

# “Closer Walk” Bible Study

## Mining Matthew Chapter 23

Purpose: To share lives around the Scripture and through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit make happy and unexpected discoveries that change our lives and bring us closer in our walk with Jesus.

Getting us started

1. Growing up, what “hot buttons” did you push to get your parents mad? What “hot buttons” do others (e.g., kids, grandkids, nieces, nephews, etc.) use on you?
2. What is your favorite city? Why?

Getting us into Scripture

3. What was the seat of Moses? Given Jesus’ remarks about the Pharisees in chapters 21-22, what is surprising about his remarks in 23:3? How does he limit his commendation of the Pharisees?
4. As Jesus sees it, what is the main evil of the Pharisees? How are the disciples to avoid falling into the same evil? Why would it be important that the disciples not allow themselves to be called “Rabbi”? What distinction was Jesus trying to make between his followers and the Pharisees?
5. Compare the path to greatness followed by the Pharisees with that taught by Jesus (vv. 5-12). What do these two views of greatness teach us about the two views of the kingdom?
6. Make a list of the seven charges Jesus makes against the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law (vv. 13-32). How do they relate to what Jesus says in verses 2-7? Do you find anything common to all seven charges? How does each of these affect the common people?
7. How have the religious leaders corrupted the practice of evangelism (vv. 13-15)? Of oath-making (vv. 18-22)? Of tithing (vv. 23-24: see Micah 6:6-8)? Of integrity, where public image matches inner reality (vv. 25-28)?
8. In what way are these religious leaders condemned to repeat the past because of their failure to learn from their forefathers (vv. 29-36)? How is the punishment in verses 33-36 appropriate to the crimes?
9. What emotion does Jesus display in verses 37-39? How do you think he likely felt as he was teaching? Why?

Getting Scripture into us

10. Where does Jesus catch your attention in this passage? What practices touch close to home in your life? How can you avoid “talking the talk” but not “walking the walk”?
11. How can you avoid making it hard for others to grow spiritually?
12. About what in today’s church do you (as Jesus did over Jerusalem)? When have you seen money in the church become more important than what the church stands for?
13. From reading this passage, what should today’s teachers and pastors be especially mindful of? How have you seen the power of the pulpit abused?
14. What “camels” are easy for you to swallow? What “gnats” are difficult (v. 24)? How will you cheer Jesus when you see him again?