

**MATTHEW (THE KING, HIS KINGDOM AND ME)
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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 39 – Compelled By Love

THURSDAY

OPEN

Do you find yourselves sometimes caught up with yourself? Do you find yourself seeking man's admiration? Do you find yourself wanting to be noticed? Do you love hearing your name spoken? Do you love entering the room and having somebody recognize you and say, "Oh, come up here." Do you love places of honor? Beloved, you've got to be careful. I know. You have to be careful because God shares His glory with no man. We'll talk about it today as we look at Matthew 23.

PART ONE

The approbation, the acclamation of men, is so very, very enticing. And when you find yourself in a public position where you are noticed by others, there is such a temptation to be caught up in that approval of men, in that acclamation of men, and to begin to want to hear your voice, to begin to want to be recognized when you step into a room. You know, been there,

done that, and you have to watch the desires of the flesh. The program that we have today, Beloved, is such an important program. We're looking at Matthew chapter 23 at God's precepts for life. At this stage in the life of Jesus, the animosity, the malice, the hatred of the Pharisees has become almost unbearable. And in Matthew chapter 23, we have an account of what Jesus said to the Pharisees that no other gospel gives us. In Matthew chapter 23 it says, **"Then Jesus spoke to the crowd and to His disciples, saying: 'The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the [seat] of Moses.'" (Matthew 23:1-2)** I'm standing in an ancient synagogue in Chorazin. Now Jesus was in Jerusalem when He said this. But I've chosen this ancient synagogue in Chorazin, because here you can see the Seat of Moses. Here you can see where they would sit and where they would do the "beriyth," where they would have the circumcision. And so what He's saying is, that these scribes and these Pharisees, these teachers of the Law, that's what the scribes were—these lawyers, so to speak—that would debate the issues and decide the issues, and who were transcribers of the Law, who were highly looked upon, and the Pharisees who were the religious leaders, the more popular religious leaders of the day, He says, **"...The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and [they] do not do them."** (Matthew 23:2-3) There's a group of people out there that say that they have a new gospel of Matthew. It's a gospel of Matthew that was written in Hebrew. And they seem to think that this new gospel is one that gives us the straight story over the gospel that we have in the Word of God. They say, for instance, in Matthew chapter 23 it doesn't make sense because they're saying ["Do what they tell you to do, but don't do what they do."] (PARAPHRASED, Matthew 23:3) Well it does make sense because all along what He has called these men are hypocrites. Remember: A hypocrite is someone that wears a mask. It's someone that is given pretense. It was used of actors on stage.

And so they are playing the hypocrites. Now when He says, [“Do what they tell you to do,”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 23:3) it’s because they’re sitting in the seat of Moses. It’s because they are the keepers, so to speak, and the guardians of the Law, of the Torah, of Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy. And so rightly so, He says, [“Do what they say. Do what they say.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 23:3) Now remember on the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, [“He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:17) There is nothing wrong with the Law. We know from Romans chapter 7 [that the Law is good, that the Law is righteous.] (PARAPHRASE, Romans 7:12) The problem is we are unable to keep the Law because we don’t have the Spirit of God within us. [The Law was our school master, Galatians tells us, to shut us up to obedience until faith in Christ should come.”] (PARAPHRASE, Galatians 3:23-25) So He’s saying, all right, [“when they sit in the seat of Moses now, I want you to do what they say.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 23:3) And it says, “**...But do not do according to their deeds....**” (Matthew 23:3) You can listen to their words when it comes to the Law, but do not follow their example. “**...For they say things and [they] do not do them.**” (23:3) Now you and I have to stop. It’s so easy to sit and to criticize the Pharisees and to criticize the scribes, but what about us? God doesn’t want us just to look at Matthew historically. God wants us to look at Matthew as a mirror that we put up before us so we can see where we are. So what do you profess that you do not do? Constantly I’m before the Lord. Constantly I’m telling God, “God, reveal to me anything that is displeasing to You,” because I have an awesome responsibility. I’m a teacher. I’m a teacher of the Word of God, as you know, because you’re studying along with me, and others have also. And so I’m going to be held accountable for what I teach. I’m going to be held accountable for whether it lines up with the Word of God or whether it doesn’t. I’m going to be held accountable also for the way that I live. So when people come to you and

