

# Ministry From Matthew 23

by William MacDonald

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*Jesus is not ecumenical, and we must beware of false religious leaders who prioritize unity over doctrine and withhold the truth of the gospel from their followers.*

**Duration:** 47:08

**Scripture:** Matthew 23:2-8, Matthew 23:13, Matthew 23:23, Matthew 23:25-33, Matthew 23:37-39, Luke 11:52

**Topics:** "Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares about a young man named Martin Selinger who is dying of cancer. Despite his physical weakness, Martin's faith and dedication to serving others is highlighted. The speaker also discusses the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, who burden people with rules and regulations without offering any help or support. The sermon emphasizes the contrast between the heavy burdens imposed by religious leaders and the invitation of Jesus to find rest and comfort in Him. The speaker concludes by highlighting the compassionate heart of God, who mourns for rebellious humanity and desires their repentance.

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## Transcript

And I'll read the first twelve verses. Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do.

But do not do according to their works, for they say and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders. They make their phylacteries broad, and make their quarters of the best in the synagogue.

Greeting is called by men, Rabbi. But you do not be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. ...himself with the multitudes.

The title of our little talk today, I would say, Jesus is not ecumenical. Now, I've used a big word, and so I'll have to stop and explain it. Jesus is not ecumenical.

There's a great movement in the religious world today known as the ecumenical movement. And it is an effort to merge all churches. Not only Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Roman Catholics, but Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Animists and Spiritists.

It looks forward to the formation of a great world church. Which, of course, the Bible predicts, doesn't it, in Revelation 17 and 18? It predicts the formation of such a world church, and we see it going on today. It's an organizational union of churches and religious systems.

All kinds of churches. But it's a union without any regard to doctrine. In other words, it really doesn't make too much difference what you believe.

Like, you could be a Hindu with thousands of gods and still be a member of this movement. You could be a Buddhist and deny the deity of Christ. Doesn't make any difference.

Don't stress doctrine. This is union at the expense of doctrine. Therefore, of course, very ungodly union.

You'll find that these men say that doctrine divides. Love unites. So, the idea is to have love for everybody no matter what they believe.

There's an interesting thing about this union, and that is that they're tolerant of everybody but fundamental Christians. Now, that's an interesting thing. They pose as liberals and have hearts wide open for all religions, but there's one group that they have nothing but hatred for.

And that is for those people who adhere to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Isn't that a strange thing? I think Spurgeon said it well. He said, if you want a bitter sneer, a biting sarcasm, or a cruel action, I commend you to these large-hearted gentlemen.

They are liberal to everybody except to those who hold the truth. And for those, they have a reserve of concentrated bitterness which far exceeds wormwood and gall. They are so liberal to their fellow errorists that they have no tolerance to spare for evangelicals.

And I don't know how it could be said better than that. One of the watchwords of the ecumenical movement is found in John 17, verses 7 and 21. They love these two verses of Scripture, but of course they take them completely out of context.

John 17, verses 11 and 21. It says in verse 11, the Lord Jesus, this is the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world.

And I come to you, Holy Father, keep through your name those whom you have given me, that they may be one as we are. They like that, that they may be one as we are. Then verse 21, that they all may be one as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.

And they take especially verse 21 to mean that if all the churches could get together, then the world would believe. If you could have a union, an outward union of all the churches. No, don't worry about doctrine now.

But if you could have a union of all churches, then the world would believe. Which of course is sheer nonsense. It's absolute rubbish to suggest such a thing.

When the Lord prayed here that they all may be one, he was not thinking about an organizational union. He was not thinking about a world council of churches. He was thinking about his disciples being Christ-like.

One in that sense. One in Christ-likeness. This is what will cause the world to believe, when they see Christ in his followers.

As I say, they take the verse completely out of context and use it to support an organizational union. Jesus was not ecumenical. We hear so much about the meek and gentle Jesus.

Chapter 23 of Matthew gives the other side of that picture. These are some of the strongest words that the Lord Jesus Christ ever spoke. And to whom were they directed? They were directed to religious leaders.

