

The Ungodly Maxims of Ungodly Leaders

Matthew 23:1-12

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Today in our Matthew Sermon series,

- We come to a new chapter: chapter 23.
 - This is the very last public discourse of our Lord Jesus before His crucifixion.
 - Verse 1 shows that the multitude is still present, and the fact that He later addresses some of the Pharisees and scribes shows that many of them are also still present.
- But it is very striking to see what Jesus chooses for the topic of His last public address!
 - It is a severe imprecation against the Scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy!
 - He pronounces a whole series of woes on them.
 - It is one of the most scathing denunciations in the whole Bible—
- It is not surprising to find that many unbelieving Bible scholars have a serious problem with this chapter...
 - It just doesn't fit with the picture of the Jesus they preach...
 - It has become fashionable among them to suppose that Matthew was being bothered by the Pharisees when he wrote his gospel and created this discourse out of his own head, putting it in Jesus' mouth.
 - They are sure that Jesus never could have said these things.
 - Fenton suggests that anyone who complains about this section might consider if the problem is not that it speaks a little too closely to their own sins.
 - Mounce points out that a Jesus who is not allowed by his critics to say anything contrary to their tastes will be a Jesus quite different from what we should expect to find in history.

My friends, this is not a fairy tale, this is the very word of God, given to us under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit.

- If Matthew says that Jesus spoke these words, he did...
 - But we may well ask *why* Jesus chose such a topic for His last public discourse.
- We can best answer that question by looking at the content of what Jesus says...
 - In the first twelve verses, there is a strong appeal to the multitudes, warning them not to let these (their spiritual leaders) cause them to stumble.

- We have seen how Jesus had compassion on the multitudes because they were like sheep without a shepherd...
- He is exposing these leaders because He loves the multitude.
- Then, after these first twelve verses, we find a list of woes against the Pharisees, denouncing their hypocrisy...
 - But this also comes with a strong appeal to them and to the whole city of Jerusalem to come and receive His saving grace.
 - He pronounces judgement on these wicked men with a view to their repentance and with a view the justice of their judgement if they do not repent.
- It is marvellous to consider that many of those who heard Jesus may have been among the 10's of thousands in Jerusalem that eventually came to believe...
 - He may have had other reasons as well, but whatever the case, He is the Lord and He knows what is best.

But today, we are going to focus on the first 12 verses in which our Lord warns the multitude not to follow the ungodly example of their ungodly leaders.

- This is recorded by the Holy Spirit for us for good reason...
- This is a problem that you all need to watch out for...
 - There is a tendency to follow the bad examples of your leaders rather than the good example.
 - Do you not find it to be so?
 - If your father was given to anger, you tend to lose control the same way He did.
 - Even if he chastened you and rebuked you for your anger, his bad example had more effect on you than his good words.
 - Likewise, if your mother complained a lot, you may very well find yourself complaining a lot.
 - Even though she may have told you not to complain and fussed at you about it, and even though you hated to hear her complain,
 - you ended up following her bad example instead of her good counsel.
 - It is a pernicious tendency of our fallen human nature to imitate ungodly examples instead of obeying godly counsels.

And so Jesus begins his denunciation of the Pharisees with these words as recorded in v. 2-3:

- Matthew 23:2-3: The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

This shows you that you must learn to separate *the teaching* from *the teacher*.

- The Scribes and the Pharisees, inasmuch as they sat in the seat of Moses,
 - were teachers of the very word of God.
 - God has appointed teachers in His church, and none of them are perfect...
 - But their imperfections should not be used by you as an excuse to reject their teaching.
 - Matthew Henry pointed out that of course you would prefer to be taught by angels,
 - but if God brings you good food in the mouth of ravens,
 - you ought to receive it with thanksgiving.
 - Your pouting that angels were not sent is no reason to starve, is it?
- But there are many bitter people who have rejected God's word because of the hypocrisy and bad example of an ordained minister they once knew (or perhaps many ordained ministers they know today).
 - You know how people go on when they have a good story about a fallen minister.
 - But the question is,
 - Why should you let a wicked man in a good office keep you from receiving the precious Word of God?
 - The Lord tells you to not let that happen...
 - Inasmuch as a minister speaks the word of God to you, receive the word with thanksgiving.
 - The man may very well be unworthy to hold the office of a minister,
 - but that should not make you oppose the good word of God!
 - Don't let him keep you from what is good and excellent!

