

Day One: Matthew 23:25-28

- Whom is Jesus addressing in this “Seven Woes” speech (25)? Five times he calls the Pharisees “hypocrites.” Why do you think he keeps calling them out on this? Consider how hypocrisy is both a big deal in the Bible and a common problem of our time. What does God think of hypocrisy?
- What imagery illustrates the Pharisees’ hypocrisy (25)? Describe the method for getting entirely clean (26). Consider your own public persona. Is it carefully curated? How authentic is it? Pray you’d show more concern for the “inside of your cup;” avail yourself to the Lord, the only one who is able to make you clean.
- How else does Jesus describe the Pharisees’ hypocrisy (27)? Picture yourself at a cemetery. What is beneath the gravestones and within the mausoleums? What is beneath your own façade? In reflecting on scriptures like this, may authenticity spring forth.

Day Two: Luke 10:25-37

- What question was posed to Jesus (25)? How did he respond (26)? What did the expert in the law go on to say (27)? What clarifying question did he ask (29)? Jesus answered by telling a parable; summarize it (30-35). Describe each character (30-33).
- What are your thoughts on the lawyer? Did he care about loving others, or was he concerned about something else? What was it? How motivated are you to love others, and to put no restrictions on such love? What are some examples of this motivation in action?
- What final question did Jesus ask the lawyer (36)? What was his response (37)? How do you think it must’ve felt for him to admit this? What did Jesus then say (37)? Imagine him issuing this same practical command to you: go and *do* likewise, considering all people your neighbor. Today, what is one way to obey it?

Day Three: Luke 15:1-10

- Describe who was present as Jesus told these parables, and what the atmosphere was like (1-2). With a hypocritical spirit, the Pharisees positioned themselves to hear Jesus teach. How do you posture yourself when receiving from Jesus? Pray for grace to sit at his feet in openness, poised to give away his love to others.
- Summarize the parable of the lost sheep (4-7). Joy and celebration, all over recovering just one sheep, conclude it. Why do you think Jesus told this story in response to the Pharisees’ remarks about sinners? What are some ways you can “welcome and eat with” people who are different from you?
- What happens in the parable of the lost coin (8-10)? God’s aim is to relentlessly and fully restore us. Consider any deficits you have regarding authenticity: hypocrisy, a need to impress others, loving others on your terms instead of Jesus’, etc. Repent and allow him to restore you to a place of authenticity and generous love.

Day Four: Galatians 5:13-26

- What are believers called to (13)? What should we do with this freedom (13)? What one *action* is the fullest expression of God’s good law (14)? What are the risks of not loving your neighbor as yourself (15)? Who *is* your neighbor? Which one is the hardest to love? How can the Lord make it possible to do it anyway?

- What happens when we “walk by the Spirit” (16-18)? Paul claims “the acts of the flesh are obvious;” what are they (19-21)? What warning does he issue about them (21)? Which of your own sins are listed here? Repent. In every way that you *believe* in Jesus but don’t *walk* accordingly, ask God to reroute your steps toward authenticity. What do you think will come of this?
- Describe the fruit of the Spirit (22-23). Focus on love and kindness and think of one way to demonstrate them in your treatment of others this week. When we belong to Jesus, what is our sin’s fate (24)? What else does Paul say about “life by the Spirit” (25-26)?

Day Five: James 1:19-27

- What three things should everyone do (19)? Why (20)? Which command is hardest for you to follow? Invite the Lord into this struggle. What is he asking of you? What two actions make it possible for us to practice James’ words in verse 19 (21)? How does “the word planted in you” – regular remembrance of Jesus and the scriptures – foster authentic, loving behaviors? Multiply the effect: study the Bible more often.
- Summarize what it looks like to do “what the word says” (22-25). When do you “forget what you look like”? When do you “remember what you heard” and do it? Pray God would bless you on this journey toward authenticity in Christ.
- What is deceitful and destructive (26)? Who does this remind you of? Perhaps yourself? What better way is Jesus showing you? What is “pure and faultless” (27)? Pray that *this* – tangibly loving those in distress – would be the religion you practice.