Just think of that. Not to bartenders, not to thieves, or to immoral people, but to religious leaders. And as you go down through the chapter, you find quite a picture of these religious leaders.

When they would quote the Bible, of course the Bible is truth, but they didn't live in the Bible. It was a case of high talk and low walk. These religious leaders think themselves a cut above the common herd.

They wear ecclesiastical clothes. They don't. Here it says they make broad the fringes on their garments.

And they wear religious trinkets. They don't. What's that all about? You see these men today going around and they have special clothing.

And they have maybe a big crucifix around their neck or something like this. What's that supposed to say? It's supposed to give the impression that they're more holy than the people around them. There's absolutely no scriptural basis for that at all.

It isn't true either. It isn't clothing that makes a person holy. It isn't a crucifix around his neck that makes him holy.

And as you go through the chapter, you find many of the things that you find today with religious leaders. They themselves are not saved and they don't want anybody else to be saved either. They actually obstruct the way to eternal life for the people.

And I love it when I read chapter 23 of Matthew to realize that my Savior was capable of indignation. You know, there are a lot of people today who aren't. A lot of Christians today who aren't.

And I have a hard time with people like that. People who can tolerate anything. People who can tolerate dishonor to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They never get indignant about it. Jesus was capable of indignation and we're going to see it here. And we can apply these principles that are found in this chapter to conditions in the world today.

So let's just go down through the chapter and see what lessons we can learn from this. First of all, the Lord is speaking to the multitude. He's speaking to the multitude and to the disciples.

And later, He addresses these religious leaders directly. And then at the close of the chapter, He weeps. He weeps over the passing of religious opportunity.

I think that's most significant. That is the strongest language that you find in the New Testament. The chapter closes with the tears of the Son of God.

He says, the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. That means that the scribes and the Pharisees had the place of authority in the religious realm. That doesn't mean that God gave it to them.

It means they took the place of being authorities in the religious realm. And they were the ones that hewed to the line as far as law and tradition were concerned. But notice what the Lord says.

Therefore, whatever they tell you to do, observe. That is, whatever they say that is in accordance with the word of God. Not whatever in an absolute sense.

But whatever is right, observe and do. But do not according to their words, for they say and do not do. Of course, this is characteristic of hypocrites, isn't it? People who say one thing, but they don't live it themselves.

They might wear ecclesiastical vestments. They might pose as being extraordinarily holy men, to all outward appearance. Makes not a bit of difference.

Notice what it says in verse 4. They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders. You think of poor people going down through the centuries to confession. And a priest sits there.

And he tells them all kinds of things that they must do, you know. As a result of their sins. It doesn't help them.

Grievous burdens that he lays on the back of people, that he wouldn't lift a little finger to help them. And he's probably guilty of worse sins himself. They themselves will not move with one of their fingers.

I compare this with the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 11, verses 28 and 29, where Jesus said, Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Quite a contrast to the legalistic traditions of religious men. And the way they treat others. And then the ostentation of these men.

Trying to make a show of godliness. Trying to show their spiritual superiority. It says all their works they do to be seen by men.

And of course in Matthew's gospel, in the Beatitudes, you have that terrible indictment. They have their reward. Their reward is that they are seen of men.

That nobody is fooled by them. They make their phylacteries broad. Phylacteries, what were phylacteries? Well, they were little leather pouches with portions of the word of God in them.

And they would tie one of them with a leather band around their forehead, and they would tie others around their arm. It would be a long leather rope, and the phylactery would be there, and they would tie them around their arm. Now when God said that we should have the word of God before our foreheads and on our hands, he didn't mean that we should put them in a leather pouch and wear them for men to see.

He meant that the word of God should always be before us. And that we should be doing what the word of God says. But this was kind of a traditional way of getting around the word.

In other words, as long as I wear the phylactery, it doesn't make any difference what I do. How ridiculous can you be? And then, of course, the Jew was commanded to wear clothing with a blue band, a blue ribbon at the bottom. And here it says they enlarge the borders of their garments.

In other words, distinctive clothing that sets them apart from others. Here they're setting up a distinction between clergy and laity, aren't they? A distinction that's never found in the New Testament. And a distinction that's set up by such outward things as clothing and knick-knacks that you wear on your body.