Now you might object and say,

- But it sounds like Jesus is saying to give wicked men like this absolute, implicit obedience—
 - to do *whatever* they tell you...
 - What if they are telling you to pray to the saints or to believe that homosexuality is acceptable in God's eyes?
 - Is Jesus telling us to obey them then?

- Of course not...
 - The word *therefore* in verse 3 qualifies his statement...
 - It gives you the reason you are to obey them...
 - You are to obey them is because they sit in Moses' seat...
 - In other words, they are the official expounders of God's word so that from them the people heard the word of God...
 - as you do from those who are ordained to the gospel ministry today.
 - But this does not mean their additions and distortions of the Bible (or of Moses) are to be believed and received...
 - Absolutely not!
 - Distortions and additions have nothing to do with the seat of Moses!
 - They are not a part of the gospel ministry—they are outside a man's ordination to that seat...
 - But the thing is,
 - in that seat, there are still plenty of things that say that are according to God's word...
 - You are to make good use of these things and receive them as the word of God.
- Of course, if you can find teachers that are more sound and that have lives that you can rightly imitate, lives that meet the qualifications outlined in the Bible...
 - you should learn from them instead of those who are in error...
 - and you should pray that God will raise up and preserve such men in the ministry...
 - but as even the very best teachers will be inconsistent,
 - and as their example will never be as good as their doctrine,
 - you need to be careful that you follow what they say from God's Word rather following what they do in word or speech that is not a part of their office.
 - This is the theme of our Lord's instruction to you in these first twelve verses:
 - Do not imitate hypocrites, but follow the Word of God inasmuch as it is preached by them.

In verses 4-10, I want to identify three maxims that wicked leaders live by—three maxims that you ought not to imitate.

- Because we do not have a lot of people around us today who carry out the specific behaviours Jesus refers to...
 - When is the last time you saw somebody with a broad phylactery or a long tassel on his robe?
 - I want to show you how the same maxims by which the Pharisees lived are still with us today—
 - and I want to warn you not to imitate them.

I. The first maxim of false religious leaders to avoid:

- **Godliness consists primarily in the observance of certain rituals.**

A. In verse 4, Jesus says that the scribes and Pharisees “bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders.”

1. The picture here is that of a pack animal loaded down to where it could barely walk...
 - you have seen pictures of this in National Geographic... a poor animal almost crushed with a huge load tied on its back...
 - And the owner walking beside with his whip to chide the animal if it slows down.
 - That is just what the Pharisees did to their disciples.
2. We only need to remember back to some of the earlier encounters Jesus had with the Pharisees to understand what burdens He is referring too...
 - Remember in chapter 12 when we looked at how they rebuked Jesus for allowing His disciples to pick grain, rub it in their hands, and eat it as they were walking through a field on the Sabbath Day?
 - They said that Jesus’ disciples were harvesting...
 - Then again how they rebuked Jesus for healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath Day because it was not a life threatening illness?
 - And then in chapter 15, they rebuked Him for not ceremonially washing His hands before He ate—
 - a ritual they had established and took great pride in!
 - They had hundreds of rules like this that they imposed on the people...
3. And besides these rituals, they had their mandatory prayer hours and their twice a week fastings and their tithing of the herbs from their garden...

- a. They were extremely rigorous and severe with those who transgressed in the slightest detail...
 - They had made burdens that could not be borne and then they chided and ridiculed the people for their failures to bear them.
 - b. But in the meanwhile, they themselves had many loopholes and allowed themselves (because *they* knew the loopholes) to avoid even certain basic requirements of God's moral law...
 - like providing for their parents in their old age.
 - The rigour they applied to others they did not apply to themselves!
 - c. But all the while the message they communicated was the message that godliness begins and ends with the observance of rituals.
 - That godliness is about observing rituals rather than about gratefully receiving the grace of God that brings salvation—
 - that brings the forgiveness of sin and gives us a new heart to love God and keep His commandments.
- B. And though the multitudes do not observe the rituals quite so closely as their leaders demand,
- they are sadly often more than ready to embrace the notion that godliness consists in rituals rather than receiving the grace of God to become a new creature in Christ.
1. The rebellious human heart seems to prefer rituals to a life of faith that looks to the Lord for His salvation...
 - If I can do some fasting or keep some holy days and perform a few rituals, that will be just fine with me.
 2. Brothers and sisters, do you how common this is today?
 - There are traditions that we make our righteousness to consist in—
 - some of them are very good traditions,
 - some of them are even traditions that are required from scripture...
 - but we misuse them by making godliness to consist in them.
 3. Let me give you some examples...
 - a. I have met people who suppose that because they were baptised, they are right with God...
 - Yet, if you inquire further, you find that they are no more looking to the cleansing from sin that Jesus gives than that door post over there...

