

# Matthew 23:1-12

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[ 0 : 00 ] Matthew chapter 23, Matthew chapter 23 as we just continue to make our way through the gospel of Matthew. We'll be looking at verses 1 through 12 this morning, Matthew chapter 23 verses 1 through 12.

Before I get started, I'll remind you that the table talk questions are up here on the front. For those of you that are getting those each week, this week's are up there. If you're not familiar with it, it's just a series of five questions that apply to the message today.

They are to be conversation starters around your home with your kids, with your spouse, with your friends. Sitting around the table where you can do one question a day or you can go through them at your own pace.

Our desire is to make the table a place of discipleship because meals are important in scripture, right? Around the table. Table fellowship is so important. It's one of the things the early church really held on to.

That's why these type of meals like tonight are just so important. But it's so much more important. You say, well, sure it's important. I'll be hungry when I get here. I'll eat some good food and then I'll leave and I'll sleep good that night.

[ 1 : 03 ] That's not why it's important. It's important because you're sitting at a table. You have opportunity to talk. I've always said you really don't get to know someone until you eat a number of meals with them.

And then you really begin to know something about them. Something about that table fellowship. But that's what the table talk questions are for. I know some of you have asked if I would keep them in the back. If I remember.

I'm going to put that if there. If is a big two-letter word, right? If I remember when I get through here and I walk down the aisle at the close of service, I'll grab a few. And somebody said, why don't you put them back there to begin with?

Well, I'll tell you that. Because I don't want you looking at them before I preach my message this morning. So that's why. I don't. And I used to distribute outlines prior to services and all those things.

And then I would have people following my outline to see if I left anything out. And that is removing the divine influence of the message. Okay. Because my goal here is not to be.

[ 2 : 00 ] Not to tell you everything I wrote down. My goal is to tell you everything that God wants us to know. So anyway. I'll try to bring some to the back with me. We're in Matthew chapter 23 verses 1 through 12.

If you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask you to join with me as we stand together. And we read the word of God. Found in Matthew chapter 23. Starting in verse 1. We'll go down to verse 12 and then we will pray.

Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to the disciples saying, 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 do not do them. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men.

For they broaden their philanthropies and lengthen the tassels of their garments. They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues. And respectful greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by men.

[ 3 : 03 ] But do not be called rabbi. For one is your teacher and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your father. For one is your father, he who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders.

For one is your leader, that is Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled. And whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. So let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. We thank you for your word. And God, we thank you for the power of it. Lord, as we have come as your people. And we say, speak, oh God. May we as your people hear your voice. May it not be the words or the opinions or the thoughts of man. May it be the very word of God that penetrates to the very depth of our being. We ask you, oh God, to have your perfect way.

Lord, that you would show us and mold us and shape us to who you want us to be. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. The world in which we live is full of appearances.

[ 4 : 07 ] I think in today's time, more than any other, appearance is on the front burner. It seems to be the thing that is highlighted. We have all heard and we have all seen that in spite of all of the social media and all of the friends and all of the time and all the time spent before a screen, it seems like that today's younger people are more depressed than they've ever been and feel more isolated than at any other time in history.

It seems to be that appearance is the main thing and at times the only thing. It is how we look at this time doing this thing or how we respond. Even this past week, I believe it was, there's a new thing. I don't understand it. You'll have to get on to me. I just know that occasionally my daughter will look at me and say, hey, it's be real time, so we need to take pictures. I don't know what that means. Some of you younger ones can tell me. But inevitably, every time that it is be real, we have to pose to take a picture.

And I said, well, if this is being real, then why don't you just get me as I really am? And at that present time, I was eating here at the church, and I was eating a piece of pizza. I said, if I'm going to be real, then what I'm doing is about to be eating this food that is before me.

I'm not going to be looking in any other way. And I wasn't saying that to be sarcastic. I was just saying that if it's be real, well, that doesn't fit the scheme of the plan because we want to be real but look good, right? And we want to be real and look like we're being exciting because sometimes, I mean, let's just be honest, real life is not so exciting.