And here the Lord is lashing out against that. God wants truth in the inward parts, doesn't he? Not what you wear that makes you holy. Not wearing phylacteries on your forehead or on your arm that makes you holy.

It's truth in the inward parts. Righteousness and peace and joy is the Holy Spirit. Verse 6. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogue.

Don't forget, he's speaking about religious leaders. He's not speaking about the poor people that are duped by them. But he's speaking about those who take the place of religious leaders.

Outward show. Love of prominence. Pride of place.

Of course, you see that so commonly in the religious world today. And not only that, but they like to be addressed with special ecclesiastical titles. Three of them are named here.

Rabbi, Master, and Teacher. Some of these words rather overlap in the original language of the New Testament. Master and Teacher somewhat say the same thing.

But we can make the applications today. For instance, the title Reverend. Where'd that ever come from? Man taking an equal brotherhood, which God had set up, and making a division in that equal brotherhood by setting apart some people as in a place of special notice.

Absolutely no scripture for it. To say nothing of Pope, Archbishop, Right Reverend. You can go down the list.

All of these ecclesiastical titles and the Word of God knows nothing about them at all. I'm always impressed by Charles Haddon Spurgeon and how he spoke out against that. He said he could see no scripture at all for any man assuming the title of Reverend.

Reverend and Holy is God's name. Not to be taken by any man. But here they are.

They love these names. And they love to be honored by, quote, the common people. Absolutely ridiculous.

He who is greatest among you shall be as your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be abased and he who humbles himself will be exalted. I think of men that I have known, men of God down through the years, and there was no pomp about them at all.

They lived quiet, godly lives and they just poured out their lives in service for others. They were true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. They never sought a place for themselves in the world.

They were just content to be in the place that God placed them in. And they were never above taking a lowly place. I might have told you, I think I did at one time when I was at Emmaus Bible School and I used to go up and inspect the dormitory.

And in the morning the fellows would go into these toilets with all of the wash basins there and they would wash and they would shave. And when they'd get through, the floor looked as if Noah's flood had just passed through. It was really a mess.

One day I went up there to inspect the dormitory and here was Charles Van Ryn, one of our teachers, down on his hands and knees, mopping up the floor and cleaning it. Took the place of a servant. He was a teacher.

He was one of the professors, as it were, in the school. And yet glad to just take that place and mop the floors for the fellows who had been there. And I think of that every time I come to this verse.

He who is greatest among you shall be your servant. I'm especially impressed by verse 13. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven among men.

You neither go in yourself nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. You might be thinking, what ever caused you to take up a subject like this? Well, I'll tell you why. In Austria at the present time there's a young brother named Martin Selinger who's 21, dying of cancer.

He came to the last two weeks of our training program. He was so weak he couldn't raise his hand. If he wanted to say something, the fellow that was with him would have to raise his hand like this.

One Saturday I spent with Martin at his home. His father's a believer and he has a sister who's a believer in himself. His mother's not a believer.

His mother is held in the clutches of a Roman Catholic church. She's one of the nicest women you could hope to meet. She has raised three children in wheelchairs.

They're all adults today. Three children in wheelchairs. And they didn't all have the same problem.

Martin has spinal dystrophy, something like that. He has a sister Ava who's a believer. And she has a beautiful face and a beautiful head, but her little body is just all distorted and crippled.

She's in a wheelchair. And there's another son, an unbeliever, who's in business, but he's also in a wheelchair. And there's that mother, white-haired, and work is her middle name.

She does nothing but work. And she's unsaved. And it really bothered me that day.

That day I came away with a hatred. A new hatred for Roman Catholicism. Not for Roman Catholics.

I love Roman Catholics, but for Roman Catholicism. And I thought of this verse. A dear, dear woman, and yet blinded.

In fact, Ava, the daughter, was baptized the following Saturday. It took two men to lower her into the water. And the mother, she wouldn't go to the baptism of her own daughter because of fear of what the Catholics would say.

