

I. Matt.23:1-39. Jesus is not famous for getting into people's faces. But there is one sort of person that he took to task seriously—Religious people = Pharisees and Scribes.

A. They had gradually transformed Judaism into legalistic hypocrisy. It became:

1. **Complex.** Matt.23:16-26
  - a) Innumerable complex applications of God's word that became more important than the message itself.
  - b) We love complexity because we can manipulate it.
2. **Traditionalized.** Matt.15:7-14
  - a) They worshipped their traditions.
  - b) Traditions become canonized.
3. **Elitist.** Big distinction between Jew and Gentile. Matt.23:13-15
  - a) Keeping people out of the kingdom?
  - b) *Paul had been one of these guys!*

II. Israel is in a state of unbelief regarding Jesus. Has God failed them (9:6)? Paul says, "No."

A. Israel's unbelief does not derail God's plan. Ch. 9.

1. There is a remnant, a living group within Israel, that God has chosen (and have chosen Him)

B. Israel's unbelief is their own responsibility. Ch. 10.

1. They should have come to Christ in faith, but failed to do so because of their unwillingness to let go of Torah-righteousness

C. Israel's unbelief is temporary. Ch.11

1. God will regenerate Israel again in the future.

III. Israel's unbelief was its own responsibility. 9:30-10:13.

A. How is it that Gentiles attain righteousness without effort, and Israel, with great effort, has missed it?  
*This is the big question of religion and it divides genuine saving faith from all forms of religion.*

B. Answer: Israel didn't just "miss it" they *avoided it*. 4 ways to avoid Grace.

1. They chose to have more confidence in the Law than in the Lord himself. 9:31; 10:510; **Jn.5:39**
  - a) 9:31. They did not pursue righteousness. They pursued Torah thinking that it equaled righteousness = life
  - b) By pursuing the Law (religion) they completely avoided Christ.
  - c) *This can also happen in Christian circles that have a high view of scripture. They can read the Bible for the "rules" instead of Christ.*
2. They substituted zeal for faith. 10:1-4
  - a) Zeal for the Lord is good. But it is easily misunderstood.
  - b) *There is a sort of faith that is not saving faith.*
    - (1) It is zealous, active, often very strict and structured, affirmed by others, obvious to the world.
    - (2) *But it is not actually trusting Jesus Christ exclusively for eternal salvation.*
  - c) Being a "doer" of the word (Jas.1:22) means letting the message of grace transform you. It doesn't mean leaping into activism and legalism.
3. They refused to realize that the race was over. 10:1-4
  - a) Christ has brought the Torah to its conclusion. Matt.9:14-17; 26:27-29
  - b) Telos = the goal and end, like the finish line of a race. NIV culmination.
  - c) The Jews considered the Law permanent, never to be replaced. Jesus said he came to fulfill it and transcend it.
4. They mistook elitism for holiness. 10:8-13.
  - a) They thought they really were gaining righteousness by Law. Lev.18:5.
  - b) 10:11-13. *Everyone* who calls on the name of the Lord will be rescued.
    - (1) Emphasis on the universal access to Christ.

#### IV. Three things we must grasp in order to grow in Christ: 10:9-10.

##### A. Faith is FIRST a freefall into the arms of the Risen Christ.

1. Trusting God in Christ to completely forgive and rescue (save) you without you doing anything to earn or merit it. *It is a freefall into Christ's arms alone.*
2. *It is not a promise we make to God. It is believing a promise he made to us.*
  - a) *This is precisely where the difference is between gospel and religion.*
3. *It is not a decision to join a religious work crew.*
  - a) Activism is not the same as mission.
  - b) Just "doing something for God" is not the same as being so impressed and transformed by the gospel that you want others to hear it and walk with the Lord.

##### B. Faith is a kind of knowledge that transforms our character and life. 10:2

1. A Spirit inspired knowledge of the reality of who Christ is and what He did.
  - a) Spiritual knowledge regarding how people become right with God and spend eternity in heaven.
2. People will "do" according to what they "know/believe" to be true, which is why real faith invariably results in discipleship. Jas.2:14ff

##### C. Faith is a turn of the heart, not a series of religious deeds or actions.

1. **Simple:** (Not complex) 6-8
  - a) Don't look High and Low for Him, He's right here.
  - b) *How much effort do you think you need to put in for God to love you?*
  - c) *How "useful" do you need to be in order to be loved by God?*
  - d) *What do you need to "promise" God when you come to Christ?*
2. **Personal:** (Not institutional) 9-10.
  - a) From the heart. Circumcised hearts. (Deut.10:16; 30:6; Rom.2:29).
    - (1) But for some people, trusting an institution is easier.
  - b) Expressed audibly. This is a group witness, a proclamation among God's people with one voice.
3. **Substantial.** (not just anything you want to believe) Jesus really is the risen Lord.
  - a) Jesus is Lord.
    - (1) The One and Only God in human form, God, Master, Owner of me
    - (2) It is not just the idea of grace, but the personal grace of the Lord Jesus Himself.
  - b) Jesus died and came back from the dead.
    - (1) Miracle, Repentance\Atonement.
4. **Universal:** (Not Elitist) 11-13. Not that all will come, but that any sort of person can call on the name of the Lord.
  - a) *Whoever* believes in Him is not disappointed. (Isa. 28:16)
    - (1) Context in Isa is exhortation to trust God instead of the world. Not rushing around in a panic.
  - b) *Whoever* calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved (**Joel 2:32**)

## V. So, what of our works? Eph.2:4-10

A. These works must spring from free grace.

1. “this is not of yourself” but is a gift of God.
2. *We do them because we really want to do them. We are pressed from within to do what honors the Lord and promotes the gospel.*

### B. Therefore:

1. They do not produce false comparisons. 2 Cor.10:12
  - a) One of the great temptations from the enemy is to make comparisons between people. Jn.21:21-22;
  - b) I’m not as spiritual as they are because I’m not doing what they do? I’m better than they are because I do more than they do?
2. They do not produce false guilt.
  - a) I have not done enough, God must not be pleased with me.
  - b) My work is not measurable (!)
3. They do not produce false pride.
  - a) I’ve done more than most! (boasting Rom.3:27-28; 4:5)
  - b) I’ve suffered more than most.
    - (1) Martyr complex
  - c) Elitism, Pharisaism, superiority.
4. They do not produce false expectations.
  - a) I have been really busy for God, so He owes me a “good life” or at least a minimum of pain and sorrow.
  - b) I have used minimal amounts of grace by being better than other people, so my life should turn out the way I imagined...