- They are no more relying on Him to wash away their guilt and to give them a new heart than an idol worshipper is.
 - The ritual is enough in their minds... and often they have learned this from their spiritual leaders.
- b. But then you meet another who is relying on a ritual prayer...
- Somewhere in his past, he went forward at an altar call and prayed to receive Jesus into his heart...
 - And now that the ritual is done, everything is done.
 - He considers himself forgiven forever, but he has no interest in seeking the new life that God gives to His own.
 - He followed the form, but he does not have a new life in communion with God.
- c. And there is another who has daily family worship—good for him—he never misses a day—
- he reads scripture and he prays,
 - but the scripture he reads is not really heard or applied or believed, and the prayers are perfunctory...
 - The form of godliness is enough—he does not care about the power of godliness.
- d. And there is a church that has decided to sing only psalms—without instruments—and that for good and scriptural reasons...
- But there they are, week after week, feeling pious because they are doing what God requires...
 - while they are missing the weightier matter...
 - They are singing the right stuff, but they are not paying attention to what they sing—
 - They are not sincerely crying out to God as they sing prayers...
 - They are not full of genuine praise and gratitude as they sing praises...
 - It is true that they should sing what God has given them to sing,
 - but the weightier matter is that they consciously present their songs to the Lord!
- e. And there is a church finds a righteousness in having a liturgy, and another that finds a righteousness in not have any set form at all...

- and that one in having two services, and that one in having a prayer meeting on Wednesday—and that one on having prayer every morning...
- And a believer over there who thinks he has mastered self-control because he drinks no wine and abstains from tobacco (though his fat belly betrays him),
 - yet another believes he has mastered Christian liberty because he drinks his wine smokes his pipe (but his critical spirit betrays him).

C. Some of our traditions and rituals are good—

- some of them are scriptural—
 - some of them are mandated by scripture...
 - some of them are not good because they are sinful additions to scripture...
- but the great problem whether they are scriptural or not is that we want to make a righteousness out of them.
 - They keep us from Jesus Christ and the salvation that He promises us.
- Like the Pharisees, ungodly spiritual leaders almost always have something in the way of ritual that they make godliness to consist in...
 - If these rituals are scriptural, you should observe them, but be careful that you do not make godliness to consist in the mere observance of them.

II. The second maxim of false religions leaders to avoid is the maxim that:

- **What other people think of you is extremely important.**

A. Another way to say this is that the *fear of man* is more important to them than the *fear of God*.

1. Such persons look for their reward in this life—from the approval of their neighbour—
 - rather than looking for the honour that comes from God only.
2. Jesus shows that this is a maxim of the Pharisees in verses 5-7.
 - a. In verse 5, He shows what audience they live for, who it is they are trying to please...and it's not God!
 - He says, "All their works they do to be seen men."
 - You see, God is simply not very real in their estimation—
 - What He thinks is not nearly as important as what other people think.
 - b. Of course it is obviously very foolish to live by this maxim...

- What men think is not that important—not nearly as important as what God thinks of you!
 - Men cannot give us an everlasting inheritance in heaven...
 - but this is a maxim of those who are avoiding God...
 - They just don't concern themselves with Him...
 - They may talk of Him quite a lot, but they never really draw near to Him...
 - He is always kept at a distance—
 - He is far away, but the people around them are near.
3. Of course, those who think this way are always concerned with externals...
- a. Their works are of little value to them unless somebody finds out about them...
- And they find ways to make sure that people *do* find out about them—
 - It always seems to slip out some how.
 - Those who are truly desirous to please God are not so concerned for publicity because they know that God looks on the heart and sees what is done in secret...
 - They are more concerned about being faithful in prayer than they are about being known as someone who is faithful in prayer...
 - They are more concerned about giving to the poor than they are about being known as one who gives to the poor.
 - They are more concerned about being content in their trials than they are about being known as one is content in trials...