they tell you, “Oh, we’re so excited. This is a gospel you can understand, ’cause it’s written from a Jewish point of view and it was written,” as they say, about this new gospel that they found written in Hebrew, “It’s more authentic.” I want you to understand something. God has not kept hidden the true gospel of Matthew for over 2000 years just to reveal it to us in this generation. Don’t be led astray by these new winds of doctrine and teaching that come along and these new discoveries. God has given us His Word and you have the gospel of Matthew from the original manuscripts. Stick with it. Now watch what He goes on to say. What do these scribes and Pharisees do? **“They tie up heavy burdens and [they] lay them on men’s shoulders....”** And it says, **“...but they themselves are unwilling to [take a finger and remove them.]” (Matthew 23:4)** They’re unwilling to do that. And He says, **“But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, [they] lengthen the tassels of their garments. They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues.”** **(Matthew 23:5-6)** As I stand in this ancient synagogue you would see seats along the side. All right now, the best seats would be over, on the side where everybody could see them, where their attention was drawn. And so He’s saying **“They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi [Rabbi] by men.”** He says, **“But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, [and] He’s [the one that’s] in heaven. Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you [will] be your servant.” (Matthew 23:6-11)** It’s the one that takes the lowly place. It’s the one that moves to the back of the synagogue. It is the one that says to others, “Oh here, you sit here,” that give them the places of preference. He says, **“But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself [will] be exalted.” (23:11-12)** Now what I want

to do is, I want to do is, I want to go back and now that you've got the big picture and then the "woe's" start in verse 13, and He lists eight woe's here in the text. But what I want to do is, I want to go back with you and make sure that you understand what He's saying. What He's saying is **"They tie up heavy burdens and [they] lay them on men's shoulders..."** (Matthew 23:4) and that weight on their shoulder keeps bringing that man lower and lower and lower and lower because the burden is so terribly heavy. Now what does He mean by that? Well they were zealous for the Law. And they wanted to make sure that they kept the letter of the Law. And so what they did is, they would add other ordinances to the Law to make sure that the Law was not broken. For instance, let's do it today. When I stay in a hotel in Jerusalem and it is "Shabbat" there are "Shabbat" elevators and if you're an orthodox Jew, you get on the "Shabbat" elevator. You cannot push a button because if you push a button then you're creating energy. If you're creating energy then you're doing work. And on the Sabbath you're to do no work. The Sabbath is a day of rest. So what they did was try to interpret that doing no work for the times, for the times. And so what they do is they have a "Shabbat" elevator that automatically stops on every single floor. And this is the modern concept. There's no striking a match. There's no lighting a fire because a man gathered wood and burned a fire and he was put to death. (See Exodus 35:3) So they do not want to ah, ah create light and so they have "Shabbat" candles already lit. So if you want to light your cigarette you don't strike a match, you go to the candle and you light it from there. I mean they had a washing ceremony, and they even have it today, where they have to keep certain fingers clean and sacred in this washing ceremony. And so He is denouncing them because they are saying these things, but they are not doing the essence of the Law. These are some of the things that we're looking at in Matthew chapter 23, so that you understand the denunciation that is about to come. We'll look at that and more in just a minute.

PART TWO

The scribes and the Pharisees were seated in the chair of Moses. They were there as guardians of the Law, as protectors of the Law. And yet, what they had done is, they had taken the Law and added so much to it that it put a burden on the shoulders of the people. They were saying, “Now the Law says this, but we’re adding this just to make sure that we protect the Law,” and so they weren’t trusting God. They didn’t take it just at face value. Well it says, **“...They do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and [they] lengthen the tassels of their garments.” (Matthew 23:5)** Now I’ve mentioned the garments before but I want us to look at these phylacteries. I want you to understand where these phylacteries came, these black boxes with a black strap that is put on the forehead of a man, or the black box that is wound with a black cord around their arm. It says in Deuteronomy chapter 6 in verse 4 and this is the famous **“Shema.”** This is what these dear Jewish people could be heard reciting as they were taken out of the ghettos and taken and put on the trains, or as they were put to death. **“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!” (Deuteronomy 6:4)** They believed. They believed that God was their God. And many of them went to the death camps, many of them went to death reciting the **“Shema.”** It says, **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... with all your soul... with all your might.” (Deuteronomy 6:5)** You know if we would remember that, then the approbation and the acclamation of man would not capture us, if we would love God with all of our heart and all of our soul and all of our might, if we would be consumed with Him instead of consumed with us. The scribes and the Pharisees were consumed with themselves. And there’s a lesson here for us, Beloved. He says, **“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.” (Deuteronomy 6:6)** What is this program all about? It’s about a process of studying the Word of God. That’s why I want you to get the study guide. That’s why I want you to download it absolutely