I want to tell you, it's a wicked thing. Men that not only will not enter the kingdom themselves, but they'll hinder others from entering it as well. If any of you think of it, I wish you'd pray for Mrs. Selinger.

That before Martin dies, she might be saved. Martin is an unusual fellow. He's staring death in the face, and he's completely triumphant.

He has made all his funeral arrangements. All the people are going to take part. They know what part they're going to take.

He has arranged to have a copy of Ultimate Questions in German given to everyone who attends. There's no fear of dying. Whatever wants to go to be with the Lord.

But in the meantime, he speaks to her three times a week to groups like muscular dystrophy or multiple sclerosis groups. And he talks to them about pain and suffering and brings in the gospel. He's thinking about the Lord all the time.

There's a young brother, Christoph Blasel, who cares for him. And one night Martin was sleeping. He woke up and he called to Christoph.

Christoph jumped to his feet and said, what is it? He said, Martin said, would you move my leg? He's paralyzed from here down because of a tumor on his spine. He's filled with cancer. He said, would you move my leg? And Christoph said to him, which leg? Well, dear Martin was still half asleep and he really didn't know what he was saying.

He said, which one would contribute most to my spiritual growth? So you can see that even in his sleep, he's thinking about the Lord. That was his answer to Christoph as to which leg to move, which one would contribute most to my spiritual growth. Of course, when two of them tell the story, they just howl with laughter.

So I came away and I thought of that woman. My heart went out to her. And I began to think of other Catholic people.

And not only Catholic people, but Protestants as well, who are duped by the clergy. And you know them and I know them. People from whom the gospel of the grace of God is withheld.

What a terrible thing, huh? What a terrible thing. You sit here today and you enjoy the freedom you have in Christ. You enjoy the knowledge of sins forgiven.

And I'm going to tell you, there are men such as the Lord is talking about here in Matthew 23. Men and women. And from the world's temple, nice men and women.

And yet they've been deceived and hoodwinked. And they know nothing of the gospel of the grace of God. You sit here this morning and you enjoy assurance of salvation.

It's a wonderful thing, isn't it? But you know, the mass of the people in these churches today that have religious leaders like the Lord Jesus is speaking about here. If you talked to them about assurance of salvation, they wouldn't know what you were talking about. And you said to them or you say, well, they would hedge and fumble for words.

Just think of the throngs about us today who do not know they're saved. And they cannot know they're saved. As long as their religion is based upon what these men teach.

Binding heavy legalistic burdens upon them. And they never know whether they've done enough. Or whether they've done the right kind of work.

You sit here this morning and you enjoy the truth of eternal security. But no sheep of Christ will ever perish. Dear friends, that's a foreign language to most of these people.

They've been tricked and deceived by these false religious leaders. We sit here today and we rejoice in our position in Christ. It's marvelous, isn't it? I talked to you about being accepted in the beloved and you know what I'm talking about.

I tell you in the average church today, if you say accepted in the beloved, they'd look at you with a puzzlement in their faces. I don't know what that means. I remind you this morning that you're complete in Christ.

Really enough to make angels gasp. And make the choirs of heaven sing. But this truth is withheld from people.

It's withheld from some of your relatives in the Catholic church. And some of your relatives in Protestant churches as well. No wonder the Lord was angry, huh? We sit here today and well, we sang it already in those lovely hymns that John gave out.

He'll come and carry on. The blessed hope of the coming again of the Lord Jesus. But the throngs of people around us today know nothing about that blessed hope.

All they know is they're going to die. And a very uncertain future after that, isn't it? And I think of that when I read this verse. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.

You shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. For you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. I don't think I told you here that our good friend Fred Greenlaw, and his roommate is a Roman Catholic.

And one day the priest comes in to visit the roommate. And as the priest was leaving, Fred said to him in rather a pathetic voice, Sir, would you talk to me for a minute? And the priest said, Certainly. And Fred said to him, Could you please tell me how to be saved? Do you know what the priest said? He said, Just keep on doing what you're doing.

He didn't know Fred. He had never met Fred before. For all he knew, Fred was in the Mafia.