[ 5 : 32 ] Sometimes real life is just real. But we don't put the everyday mundane life on view for everybody to watch.

We put on our Sunday best. We put on a great appearance. What Jesus is saying in his final public discourse, which is what we have just entered into in Matthew 23, because by the time we get to the end of the 23rd chapter, Jesus would have rebuked and rebuffed all the religious leaders of his day. We're about to get into what we call the woe passages. Woe to the scribes and the Pharisees and woe and woe. We get into all of that. We've stopped just short of that. When we get to the end of the 23rd chapter, we will see where Christ makes this pronouncement that the light has left, that the Spirit of God has departed.

And there's this real unique thing when you put the Gospels together where it says, and at that moment he walked away from the temple. Pay attention to that, by the way, because when Jesus says, for I tell you the Spirit of God has departed from this place, and then he turns around and walks away, what he is saying is when I leave, he leaves.

But Jesus starts his final public discourse. He's going to have a great private teaching. We don't get it in the Gospel of Matthew. We would have to go to the Gospel of John in John 13, 14, 15, 16, and even into John 17 where you have the final teachings of Christ.

[ 7 : 06 ] But that's with the disciples there. That's with the apostles, not even all of them. In the 13th chapter of Judas Iscariot is moved by Satan and leaves. And so there's the 11 gathered around there, and he has this great time of intimate teaching with them.

And, man, I love that passage because those passages in John 13, even to 17, where you have the high priestly prayer of Christ, really just offer promises of hope over and over and over and over and over again.

And many years ago I studied that, and I identified nine promises of hope to go through that. But those promises weren't given to the public. They were given to the private. They were given to the apostles gathered together in the upper room.

Those who were eating a meal with him. Those who were gathered around the table. But here in this final public discourse of Christ before his crucifixion, before he dies for the sin of the world, before he is put on trial, he is mocked, he is tried six times in just a short amount of time, and each one of them is a mockery of a trial.

In six trials he's never found guilty, but at the end of six different trials he is put before Pilate, and he is called upon to be crucified, and he will be led away. He will be bruised.

[ 8 : 20 ] He will be beaten beyond recognition. He will have the crown of thorns pressed upon his head. He will bear the cross at least as far as he can until Simon of Cyrene will come and carry it the rest of the way up Golgotha.

He'll go to Calvary, and he'll be crucified between two criminals. But the last thing he tells the public is to be wary of religious appearance.

Because what we find in Matthew 23 verses 1 through 12 is a warning against religious appearances. Because see, appearance doesn't only matter in our private slash public life.

That is, the part of our life we want everybody to see. Unfortunately, what happens is the matter of appearances and how we look to everyone else tends to bleed over into every aspect of our society and into every aspect of our life.

And before we know it, even our faith becomes a faith of appearance. We want to look right, and we want to be right. I remember one time, now it wasn't here, so nobody get in trouble, okay?

[ 9 : 31 ] Nobody, I don't want, before I say this, I don't want anybody looking at anybody else because they're not here, and it didn't even happen here. I remember there was a choir practice one time, and I was listening to the choir practice, and in the choir was a new believer.

I had just met with a brother, and he had had a story, and we had come to this, and over about four or five weeks' time, he had finally given his life to Christ, and he was so excited, and he wanted to get in the choir.

Now, he wasn't gifted to sing, and that's okay, but he wanted to be around other believers, and he wanted to sing in the choir, and he was up there, and it was a choir practice on a Sunday morning. They had practice at nine o'clock, and I happened to be walking through the back of the sanctuary there, and he had messed up on a part, and he said, oh, and some other words came out of his mouth, and everybody in the choir looked at him, and then they looked at me, and I just kept walking.

You know why? Because for a moment, he was being real. He had been redeemed. He had been saved, but the Lord was still working on it. He goes, oh, I'm sorry, guys. I didn't mean to do that. He had not kept up his appearance. Now, that doesn't mean you need to be going around and dropping whatever you want to drop. I'm just saying, for a moment, it was all right to see real Christianity being lived out among brothers and sisters in Christ, and no, no, there was no judgment.