free. We make it free to you. It costs us a lot to produce it, but we have so much more in it than I can even give you on television. But I want you to download it. I want you to go to preceptsforlife.com, preceptsforlife.com and download it, because I want these words of God to be on your heart. And for them to be on your heart you have to do more than just hear. You have to participate in the Word of God. He says, **“You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in [the] house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them....,”** now listen, **“...as a sign on your hand....” (Deuteronomy 6:7-8)** That’s why they have the phylacteries on their arms. He said, **“...And they shall be as frontals on your forehead.” (Deuteronomy 6:8)** And that’s why they would put the phylacteries on their forehead. And what they would have is they would have a copy of the Torah in there. They would have a copy of, not the whole five books of the Bible, but they would have a copy in there, the commandments of God that were before their forehead, before their eyes and on their arms. He says, **“You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:9)** That’s why when you go through any Jewish building, you will see the “mezuzah” on the side of the door. And that is where you’re going to see them, you’re going to see them kiss it as they go through, or many will. And so you’re putting the Word of God, you’re writing these truths, you’re writing the “Shema” on the doorposts of your house and on your gate. So this is what they were doing. To be noticed by men, they had bigger phylacteries on their arms and on their foreheads. But not only that, they lengthened the tassels on their garments. Now remember in Numbers, He says, **“Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they [are to] make for themselves tassels on the corner of their garments throughout [all] generations....” (Numbers 15:38)** So when you see a Jewish man walking down the street and you see those tassels hanging out don’t despise him. What is he doing? It’s his “talit.” It’s his prayer shawl. It’s tucked

underneath though, and those tassels are out because that's what the Word of God says. Remember they are under the Law until faith in Jesus Christ comes. It's the Law that leads them to Christ. So they are either under one covenant or the other. Don't despise them, because blindness, in part, has happened to Israel and they don't believe because their rejection has been the Gentile's salvation. It's been your salvation. So they walk down the street. Well they have these tassels and they're to wear them **"...throughout their generations...."** (Numbers 15:38) It's a time phrase. And **"...that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue."** (Numbers 15:38) There's to be blue in there. You look at the Israeli flag, it's blue and white. It says, **"It shall be a tassel for you to look at...."** (Numbers 15:39) As you walk down the street you see that cord of blue. You look at it and what do you do? You remember that you are a holy people. So you remember all the commandments of God. So He says this, **"It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, so as to do them...."** (Numbers 15:39) Now what the scribes and the Pharisees were doing, and this is why He denounces them, they were going through the motions. They were saying the words, but they were not doing them. That's why He says, ["Listen to them when they sit in the seat of Moses, but do not do as they do."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 23:3) He says, **"...So as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot."** (Numbers 15:39) So it's a reminder. The Word of God on your door, the tassels on your garment, the phylacteries that they made were a reminder that they were to be a holy people. **"...So that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God. I am the... God who brought you ... from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the Lord your God."** (Numbers 15:40-41) What He's saying to you and what He's saying to me is this: All glory and honor belong to Me. Do not take anything to yourself. If you want to be great in the kingdom of God you cannot love the praise of men. And this is

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so important because we live in a time when we have so many human heroes that we look up to. But they're not really heroes. They're stars. We look up to stars and we miss the throne of God. And so God wants you and God wants me to remember that we are to ["love Him with all of our heart and soul and mind and body and strength"] (PARAPHRASE, Deuteronomy 6:5) and all the glory goes to Him. O Beloved, beware of the praise and the acclamation and the admiration of men. Seek an audience of only One and that is God. And remember this dear one; ["to Him belongs the honor and the glory and the power and dominion forever and ever."] (PARAPHRASED, Revelation 1:6) Remember that and live accordingly. Keep your heart pure. Don't seek the place of honor. Seek the place of serving and then you'll be great in the kingdom of God.