TRANS> But the Pharisees only want to make a show.

- b. And in their zeal to *appear* righteous, they assumed distinctive clothing...
- 1) In the law, Moses, after telling the people to love God with all their heart, soul and might had said:
- Deut 6:6-8: “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.”
 - It would seem that Moses was simply telling them that everything they did and thought was to be with love to God...
 - a call that stops every mouth from boasting when we see how much we fail...

- This is something that humbles us and makes us see how much we need the grace of God...
 - But the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' day had found a way to keep this commandment in the eyes of men...
 - They had taken up wearing these little boxes on their arm and on their forehead with little pieces of parchment having the texts inscribed on them...
 - These little boxes were called phylacteries...
 - And as the custom had been going on for while, they made their phylacteries stand out from other people's phylacteries by making them larger in size!
- 2) Besides this, they also lengthened the hem of the borders of their garments...
- In Numbers, God told his people to wear a tassel to remind them that they were to keep his law...
 - It was supposed to be an aid to sincere piety, but the Pharisees also used this to make a show...
 - They made their tassels really long!
 - The story is told of one Pharisee who had a tassel so long that he employed noble men to carry his tassel on pillow behind him as he went along.
 - Any thing to gain honour!
- c. Nothing appealed to a Pharisee's heart more than have men recognise them...
- In verse 6 Jesus says that they loved the best places at feasts and the seats of honour in the synagogue...
 - Their heart was flooded with joy when they were given these special seats,
 - and they were sick with envy when they were given a place lower than what they thought they deserved.
 - When they were in the market place they loved to receive special greetings and be recognised for their importance.
 - The length of the greeting was supposed to be proportionate to the honour of the man...
 - And they were so zealous for these greetings that they taught the statue that "he who salutes his teacher, and does not call him Rabbi, provokes the divine Majesty to depart from Israel;"

TRANS> As you can see, they lived by this maxim that what other people think of you is very important.

- Of course, you can feel quite removed from all this today...

- When is the last time you saw somebody with a long tassel?

B. But let me show you how widely this maxim applies to us—the maxim that what other people think of you is very important...

1. When you see ungodly spiritual leaders vying for honour and position,

- it has a strange attraction to your sinful heart to do the same...

- The danger is that it will rub off on you so that you will start to live this way.

2. We all have our own styles in our own situations and circumstances of seeking honour from men...

a. One person goes about always asking the question, “Do these people like me?”

- If this is you, your mind is not how you may please the Lord, how you may serve others, how you may bring glory to God...

- But it is on how you can make yourself to be more popular...

- If that requires gossip, you will do it—what matters is that people like you.

b. Another person asks, “Do people care about me?”

- They watch to see if anyone will come to talk to them?

- Will anyone remember to ask about the prayer request they made?

- Will their children remember to send flowers and call on Mother’s Day?

c. Yet another is concerned about her appearance...

- Her preparations for church are more about hair and new shoes than about a heart prepared to praise God...

- Will anyone complement my hair today?

d. Then there is one who wants to be appreciated...

- This one gains approval—perhaps by serving others, but at the expense of family obligations—

- or service with a bad attitude within that complains about not being appreciated or thanked...

- These are all signs of a heart that places too much importance on what other people think of me.
- e. And there is the one who wants to be respected...
- He tries to impress everyone with his accomplishments, he speaks of his education or his position at work,
 - of his income or his successes, or the successes of his children.
 - All because he wants to be respected.
- f. I could go on and on...
- But you can see that Pharisees don't have exclusive rights to this inordinate love for human applause.
 - You will find this in your spiritual leaders—
 - sometimes even more than you will in others...
 - But do not pick up the disease!
 - It is one of those maxims that Jesus instructs you hear not to imitate.
 - Your concern ought to be to gain approval from God, not from man.
 - Men can honour you in this life,
 - but the honour that God gives to those who diligently seek Him will endure forever.