[ 10 : 50 ] Everybody kind of looked at me to see what I would do, and I just, well, just fix that, brother, and keep moving on, right? You know, let's not stay there. Let's not say that when the crowd gets here. We don't want to blow anybody away, you know, when the microphones are on.

Thankfully, we weren't live streaming at that time. That would be really good, but we see that appearances tend to creep over in every aspect of our life, and Christ here gives a great warning against religious appearances, and the first thing we see is the danger of hypocritical teaching. It is the danger of hypocritical teaching because it says, and Jesus said to the crowd and the disciples. Now, where is he standing? We've already said it, but in case you've missed it, he's on Temple Mount.

He is there where the Pharisees hang out. This is where they make their living. This is where their occupation is, and when is it? It is probably Tuesday of Passion Week, Tuesday of Passover Week, so the town is really bustling, and there's a lot of excitement.

Some people would tell you that the crowd in Jerusalem would be multiplied by the thousands of times during this period in history where people would come to observe the Passover, so the crowds and inevitably, everyone would want to go see the temple because if you don't live in Jerusalem and you don't hang out in Jerusalem, but you travel there just a couple times a year, then your destination is the temple, so he's on Temple Mount, and he's there in that place where the Shekinah glory of God had been manifested and where the lamb was to be slain, and he is presenting himself for inspection, and he is here probably on Tuesday because Wednesday is a day of silence, and then Thursday we get into days of preparation, but here it is probably on Tuesday of that Passion Week, and he is teaching to the crowds and to all the people that are gathering around.

[ 12 : 37 ] Now, he's not directly addressing the Pharisees, but they will hear him. He's not directly speaking to the scribes, but they will hear him because the time for questioning is over, right? That

happened in the 22nd chapter.

The time for questioning is over. Now, here's the time of challenging, and he is here, and he is teaching this crowd, and he says, the Pharisees and the scribes, pay attention to this, have seated themselves in the chair of Moses.

They have seated themselves in the chair of Moses. Now, we understand this because we see chairs, quote, unquote, that are held in, you know, universities and schools and positions like that. We have the chairs that are over this place or over that place, and it's not like a chair here. It's not like Moses had a chair because we know that Moses didn't have a chair, and the reason we know Moses didn't have a chair is because he stood up on a rock, and they had to hold his hands up. Remember that? And we also know that Moses had a chair because I've told you this before, and I know I'm completely on some squirrel tracks here, but this is good stuff. You need to pay attention to this, and I got my watch battery fixed, so now I know I got time, and since we were a little bit quick on the song service this morning, I got a little bit more time, but there was one article of furniture that they were not supposed to have in the tabernacle or the temple.

[13:52] There were no chairs. There were no chairs. There were no stools. There was nothing to sit on. This is why when Eli heard his sons had done wrong, and Eli in the book of 1 Samuel had heard that his sons were dead in battle, and the Ark of the Covenant had been captured in battle and carried away.

Then Eli fell backwards off of the stool he was sitting on and broke his neck because he was a heavy man, the scripture says. There's two things wrong there. Number one, Eli didn't get fat by looking at the food on the altar.

He got fat eating the food on the altar, so he started consuming more than what he should have, and number two is he should not have been sitting down to begin with because the work of God never stops.

We need to pay attention to this, right, because we always say, well, Eli's sons did wrong. Eli's sons did wrong. Eli's sons did wrong. Right, but Eli wasn't exactly right either, so we understand there's no chair, so when Jesus is speaking chair, he's not speaking of a literal chair.

He said, they have seated themselves in the chair of Moses. That necessarily means they have put themselves in the place of being people to tell you what Moses wrote. They are the people who would teach you about the Old Testament.

[15:00] They are, and we've looked at that with the scribes. They were the people who would interpret the law to you. The law being the first five books of the Bible which were written by Moses. They are there to tell you what the Pentateuch says.

Now, pay attention to this because hypocrisy starts here. It is when man assumes a position he was never called to because Jesus says they have seated themselves in the chair.

He never says God called them to be the possessors or the holders of a chair. He does not say God had called them to the position, but he says they've seated themselves in a chair.

