business, they'd boycott your business. There were repercussions to pay.

And they had already made that known. If you follow Jesus, you're out. And that's why these parents were saying, well, you go ask him. He's old enough to answer. So not only were the Pharisees not entering the kingdom, they were doing all they could to keep others from entering, using all the pressure of their ecclesiastical powers, not to bring people to Christ, but to keep people away from Christ.

So they call the healed man in again, and they solemnly tell him, now tell us the truth this time. They want to hear all about it again. We know this man's a sinner, they said, referring to Christ.

And he says whether he's a sinner or not, I don't know, but one thing I do know, I was blind, but now I see. This guy's got some spunk, doesn't he? He's talking to these spiritual leaders and he's not having it.

And he's letting them know what he thinks. So they hurled their insults at him. We're going to see that that's what the Pharisees are good at.

[25 : 08] They're up here and you're down here. If you don't agree with what they say, they'll just insult you. They'll just look down their nose and diss you. You're this fellow's disciple, they said.

He answered, well, we know that God doesn't listen to sinners. He listens to the godly, the godly man who does his will. Nobody's ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

They had no answer for this poor man. And so they resorted to what? Further insults. You were steeped in sin at birth. That's why you're blind. How dare you lecture us?

And they threw him out. They excommunicated him from the synagogue. So nation of Israel, here are your spiritual leaders. Jesus is exposing them, you see, in this sermon in Matthew 23.

And their way of treating Jesus all along was exposing them. they're doing all that they can to keep people from trusting in the Lord Jesus.

[26 : 18] John 7, Jesus was teaching in the temple in Jerusalem and some were saying, this Jesus must be the Messiah. They were amazed at his teaching.

They were amazed at the miracles he was doing. And the Pharisees heard the people whispering these positive things about Jesus and they sent guards to arrest him.

and the guards came back empty handed and they nailed the guards. Why didn't you bring him in? No one, no one ever spoke the way this man speaks.

The guards who went to arrest him were themselves arrested by his preaching, his gracious words of the gospel. Do you mean that he's deceived you also?

The Pharisees retorted. Has any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed in him? No. You see, they give their own answer to their own question.

[27 : 20] No Pharisee has believed in him, but this mob who knows nothing of the law, there's a curse on them. These know-nothings. Only they follow this Jesus, this fellow.

So the Pharisees tried their best to keep others from entering the kingdom through the door of Christ by their bad example, number one, and by active attacks on Jesus, number two, but thirdly, by their false gospel.

Their false gospel, we'll get into this more another time, suffice it to say now that the Pharisees taught us salvation by works. You work your way to heaven.

You must earn entrance into the kingdom by your own righteous acts, by faithfully keeping all of God's laws and also the rules of the rabbis, the application of those laws.

Their confidence then was in their own law keeping, in their own righteous living. That was the religion of the Pharisees. Their confidence and trust was not in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. [28 : 25] So they opposed the gospel of Jesus Christ. That salvation is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but by God's mercy provided in Jesus Christ.

By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. We enter the kingdom of heaven then only by trusting in Christ's works, not our own.

But the Pharisees rejected that and instead directed people to legalism's dead-end street of trying to work your way and do more good deeds than bad deeds and find yourself at last in the kingdom with yourself to thank for it.

So anyone who believed their false gospel was effectively being kept out of the kingdom of God.

They were using their false gospel to slam the door on the real gospel, the way of entrance into the kingdom of heaven through faith in Jesus Christ.

And then lastly, the fourth way that they hindered others from entering the kingdom was by their great zeal to win converts to their false religion.

[29 : 34] We have this in verse 15. Jesus says, Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You travel over land and sea to win a single convert.

And when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Now, the Pharisees could be very zealous in their missionary endeavors to win converts.

Yes, even sometimes to win Gentile converts to their Christless legalistic religion. They believed salvation was for the Jews, the ancestors of Abraham.

But if the Gentiles, if you and me, we Gentiles, we non-Jews, wanted to enter the kingdom of heaven, then we must first become religious Jews and follow all the religious laws of the Old Testament like the Jews did.

So in essence, we have to, if we're Gentiles, we've got to become Jews to become believers and enter into heaven. And they went everywhere over land and sea to make a convert, but their zeal was not aiming at the glory of God or the good of man, but only to swell the ranks of their own party.

[31 : 00] And their zeal to make disciples, Jesus said, did much more harm than it did good. You know, I do believe that religion has downed more people than it has saved, and this is what we're seeing.

These were religious people, hyper-religious men. And yet, Jesus says, you go to great lengths, crossing land and sea to gain just one convert to your religion.

And once you've made him a convert, what do you have? You've got a man, a woman, who is twice as much a son of hell as you are.