He said, Just keep on doing what you're doing. Fred said, What about Calvary? Well, he said, Calvary's important, but it's not everything. Fred said, No, of course not.

It's a resurrection. And the priest decided it was time to leave. Probably figured he had a Bible thumper on his hands.

Somebody who knew the Bible better than he knew it. He'd better get out. That's the kind of people that the Lord is talking about here.

They told me about a priest in Austria who told one of the dear people there, Christ paid for 99% of your sins on the cross. You have to pay for the other 1%. Apparently he had never read those words.

It is finished. The Lord Jesus finished 100% of the work on the cross of Calvary. And nothing remains to be done.

And this is what's going on in the religious world today. And my heart goes out to the people who are deceived by such religious charlatans as this. Men who don't want the Lord themselves.

They don't want anybody else to trust him either. The day before yesterday I got a call from a young fellow in Motherwell, Scotland. His name is Brendan Flynn.

He's a converted Catholic. And after he got converted he went to see the priest. And he told the priest what had happened.

And the priest showed him to the door. Wouldn't have anything to do with it. Why? Because he was saved.

What's so bad about that? Before that he had been on drugs and alcohol and all the rest. Immorality. Now he's saved, a new creature in Christ Jesus.

The priest showed him to the door and told him to get out. That's what's going on today. No wonder Jesus said, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.

You shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. You neither go in yourselves nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. There's an interesting verse in Luke chapter 11 where it says they took away the key of knowledge from the people.

Let me just see if I can find it. Verse 32. Not that.

But anyway, the Lord is speaking here to the lawyers. And he tells them that they've taken away the key of knowledge from the people. And of course that means the Bible.

They've robbed the people of the word of God. What is it? 52. Woe to you, lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge.

You did not enter in yourselves and those who are entering in you hindered. What a wicked system where these religious leaders keep the people in ignorance of the word of God. I know that in the Second Vatican Council Catholics were encouraged to read the Bible.

But that word is never filtered down to the priest. They do not want the people to read the Bible. Because they know what happens when people read the Bible.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. They know that when people read the Bible they're delivered from Catholicism. They're saved by the grace of God and they lose members and they don't want it.

Taken away the key of knowledge. And that isn't all. He says in verse 14, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.

You devour widows' houses, taking advantage of poor people. You know, wherever Catholicism has gone there's been ignorance and poverty. Ignorance and poverty.

The countries in which Catholicism made the, in which Communism made the greatest advances were Catholic countries. The biggest Communist party outside the Iron Curtain was in Italy. Headquarters of the Church of Rome.

People, men, supposedly men of God, taking advantage of the poor. Devouring widows' houses. But then for a pretense, making long prayers.

Thinking that by ostentation, prayers in public, they can hide their greed and covetousness. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. Notice that expression, greater condemnation.

What does that mean? It means there's going to be degrees of punishment in hell. That's what it means. That's what it means.

There's going to be degrees of punishment in hell. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. You travel land and sea to win one proselyte.

And when he's won you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourself. What does that mean? I don't think here it means literally traveled over land and sea. Because the Pharisees stayed pretty close to Jerusalem.

But what it means is you spare no effort in making proselytes to your cause. But now that they're proselytes, what are they going to do? Are they going to live holy lives? No. How can they live holy lives? I'll never forget when I was in the Navy out in Honolulu.

I was in the officer's club one day and just sitting there reading. And two priests came in and one of them was as drunk as he could be. Drunk as he could be.

And the other one said to me, you'll just have to forgive the father. He said to me, you'll just have to forgive the father. Of course they did that.

They did that. They would get drunk. They would drink with the sailors to show them that they were just good guys like themselves.

Instead of setting themselves apart as men to be followed, they stooped down to the level of the sailors themselves. Make him twice as much a son of hell as yourself. What a terrible condemnation from the lips of the holy son of God.

And then the foolish distinctions that they made. It says, woe to you blind guys. Whoever swears by the temple, it's nothing.

But whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he's obliged to perform it. Fools and blind, which is greater? The gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? This has to do with taking oaths, making promises. To them, the gold in the temple was more important than the temple itself.