See, when man puts himself in a position he has not been called to, then all of a sudden hypocrisy begins to take place. And they have put themselves in a prominent position.

They have set themselves up as being authorities to tell you what it is you should and you shouldn't do. Now, the word Pharisees means separated ones.

[16:02] They were those who proclaimed to be separated from Gentiles and non-faithful Jews. They were people who were set apart. They were people who were living according to the law.

And it's always amazed me how people who set themselves apart also want to set themselves over, right? They have set themselves apart and now they say and since we are apart from you we want to be over you.

And they had seated themselves on the chair of Moses and then Jesus goes on. He says, so whatever they say to you, do. Now, this is amazing because Jesus doesn't say God called them to that position.

Jesus doesn't say they had earned that position. Jesus didn't even say they had a right to that position. But what Jesus did say is when it comes to the word of God it doesn't matter who it is. The word of God has authority. So if they declare the word of God to you, do it. Because it is not the man that gives the authority to the word but the word that gives the authority to the man.

[17:02] If he can speak through a bush and a donkey then he can speak through anybody at any time at any place. And he says, when it comes to the word you listen to the word it doesn't even

matter who it is that's saying it.

You listen to the word because the authority is not whose rump is in the seat so to say. The authority is the word that they are declaring to you. The word of God has inerrant authority. It has authority that belongs to it and to it alone. Pay attention to that. That would be one of your questions on the table talk, right? See, the word has authority.

He says, so whatever they say to you, do simply because they are declaring to you the word of God. But then he goes on. But, do not do as they do.

He says, whatever they say, listen to it. But do not do as they do because they declare this great teaching and they lay it upon the shoulders of men but they will not even use their finger to lift it up.

[18:12] He says, they won't obey the very thing they're telling you and here is the danger of hypocritical teaching. The danger lies in this. The word comes with authority but the life of men diminish that authority.

He says, I want you to listen to what they say but I don't want you to live as they live. And friend, that is the grand example of hypocrisy.

See, authority doesn't come from holding a seat. Authority comes from having a changed life. It doesn't come from knowing what to say but rather knowing what he has said and living your life accordingly.

See, the Bible says in the book of Acts over and over and over again that people came to Christ. Remember this phrase? It's been a couple of years since we've been there.

In the book of Acts people were responding to the gospel. People were accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. It didn't say based on what they heard. See, we left some words out.

[19:19] It says based on what they saw and heard from the disciples. See, the multitudes were coming to Christ not because Peter preached a good message.

The multitudes were coming to Christ not because at the temple, at the hour of prayer, Peter and John had something good to say. The multitude came to Christ because they saw the movement of the Holy Spirit and then Peter preached a good message.

The multitude came to Christ because there was a man begging for alms and then they saw him get up and begin to walk around and then Peter and John said something on the temple mount at the hour of prayer. See, the power of the word was combined with the difference of their life and people were coming to Christ based on what they saw and heard.

The danger of hypocritical teaching is that the word of God has authority and power and is able to save to the uttermost but the life of the believer seems to contradict everything it declares and it becomes the very stumbling block upon which men fall.

It becomes the very thing upon which men trip. See, you cannot separate your life from the gospel you proclaim and if the gospel you proclaim does not match the life that you live, then friend, listen to me, you're living in a dangerous world of hypocritical teaching and until life and message all of a sudden are combined into one, we will never see the authority that the word of God is supposed to have.

[20:44] The Pharisees are still in existence today. Legalistic keepers of the word of God. They're the only ones that endured the fall of Jerusalem. They're the only ones that endured the dispersion of the Jewish people and they're recalling back when the nation of Israel came out of nothing at the end of World War II.

They're the only ones who really hate is the Pharisees, the legalistic keepers of the law because there are a lot of people who like to tell you what it says but they don't want to live that way. They don't want to live that way.

You must be careful even in your own Bible study because you will read in your Bible study if you go far enough and deep enough long enough. You will eventually begin to read Bible scholars say this.

always test your scholars because not every Bible scholar is a Bible follower. Not every Bible scholar is a true follower of Christ and I don't I don't mean this in any disrespect.

