

Matthew 23:1-12

Be the Greatest

No mincing words ...

I. How Not to Be

- A. The Pharisees' Position
- B. The Pharisees' Preaching
- C. The Pharisees' Practice
- D. The Pharisees' Problem

II. Who to Imitate

- A. Jesus' Humility
- B. Jesus' Authority
- C. Jesus' Consistency
- D. Jesus' Perfection
- E. Jesus Our Hope

III. How to Be

- A. The Christian's Status
- B. The Christian's Standard
- C. The Christian's Striving
- D. The Christian's Struggle
- E. The Christian's Solution

... no room for hypocrisy.

Children, Listen ...

1. What does Jesus mean when he says that the Pharisees don't practice what they preach?
2. Did Jesus always practice what He preached?
3. Who should Christians be more like, Jesus or Pharisees?

That Little Pharisee

Addressing His followers, Jesus blasts the behavior of the scribes and pharisees, using them as examples of how not to be. The reputation of these religious leaders is so notorious that when someone uses the term "pharisaical," anyone, even with a vague knowledge of the New Testament, can pinpoint its origin. Webster's simply defines it as "marked by hypocritical censorious self-righteousness." Ouch! Their very title has become synonymous with hypocrisy! They are an easy target, and Jesus does not hesitate to take aim at them in an effort to warn His followers against being like them. But let's face it: while we may not walk around in pretentious outfits emblazoned with overexaggerated religious symbols, most of us have to admit that we have a little Pharisee inside us. Our Lord points out that hypocrisy is a direct contradiction to genuine Christian living. But the struggle is real and we may actually discover we have numerous little pharisees lurking in us. They can be sneaky buggers: we need to identify them, confront them, and by the grace of God and with serious resolve ... and, this may sound harsh ... but put them to death.