TRANS> Now let's turn to the third maxim...

III. The third maxim of false religious leaders to avoid:

- **That man is, at least in part, the source of truth.**
- A. This maxim is closely related to the one we just looked at...
- it flows out of the Pharisees love for the honour of pretentious titles...
 1. In verse 8-10, Jesus forbids the use of all pretentious titles...
 - a. He tells us not to be called (or to call anyone): Rabbi, Father, or Teacher.
 - READ> Matthew 23:8-10:
 - b. Now I hope you know Jesus well enough to know what He means by this...
 - One commentator I read said that those who call religious leaders **father** are in grave error, but as this man is called a **teacher**, he explained that this was acceptable.
 - But Jesus is not concerned with such things when He says this...

- He is not forbidding the **name**, but rather the manner and attitude with which it is used...
 - The Pope (which means father or papa) can call himself “the servant of the servants of God” if he wishes to...
 - but if he is arrogating to himself what belongs to God, the name itself makes very little difference.
- Jesus often speaks this way, for example, when He says,
 - “Swear not at all,” and then He Himself says, “truly truly I say to you,” or answers under oath before the high priest in a court of law...
 - He is not forbidding all swearing, but the kind of false swearing the Pharisees were doing.
- If Jesus meant to say that a teacher should not be called a teacher and a spiritual leader should not be called a father,
 - Then Paul was a great transgressor! He uses both terms to refer to himself.
 - And perhaps even worse, in the Lord’s name, he appoints people to the office of pastor-teacher and then refers to them as such!

TRANS> Okay then, so what is Jesus getting at?

- In what way are these titles wrongly used?
2. These titles are wrongly used when they are used to suggest that a mere man is a source of truth—that is, that law or truth originate with him!
 - a. That is the way the Pharisees used these titles, and that is the way the Pope uses them today...
 - Jesus is emphasising that “One is your teacher,” even Christ...
 - And that “One is your Father who is in heaven.”
 - b. The point is, no man can occupy the place of Christ or the place of the Father!
 - Men are neither the source or the originator of truth.
 - Men can convey the truth that they have learned from God, but they cannot originate or establish truth.
 - c. In other words, they have to be certain that they add nothing and take nothing away from what God has said in their teaching....
 - They are to expound it and apply it, but they are not add to it or change it.
- 1) In God’s dealings with men, truth is absolutely sacred...

- If anyone presumed to speak truth as a prophet and it was discovered that God had not commanded that prophet to speak it...
 - if it did not come true—that prophet was to be stoned to death!
 - Truth is not to be trifled with!
 - It is to be regarded with utmost reverence.
- Do you remember the prophet Hananiah?
 - You can read about him in Jeremiah 28...
 - Jeremiah told the people they were to go into captivity, but Hananiah said no—He said that the LORD would break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar within two years!
 - Jeremiah 28:15-17 says:
 - “Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Hear now, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you, but you make this people trust in a lie. Therefore thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have taught rebellion against the LORD.’” So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.”
 - It is a very serious thing to claim to speak for the Lord.

2) But this was exactly what the scribes and Pharisees did...

- They made their traditions equal to the word of God.
 - They acted as if the traditions of the fathers were on par with the scriptures!
 - They acted as if man is the source of truth and it was in this sense that they were called Rabbi and Father and Teacher.
 - This is the same thing the Pope does with tradition!
 - This is what Jesus is prohibiting on the most absolute terms!

B. So now, what is it that false spiritual leaders do today? How do they violate this?

1. They violate it by saying that truth is found somehow in man!

- a. I already spoke about those who claim that Jesus never could have spoken the words of this chapter...
 - Those men make their own sentiment the source of truth...
 - It just doesn't *feel* right to them to think that the Jesus they love could have spoken these words...
 - Such false teachers adjust the truth according to their own sentiments and preferences!