I don't care how many degrees an individual has if he doesn't have the fullness of the Holy Spirit he can't tell me what it says. That's just the biblical truth of the matter.

[22:05] I'd rather have a simple individual moved by the power of the Holy Spirit than a highly educated person without the Holy Spirit telling me what the Bible says. That doesn't mean that you don't need to study.

we're admonished to study to show ourselves approved. But there must be this connection of life and message where we live in the danger of hypocritical teaching.

Number two we see the deception of prideful living. When we talk about religious appearances we see the deception of prideful living.

I've told you before I think I told you about a week ago that during the days of Joseph Parker Hudson Taylor George Mueller Charles Spurgeon in the heyday of faith in England in particular London majorly that they didn't take up offerings they didn't pass the offering plate the way we do they didn't do those things.

Now George Mueller when he was a pastor he just set a box up in the back of the church and by faith he started trusting that people would put that in but the common practice of the day even when you come over to America early churches in America the common practice was to rent out pews. [ 23 : 29 ] At the end of each pew there was a little door there and that door had a lock on it and based on how much you gave to the church get this you didn't sit further back you got to sit closer up the more you gave the closer up you sat and they would give you the key to the door to that pew and that was your pew so I mean literally you didn't take somebody else's seat we all joke that you get in trouble if you sit in somebody else's seat well back then you'd really get in trouble if you sit in somebody else's seat because you had to jump over the door to get there so based on what you gave is based on where you sat now you see where this is going because all of a sudden especially when Spurgeon became the prince of preachers the metropolitan tabernacle there in London multitudes of people were coming in multitudes of people and people were buying tickets like you would buy them to a ball game and they would be buying a pew there and then buying a pew over at Joseph

Parker who was so much different of a pastor but is equally good as a pastor and preacher and expositor of the word and they would sit in a pew here and then they would go across the street and sit in a pew over there and before too long this is if you remember I asked the question last time I brought this up what happened to the church well what happened to the church is the pew became more of a place of prominence than it became a place of posture your faith became more of well I sit on the second row of the metropolitan tabernacle and that was a place of prominence that you had attained a level because you could afford to move up it broke Spurgeon's heart I think he was one of the ones who quit doing it and just opened it up and that blew everybody out of the water that why would we do such a thing you mean anybody can sit wherever they want to sit and it really just disrupted the whole order of things and it just really came out of disarray it was that way that D.L. Moody would rent out a whole pew at the church that he attended in Chicago at that time and the money he would make repairing shoes and being a cobbler in the store there he would rent out a whole pew and people would look at him and say look at all these people because he would go out and get these street kids and put them in his pew and people were looking at him going this ain't right these people don't need to sit in this pew because young D.L.

Moody made pretty good money so his pew was always full and people kind of got disrupted because he was renting out two pews and see Moody would fall asleep in his pew and people would laugh at him because here he is he would have two full pews rented out and all these people in it and Moody asleep but what they didn't know is that before Moody had got there he had already had church somewhere else he had already been teaching a thousand street kids that morning and what they didn't know is that when people would get mad because of who he would put in their pews beside them and it was messing with their prosperity and it was messing with their appearances what they didn't know is that when Moody got tired of that he would start his own church and that would become the Moody church of Chicago which would eventually grow so large and he never pastored that church he just had a church that had pews without doors and anybody could sit wherever they wanted to and the building would get full and they didn't know that when the Chicago fire would come that it would be that man who would help rebuild so much of that city because see the problem that happened in the churches not in the world is that position became but this is not anything new under the sun the book of ecclesiastes says that which is being done has already been done and

Jesus says of the Pharisees he says everything they do they do to be noticed by men everything their appearances their separation their obedience to the law now when Jesus declares why you're doing something there's no need in arguing with him right because he who knows your heart knows why you do it the Bible tells us in the third chapter of John when Nicodemus came to him that Jesus

didn't need anyone to tell him about what was in the heart of man for he knew the heart of every man and he looks here at the!

