

# ROGUE MESSIAH

Getting to Know Jesus & Love Him

Pastor Toby Locke • Week 9 • 3/8/2020



## Bad Religion

Matthew 23:1-28

**Introduction:** Religion wasn't Jesus's enemy – BAD religion was. What was it about the religion of the Pharisees that irked Jesus so much?

### Characteristics of Bad Religion

- **Bad Religion refuses to PRACTICE what it PREACHES.** (23:1-3)
- **Bad Religion sets people up to FAIL.** (23:4)
- **Bad Religion tries to IMPRESS people.** (23:5-12)
- **Bad Religion MISSES the POINT.** (23:16-22)
- **Bad Religion emphasizes the TRIVIAL and neglects the ESSENTIAL.** (23:23-24)
- **Bad Religion disguises SICK HEARTS.** (23:25-28)

**Conclusion:** So, how about you? Are you weary of bad religion? Are you ready to come to Jesus and learn from Him a new way to live?

Debrief Plan: 3/8/2020

#### Icebreakers:

1. Do you tend to be punctual or late to appointments? Have you had the same tendencies ever since you were a kid or have you changed recently?
2. Are the religious people depicted in modern storytelling (books, TV, movies) portrayed in a positive or negative light? Give examples of each, if you can.

Sermon Summary: The religion that Jesus found so toxic was hypocritical and oppressive. It tried to impress people with an external piety that completely missed the point of straight-forward faithfulness to God. It focused on trivial rule-keeping at the expense of character and relationship, all the while disguising the sickness within.

#### Discussion Questions: (Refer to Mt. 23:1-28 as you discuss together.)

1. How would you describe Jesus's tone in this chapter? Give evidence from the passage to support your answer. Do you think it's justified, and if so, why?
2. Can you really claim to "practice what you preach" if you aren't perfect? Give reasons for your answer.
3. It's been said that we humans tend to judge other people by their worst mistakes while we judge ourselves by our best intentions. Agree/disagree? If you agree, why do we have that tendency, do you think?
4. What are some ways that we tend to pile heavy expectations on each other? Do you think we do it consciously or unconsciously?
5. What should be our attitude be towards failure? How much should it be on our minds as we seek to live out our relationship with God in the real world?
6. What's the difference between showing respect and honor to someone (a biblical concept) and making them a celebrity (a dangerous distortion)?
7. How would your life look different if you were 100% convinced that God was the only person who could REALLY reward you for your service?
8. Read 2 Chronicles 30:13-22 together. In this story, sincere people celebrate a religious feast in an improper way. How does God respond to it and how does it relate to Jesus's critique of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:23-24?
9. What are those essentials from God's point of view that we ought to focus the majority of our energies on?
10. Why do we hide behind religious disguises? What are we trying to protect?
11. Read Mt. 11:28-30. What does it mean to come to Jesus and learn from him?