- They revise the word of God to suit them!
 - They are teachers and fathers in the sense that Jesus forbids—
 - They presume that they are the arbitrators of truth and do not bow to the word of God.
 - These men don't like scriptural doctrines like predestination and eternal punishment and a substitutionary atonement,
 - so they just deny them...
 - They set themselves up as Rabbis and fathers.
 - Their judgement will not slumber!
 - Don't let this error rub off on you!
 - You are not to live by your feelings, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God!
 - Your feelings are not the source of truth, God's word is truth!
- b. Others rely on their own reason—
- To them, it seems unreasonable to say that God created the world in six days...
 - And surely no one could believe that Jesus actually rose from the dead on the third day—
 - we want His teaching to rise up in the church and we can believe in a resurrection on those terms, but it is unreasonable to think a man could come back to life...
 - And so these men also make up their own system of truth, and they stand in the pulpit of God as Christ's representatives and declare what they have reasoned is true.
 - Don't let this error get into your life...
 - I have met people who reject the trinity or the sovereignty of God because "it just doesn't make sense to me."
 - That doesn't matter—if the word teaches it, it is true because you are not the source of truth.
- c. Still others bring in their own prophecies and they teach the people to do the same...
- "The Lord told me this" and "the Lord told me that."
 - Now I am glad to see someone that is eager to please the Lord and that wants to be led by Him...

- but as soon as prophecies start flying about that are only partially fulfilled if at all,
 - these men need to shut up!
 - When God speaks, it is clear and it comes to pass!
 - Truth does not originate with us
- d. And of course, I have already spoken about traditions—which was the main error of the Pharisees and is the main error of the church of Rome today...
- It is not our place to create holy days or new doctrines about the immaculate conception or binding prohibitions against foods or marriage.
 - We are not the source of truth...
 - God reserves that place for himself alone.
2. Jesus is warning to neither take it for yourself or allow anyone else to take it.
- False teachers live by the maxim that truth can originate in man...
 - Do not let this maxim rub off on you.

Conclusion...

We have seen three maxims by which false teachers live that we are not to follow...

1. That godliness consists primarily in the observance of rituals...
2. That what other people think of you is extremely important.
3. That truth, at least in part, originates with man.

The Pharisees and false teachers style themselves as great men...great spiritual men who are indispensable to God...they are full of pride...

- They want their disciples to be dependent on them.
 - But in verse 11, Jesus tells us what those who are truly great do...
 - They give themselves to others as servants!
 - And their service is to point men to God rather than to themselves...

And so, instead of being content with a mere ritual holiness, no matter how pretentious—

- the servant proclaims that salvation is of the Lord... that we cannot save ourselves but that Jesus Christ came to take away our sins...
 - That we have to give up on ourselves and use the rituals God has given us to seek His salvation—

- to earnestly pray and fast and read the word and use the sacraments that we may look to Him for the forgiveness of our sins and for His Spirit that gives us new life...
- Don't trust in the ritual, but trust in the Lord Jesus to whom the rituals point!

And one who serves you, rather than looking to obtain your admiration for himself and for his large phylacteries...

- earnestly strives to point you to the glory and majesty and perfections of Jesus Christ.
 - As Paul said, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake."

And finally, the one who is your servant, rather than teaching His own doctrine and His own counsels, points you to the Word of Christ which is found in the Holy Scriptures.

- Instead of teaching you to rely on himself, he continually points you to the word of God.
 - His goal is not to show you what is not in the word, but to cause you to understand the sense of the scripture...
 - to hear his teaching and to look at the Bible and to say, ah yes, there it is...
 - so that you might have hope and confidence in God's truth which is the only truth instead of the teacher's truth.
 - He is there as a servant, not as a lord.

Jesus ends this section with a warning to both teachers and those who are taught...

- He says, "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."
 - That is really what it is all about...
 - If you exalt yourself the way false teachers do, if you follow their example and seek to obtain your own righteousness, your own honour, and your own truth...
 - you put yourself in the place that belongs to God only—
 - You dare to knock Him off His throne and put yourself there!
 - He will knock you off!
 - He will humble you with the deepest, most shameful humiliation for your treason...
 - What injustice, what arrogance, what a lie to put yourself in the place of God!
- But my friends, if you humble yourself!

- If you take your proud heart and you see how corrupt it is before God, and you come to Him for His righteousness, and you reverence Him instead of man and you believe His truth,
 - He promises that you will be exalted!
 - He will pour out His grace on you and His grace will give you a place in His eternal kingdom...
 - You will inherit the earth and reign with Him forever and ever.