[ 27 : 57 ] multitudes and he says everything they're doing they're doing to be noticed by men he says oh I just want to serve the Lord he says you just want to be noticed by men he starts talking about these this word it's so hard for me to say in my southern dialect these philanthropies you can say it right these leather boxes that they put on their forehead and on their arm that's what they were I don't know why it just say leather boxes we can call it that they were these little leather boxes he says they broadened them now those little leather boxes they would have four strips of scripture in them and it goes back to the book of Deuteronomy where God says you should have it and as if it was all over your hands that whatever your hands did the word of God would not be ashamed of what your hands were doing so they would tie it around their right wrist they would put it on their left arm as high up as they could to get it as close to their heart they would put this box on their forehead they still do that today by the!

and you say oh they are just so faithful Jesus says no they just want to be seen they make it larger so everybody knows I've got the word of God on my mind you don't have to tell people when the word of God is on your mind I mean you don't the reality is is if you're thinking on the word and the word is in your heart and the word is affecting your hands you don't have to make a public display because your life will say it enough the only reason we have to tell people we're thinking about the word is because we're not living according to the word I mean that's just the reality and I know that upsets us sometimes and I know it kind of ruffles our feathers a little bit and all this other the good stuff but that's the truth we don't if we have to tell people we're doing it then the reality is we ain't doing it he says they just they broaden the tassels which are those prayer tassels and they make them longer and they walk around and they love the respectful greetings in the prominent seats in the synagogue see here is the deception of prideful living it looked reality is they were just ultra prideful they wanted to be seen they wanted to be noticed they wanted others to see how good they were how religious now don't throw all the

Pharisees under the bus some say that at this moment in history there were about 6,000 Pharisees in Jerusalem about 6,000 surely not all 6,000 of them are guilty of this we know of at least three that aren't Nicodemus Joseph of Arimathea and the unnamed one that we find also at the death of Christ that were not present when the Sanhedrin gathered together we know that there are some who are honestly searching but he says the majority of them just want to be seen see here's the thing we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling and I know this is more of a penetrating!

come into church and feel good well we're getting there stay with me right because I love what the Bible tells us I love the books of prophecy and they're so dark right and they seem so so hard and then you read like even in the book of Lamentations he says striking yet healing because see the healing comes after the breaking and there's that pain that's for a moment but the joy that's everlasting and we see this here because Christ is teaching us your faith is not a faith that is so concerned about what others think because if your faith cares more about appearance than you're living in the deception of pride if it is there just so that others will notice now this doesn't mean you need to walk around with this false sense of humility hoping no one would notice because then you're breaking Matthew 5 you are the light of the world so let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven but again do you see that the recognition!

is not you don't let them see your work so they can give you all the praise let them see your work so they can glorify your father who is in heaven people ought to look at you and go man there ain't no way you would do that they should look at you and go the only way you're doing this and living this way is because of something that the Lord your God has done to you!

[ 32 : 45 ] and you should be that's absolutely right see we ought to love to such an extent and give to such an extent and serve to such an extent we ought to our lives ought to be different that they are not natural because it's not it is supernatural but we ought not do it to be noticed by people they will see it's okay but that's not our motivating factor see we don't sit in a pew so that we can hold a place of prominence we don't attend the church so that we can say oh we're members of so and so church and we don't give and we don't do that because that's pride and it's deceiving it's appearing to be religious while honestly just being selfish we get to this third great thing and it's our final thing it is the difference in true disciples Jesus says the Pharisees love to be called rabbi rabbi is great

one or teacher they love to be called father that word father means the one who is leading me and going before me it is the one who is over me they love all these things these respectful greetings and they love to be called something and again that's not saying that it's wrong to call someone by a title that they have earned or anything of that nature some people took this to the extreme in the early ages of the church and said no one should ever be called doctor we shouldn't ever call anyone doctor so and so listen if that individual has put in the study and he's attained to that that's okay there's nothing wrong with that right because