So don't miss what Jesus is saying about the Pharisees, not only talking about the convert, he's now talking about the Pharisee, isn't he? They claim to be sons of the kingdom, Matthew 8, 12, but they are, Jesus says, sons of hell.

And their converts are doubly so as they often outdid the Pharisees in their own false religious zeal. Hendrickson says a son of hell means a person belonging to hell, a person worthy of hell, a person bound for hell.

[32 : 19] Yes, that's strong language, but the situation more than warranted it from our Savior. So what's happening here?

We've seen the charge that these Pharisees refused to come to Christ to enter the kingdom and they actually slammed the door and tried to keep people out who were trying to enter.

What's happening here? verse 16 makes it plain when Jesus says to them, woe to you blind guides. Blind guides. You know, it's one thing to be blind and it's another thing to be a blind guide. A blind guide who claims he can see, who claims that he is a safe guide to others.

follow me, he says. I know the way. That's the way these Pharisees were. We've studied. We know the way. Follow us. What's happening here is pictured in a print of a painting that's hung on my study wall at home by a 16th Flemish painter, 16th century Flemish painter named Peter Bruegel.

[33 : 38] in the background is a church building. In the foreground of the painting is a line of blind men, each with their hand on the blind man's shoulder in front of them.

So here's the line and it goes on and on. And the man who's leading them is also blind, but he has already fallen into the ditch. And the painting makes clear as can be that all the rest who are following him are going to end up in the same ditch in which he is.

Yes, the title of the painting is the parable of the blind leading the blind. Earlier in Matthew 15, Jesus said about the Pharisees that they worship God in vain for nothing.

It's futile. Meaningless. Why? Because their teachings are but rules taught by men. It's a man-made religion. It's not the God-revealed religion from heaven.

No, this is man's own ideas. And so their religion is worthless. After those words from Jesus, the disciples came to Jesus and they said, do you know that the Pharisees were offended by what you said?

[35 : 04] Jesus said, every plant that my heavenly father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them alone.

They are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.

pit. And as we've seen and we'll see later in the same chapter of Matthew 23, that pit is nothing less than the pit of hell. Can you now see why Jesus is so serious in his warning against the religion of the Pharisees?

they claim to be leading people to heaven when they're leading them to the ditch of hell. Beware, be on your guard against the teaching of the Pharisees.

Now, if you see something devilish in this, that's because there is something devilish in this. Satan hates God with a vengeance.

[36 : 11] and he hates mankind who was made in the image of God. They're God's highest form of creation.

Those in whom God took great delight, they were made to know God, worship God, glorify God, and to enjoy God and fellowship with Him forever.

Because Satan hates God and all that reminds him of God, he hates all mankind and he does all he can to see them damned in the end.

Well, these Pharisees were doing the devil's work. There is something devilish in what they're doing. Paul writes about them in 1 Thessalonians 2, that they killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out, us missionaries, us evangelists.

they displease God and are hostile to all men in their efforts to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.

[37 : 22] Let me read that again. These religious leaders, they displease God and are hostile to all men in their efforts to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved.

That's the greatest cruelty and inhumanity and hostility to man. I get reports two times a day or at least once a day now about the war in Myanmar between the military that's fighting their own people and slaughtering and butchering them and burning their cities and doing horrendous things.

It is so bad I have to quit reading at times and just put it away for a week. Those things are happening in our world but there's something even more cruel and that's to take the hand of someone and say hey here let me lead you to heaven when really you're leading them to hell.

You can do that by your example. You can do it like the Pharisees by teaching a false gospel. You see this is part of that old hostility way back in Genesis 3 15.

When God said to Satan that he would put hostility between the serpent and the woman's seed they are hostile against God and his people against all men and Satan takes out that hostility on all men by blinding them.

[39 : 01] Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3 or 2 Corinthians 4 3 and 4 if our gospel is hidden it's hidden to those who are perishing. The God of this age that's Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

The only way Satan can keep sinners in his kingdom and keep them from going over to Christ is to hide them from them to hide Christ from them not to let them see the glory of Jesus Christ not to let them see the beauty of Christ.

They must not be allowed to see him so he blinds their minds by spreading his lies. He's the father of lies. He's the author of the very first lie that was told to Eve in the garden by which we all fell as Adam followed her into sin and Adam being our representative.

We've all been plundered by the lie of the devil and every other lie about Jesus and the gospel and the way of salvation. He's the father of it.

You see he hates God. He hates people. The image of God and it's all intended. These lies are all intended to keep people in the dark about the real way to heaven.

[40 : 24] The one way. The only way. Jesus Christ. Christ. And the devil has all sorts of helpers out there. The most cruel are those who spread a false gospel in the name of God.

This was the lie of the Pharisees. You can work your own way into heaven. And it's very much with us today. Now. Don't miss the heart of Jesus Christ in all of this.

