

Matthew 23:29-36. Christ Denounces the Last Woe Against the Pharisees.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of self-examination, recognizing the consequences of sin, and seeking God's mercy and forgiveness.

Scripture: Exodus 20:5, 2 Chronicles 34:27, Joel 2:13, Matthew 23:29, Matthew 23:35, Luke 11:47, Hebrews 11:4, 1 John 3:18

Topics: "Hypocrisy And Repentance", "Generational Sin"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer delves into the last of the eight woes that Jesus denounced against the Pharisees, focusing on their hypocritical nature, particularly in the building of tombs for the prophets. Mortimer highlights the danger of self-deception in assessing our own characters and urges listeners to examine how they treat believers in the present day. Reflecting on the honor given by Jesus to the martyred prophets, Mortimer emphasizes the consequences of sin passed down through generations and the importance of repentance to break the cycle of curses. Despite the generational impact of sin, God's mercy is available to those who repent, as seen in the example of King Josiah.

Transcript

This is the last of the eight woes that the Lord denounced against the Pharisees. Eight times he uttered these words, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." Eight times he described their hypocritical character. The last instance of hypocrisy mentioned, is the building of the tombs of the prophets. This was a hypocritical act in the Pharisees, because it was not done from love and reverence to the martyred prophets, but merely from pride and ostentation. If they had revered the ancient prophets, they would not have persecuted the living ones. It is very probable that they really thought that they would not have been partakers with their fathers in the blood of the prophets; but they did not know their own hearts. It is very easy to deceive ourselves respecting our own characters. When we read of wicked actions, it is natural to think that we would not have committed them, had we been placed in the circumstances of those we read of. But this is not the way to come to a knowledge of ourselves. Let us not inquire how we should have treated the apostles or the reformers, had we lived in their days, but let us rather inquire how do we behave towards despised saints in these days? Do we love all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we ready to relieve their wants, and to defend their characters? When the saints are praised and admired, it is easy then to speak in their favor; but when they are despised and

calumniated, then it requires faith to take their part, and to share in their reproach.

With what honor the Son of God mentioned those holy men who had been slain in former times! What a title he bestowed on Abel, when he called him "righteous Abel!" The waters of the flood had not washed out the stains of his blood from the earth. We know the names of very few of those prophets who were slain between the time of Abel and of Zachariah, but all their names were known to Jesus at the moment he was speaking--all their spirits were happy in his Father's presence, and all their blood was crying for vengeance from the earth. And upon whom would that vengeance descend? Upon that generation to whom Jesus then spoke--upon that generation who would exceed all their fathers in wickedness, by slaying the Son of God, and by refusing the offer of pardon that his apostles would proclaim. Jesus declared, "All these things shall come upon this generation." But not upon that generation alone. The sufferings of the Jewish nation are not yet ended. To this day they are wanderers on the face of the earth, even as Cain was who slew his brother Abel.

Can parents bear the idea of entailing a curse upon their children? Long after they are sleeping in their graves their offspring may be suffering the consequences of their sins. A family is plunged from the height of affluence into the depth of poverty; disease sweeps away the fair blossoms from a flourishing tree; public crime inflicts a dark blot upon a reputable name--and men know not the cause of these visitations. Sometimes they are sent, like the afflictions of Job, and the temptations of Abraham, to try the faith of God's dear children, and as tokens of a Father's love--but sometimes they are the memorials of sins perpetrated long before--of sins unpardoned and unrepented of. The cruel treatment of a fatherless child, the treacherous robbery of a master, the bitter persecution of a saint, are often visited upon the unrighteous descendants of those who committed the guilty acts. God fulfils his own word by visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate him.

But He will never let his wrath burn against the righteous son of ungodly parents. No, if the son repents, he shall obtain mercy. The good king Josiah, though the son of a very wicked father, was spared when God was going to pour torrents of wrath upon his kingdom. Because his heart was tender, because he humbled himself, and wept and prayed, therefore God said, "You shall be gathered to your grave in peace." Pious children who have ungodly parents yet living, may pray for them, and may obtain mercy for them also. Far from punishing the children for their parents' sake, he may bless those parents for their children's sake. "For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repents him of the evil." (Joel 2:13.)

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