I've met a lot of doctor so and so that were very humble they weren't using it the problem that I have with an individual is if you refer to them a certain way and they correct you know I am doctor so and so that I think we start getting into pride a little bit there right and we understand that there's a difference between respect and now I'm talking about doctorate of theology things right not necessarily I'm not talking about the doctor I want to be calling somebody doctor when I got a problem going on my spine I wanted it to be a doctor and I wanted to have to call him doctor I didn't want to call him okay you good sir would you mind doing this I had a lot of volunteers people tell me they cut me open but I wanted somebody I could call doctor to do that I'm talking about an academic world especially when it comes to faith here we see the difference that happens among the disciples of Christ because we're looking at our religion or our faith and its influence he says really the difference rests upon one thing as we read on he says do not be called rabbi for one is your teacher and here's the difference and you are all brothers do not call anyone on earth your father for one is your father who is in heaven and do not be called leaders for one is your leader that is

Christ he speaks of the difference that goes on among true disciples and that difference rests in a unity he says you don't have to worry about attaining a position for you are all brothers in our realm! we're looking at we're all brothers and sisters in Christ he says your unity will diminish the pride the reality that in Christ you are one will help combat the natural desire of man to exalt himself the understanding that in Christ you are united to one another will help to overpower the desire to be noticed by others now he says do not call anybody rabbi that means don't call anyone your great one for one is your rabbi that is Christ for one is your teacher do not call anyone teacher do not call anyone father that doesn't mean you can't call your parents father that's not what it means my daughter figured!

out many years ago that if you're in a crowd and! to say that down here in the south and that would be my daughter so I turn around and yes what do you want so when she wants my attention she's like father now she's not sinning here that's not saying you're not supposed to call anybody father that's not what it means it means leader or one who rules over me that I'm saying in this original language that means one go before Paul himself Paul called himself the spiritual father of the spiritual children but he didn't exalt himself he didn't ask anybody else to call him that he didn't tell Timothy you need to refer to me as daddy he didn't say those things he also referred to him as brothers and sisters in

[ 37 : 54 ] Christ because see we see the difference is the unity that comes from being under one there is but one that is exalted among us there is but one that is over us there is but one who is the great one and that is Christ now there are leaders in the church those leaders are not exalted leaders they are called leaders but they are also servant leaders because there's only one head and any leader!

in the church is not there to be over you but there to walk beside you to encourage you to get closer to the head which is Christ and we see this as Paul says follow me as I follow Christ and he goes on he says the difference is rather than being self seeking self promoting and hypocritical living he says the greatest among you shall be your servant!

ought to be others serving for whoever exalts himself shall be humbled and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted you know we work to exalt ourselves but we don't have to work to humble ourselves because if we're working to humble ourselves the reality is we're not humbling ourselves humility is that aspect in our life where we don't even know when we're doing it it is just so living with the reality that Christ is the head and everyone else is on the same playing field that in Christ we're united to others we're not greater or better or less than any others depending on however our enemies are standing on our shoulder but that in Christ we are all brothers and sisters and he has called us to serve one another to love one another to care for one another and to follow him then we start treading on the ground of humility humility is not something that we have to work to attain

rather it is something that naturally flows from a life that is fully surrendered to Christ we have the great privilege here in just a moment we're going to sing I surrender all now you know if you know anything about me you know that's a hymn that I'm very picky about how we sing it because I think unfortunately so many times we come to that hymn as if it is a drudgery to surrender everything that we have to gain Christ the reality is I get to surrender who I am for all he is for his glory and his honor see the difference among true disciples is I'm no longer the most important person in the room Christ is and when he's there the rest of us are all the same we don't walk around to be noticed we don't walk around to be seen we follow Christ and I ask him oh lord would you help my life to match my words for your glory let's pray lord I thank you for this day I thank you for the opportunity of gathering with my brothers and sisters in Christ I thank you for the privilege we've had of hearing your word and singing songs to your glory lord would you unite us now like never before lord I pray if there is any here today who may have just been going through the motions never really surrendered their life to Christ lord that they would move beyond religious appearances that they would come to the person of Christ to the finished work of the cross of Calvary and fall at your feet and say lord you be the great one and I'll follow you we ask it all in Christ's name amen so

[ 42 : 40 ] Thank you.

Thank you.