We've seen the Pharisees and yes it's horrible what we see. But don't miss the heart of the Lord Jesus in his scathing condemnation of the Pharisees. In Ezekiel 34 the Lord says because the shepherds of Israel care nothing for the sheep and only care about themselves I myself will come and shepherd them.

That's some 600 years before Jesus was born. The shepherds of Israel will care nothing for them. So what? I'm not just going to sit here in heaven's glories and just watch it happen.

I myself will come and shepherd them. What a heart. And so Jesus the eternal son of God has come into the world to seek and to save lost sheep.

[41 : 44] Love will not let him stand by and keep quiet while Israel's spiritual leaders are blind and leading blind sinners into the ditch of hell with their false gospel.

The Pharisees did they travel over land and sea to make one convert who became a twofold son of hell. What moved the son of God? To travel all the way from heaven to earth and to even go further down to the hellish cross.

what would move him to do that? It was love. It was love. Love of the good shepherd to come and lay down his life for the sheep and sheep that love to wonder.

Sheep that had their backs turned to God and were going their own way. Yes it was love for such sheep that Jesus came and there at the cross he crushed the head of the serpent as was said in Genesis 3 15.

He crushed the head of the serpent who had held us captive in his kingdom and kept us in the dark as to the only way to the kingdom of heaven. And so he provided all that was needed.

[42 : 57] All the merit we needed to become children of God. Sons of the kingdom of heaven. So this anger that we see in Matthew 23 against the Pharisees is the love of the good shepherd in action.

for the poor lost sheep like you and me. Not going to give up the field to the lies of the devil but going to bring the Savior into the world and proclaim his gospel.

Here he is. Let's love him then for warning us about the lies that are being told about heaven and hell. Let's thank him. Let's praise him for telling us the truth.

for being himself the way, the truth, and the life by which we come to the Father. And then let's learn from the zeal of the Pharisees. Will they be so zealous in spreading their damning lies?

Will they be, will we be outdone by them in our zeal to spread the saving truth of the gospel of Christ? Again, mothers, work hard, pray hard to bring your children to Jesus, to repentance and faith in him.

[44 : 11] Tell them the gospel story of Jesus often, early, and live a life worthy of that gospel. And all of us, let us by our witness spread the truth that exposes the lies and false gospels.

And yes, even by our prayers and financial support of missionaries, we can travel land and sea to bring converts to the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of which, just one convert of which is worth more than the whole world combined. A sinner saved for eternity from endless torments to endless bliss in communion with Christ forever.

forever. And let's be grateful that when we were spiritually blind and could not see any glory in Jesus, that we should love him, that we should trust him, that we should follow him.

But the same God who at the beginning said, let there be light and there was light, made his light to shine in our hearts. That we might see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

[45 : 24] in the face of Jesus Christ. And forsake that kingdom of darkness and be brought into the kingdom of the Son God loves. Coming into that kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ.

Let us thank him. Let us never grow weary in giving our thanks that Jesus came to save us. And lost people, lost person, you need to know that not all religion is saving religion.

There is much that is false out there. Don't be deceived by all the false gospels and none more deadly than the Pharisees. Get into heaven by your own doing.

No, we're saved not by what we have done, not by what our hands have done, but by what our Savior did. What he did for us. You know, the way to spot a counterfeit is to know the genuine.

So study the genuine gospel. Get to know the gospel, sinner friend. Get to know Christ, who is the whole key into the kingdom, to the scriptures and the way into the kingdom.

[46 : 36] It's Christ who saves. He's the only way to the Father. You'll meet him in the Bible. So let Jesus, the good shepherd, take you and lead you and teach you and guide you into the scriptures.

Believe everything that his word has to say about God, about yourself, about sin, about the judgment, about the right way of salvation, about heaven and hell. Believe it all because you can trust yourself to this Savior.

He's come all the way from heaven on this mission to save sinners. He's not about to deceive you. He's here to uncover the deceits and to reveal himself to you as the true God and Savior.

Don't stop short of him. He's the way in. To the kingdom of heaven, let's all rejoice together in Christ and put no confidence in the flesh. We'll do it by way of number 403 is our response this morning.

Not what my hands have done. We're we're. We're renouncing anything that we contribute to earning our salvation and we're attributing it all to the work of God in Jesus Christ.

[47 : 48] Stand and sing 403. Father, it's in the gospel that we come to taste and see just how good you are. We come to see the goodness of our Savior, his overflowing fountain of love.

God, not to stay in heaven and let the world go to hell following the lies of the evil one, but to come at such great cost to himself and lay himself out on our behalf to save us from our sins and to bring us into that glorious kingdom of heaven.

May others this day put their trust in him right here in this room and all around the world to your eternal praise and to their everlasting good. We ask in Jesus powerful name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.