The temple was a dwelling place of God. But they thought of gold rather than of God. You could tell what was uppermost in their mind.

Whoever swears by the altar, it's nothing. But whoever swears by the gift that's on the altar, he's obliged to perform it. You could swear by the altar of God and you didn't have to carry out that promise.

But if you swore by the gift that was on the altar, materialism, then you really had to carry through on your promises. Let me give you an illustration of what the Savior is saying here. I probably told you this before.

A man in France, he went into a used store and he bought a piece of jewelry. He got what was a ring or a bracelet. And it didn't cost him very much.

He came home and he took it to an appraiser. And the appraiser, his eyes popped when he saw it. And he said, how much is it worth? He said, worth \$10,000.

I couldn't believe it. He just paid a few dollars for it in a used shop in Paris. And he took it to another appraiser just to be sure.

And the man said it's worth \$15,000. Couldn't believe it. But then the man gave him his magnifying glass and he looked inside.

And it was a gift from Napoleon to Josephine. It was inscribed inside. A gift from Napoleon to his wife, Josephine.

Actually, the bracelet wasn't worth \$15,000. It was the name inside that sanctified the bracelet that gave value to it. It was the temple that gave value to the gold.

It was the altar that gave value to the gift that was upon it. But they made these false distinctions and put material things above the Lord himself. He says, blind guides, verse 24, who strain out a net and swallow a camel.

They were punctilious about the minor things in life. And they were just interested in what was outward, not what was inward. They cleansed the outside of the dish, but the inside was just putrefying.

They were like whitewashed tombs. That's an interesting expression, whitewashed tombs. The Jews don't like cemeteries.

To touch a tomb would defile you because it contains a dead body. So they whitewashed it. And what difference does that make? Whitewashing a tomb doesn't make it more holy.

It might look a little cleaner. But inside it's just worms and dust. What expressive language.

You're like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. And then I think that's tremendous. Where they took, and on Memorial Day they would bring out their big bouquets and they'd lay them at the tombs of the prophets.

They said, boy, if we had living in the days of our fathers, we never would have killed the prophets like that. And right at the same time they were doing that, they were plotting the death of the Son of God. But the Lord lays at their door here.

Verse 31, Therefore your witness is against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of your father's guilt. And they did it when they nailed the Lord Jesus Christ to the cross of Calvary.

Who have been the persecutors of the Christian church down through the centuries? Religious people. Who instigated the Inquisition in Spain years ago? The Roman Catholic Church. The hands of the Catholic Church are stained with the blood of Christian martyrs down through the years.

Is that serious? We only have to read history to know that this is true. In fact, in the Vatican there's a portrait of some Christians being martyred, and underneath it says the Pope approved. That's the writing underneath the picture.

The Pope approved. So these words really are not theoretical, are they? They're actual. Therefore your witness is against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

Fill up then the measure of your father's guilt. Serpent, brood of vipers, how can you escape the condemnation of hell? And then as I finish, he closes this chapter with his tears. Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you as a hen doth gather her chickens.

But you would not. He wept alone, and men passed by the men whose sins he bore. They saw the man of sorrows weep.

They'd seen him weep before. They asked not who those tears were from or for. They asked not whence they flowed.

Those tears were for rebellious men, their source the heart of God. The eye of God is downward bent, still ranging to and fro, where'er in this wide wilderness there roams a child of woe. And if the rebel chooses wrath, God mourns his hapless lot.

Deep breathing from the heart of God, I would, but he would not. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you this morning for these words, these sharp, cutting words from the lips of the neat and gentle Jesus. They think of people that we know who are deluded by men just like this today, who are kept in ignorance.

Men who themselves are not saved, and they don't want to see other people saved as well, and do anything in their power to keep people from the gospel, to keep the Bible a closed book. Father, we pray that you would raise up men like Martin Luther and John Huss and others in our day to cry against the wickedness. We think of this whole ecumenical spirit.

Never say anything against anyone else. We thank you that our Savior was not ecumenical. Bless this word to our heart.

Use us in whatever way you can, Lord. We ask it in the Savior's name. Amen.

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