



62A PENTECOST 22A LITURGY

Looking Good – Being Good

Abstract

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.

Matthew 23:2-3

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64A Pentecost 22A Liturgy

Looking Good – Being Good

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2020 | AFTER PENTECOST | PROPER 26 YEAR A

On the same date: All Saints

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Joshua 3:7–17

Psalm Psalm 107:1–7, 33–37

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Micah 3:5–12

Psalm Psalm 43

New Testament 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13

Gospel Matthew 23:1–12

Matthew 23.1-12

- Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of not doing what they teach.
- He tells the crowd and his disciples that they have but one teacher, and one Father in heaven.
- Those who exalt themselves will be humbled; the humble will be exalted.

This week's resources explore: looking good; speaking the truth; honest living.ⁱ

<p>Pre-Service</p> <p>CCLI song #7105732 More Like Jesus Younker/B&S Ligertwood Stanfill</p>
<p>Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p> <p>and also with us</p>
<p>We Gather</p> <p>Come to our great teacher. Listen to God's word. Sing God's praise. Be encouraged in your daily lives. Be strengthened in your call to serve God and all who are in need.</p>

Acknowledgements

Our worship is being held on the traditional lands of the Wada wurrung people who have looked after and cared for the land for over a thousand generations and are still caring for it to this very day.

We wish to acknowledge them as traditional owners and to pay our respects to their elders, past and present, as well as the elders from other communities who may be here today and as well as Rev. Thompson, elders, leaders and members of this church that continue to care for these lands and her communities.

This church service is a safe place for all people to worship regardless of race, creed, age, cultural background or sexual orientation

Let us Pray

We pray for all who come to worship today:

- for those who lead worship;
- for those who are worshipping for the first time;
- for those who come more out of habit than conviction;
- for those considering their vocation;
- for those for whom faith has become a struggle;
- and for those unable to get to a service today.

Lord, surround each one of them – of us – with your grace, your truth, and your love.

Amen

Hymn/song

TIS 414 There's a spirit in the air - Wren

Welcome

- Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of not doing what they teach.
- He tells the crowd and his disciples that they have but one teacher, and one Father in heaven.
- Those who exalt themselves will be humbled; the humble will be exalted.

This week's resources explore: looking good – being good: speaking the truth; honest living.

Let us Pray

Gracious God,
as, together, we come to you today,
we acknowledge our mixed emotions
and our differing gifts and needs.

May a desire to serve unite us.

May the truth of the gospel encourage us.

And may the example of your Son inspire us.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Readings

New Testament 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13
Gospel Matthew 23:1–12 (Video) <https://youtu.be/uTUjO6ghUv4>

1 Thessalonians 2:9–13

⁹ Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

¹³ And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. ⁱⁱ

respond

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn/song/video

In Christ Alone - Stuart Getty/Keith Townend

We say Sorry

Forgive us, loving God:

when we trumpet our good deeds,
and show off to impress others;
when we sacrifice integrity for popularity;
when we seek attention more than we seek you.

Give us a quiet confidence that has no need to boast,
and that puts integrity before success,
so that we may be people of depth and honesty,
to your glory.

Amen.

Hymn/Song

P&W 657/SCE 436/SOF 475/Vineyard Refiner's Fire Doerksen

Response

The Difference Between Looking Good And Being Good
Matthew 23:1-12

There is a huge difference between looking good and being good.

A study has found that on a bad hair day,
we feel less smart, less capable, more embarrassed, and less sociable.

And ... its men, not women that are most affected by bad hair days.ⁱⁱⁱ

[Of course, some of us men no longer have to worry about bad hair days.]

Other research asked this question,

"Which member of your family is the best looking?"

The top answer in the poll was, "Me."
 the smartest, the answer was "Me".
 Paradoxically, which family member was most likely to tell a lie?
 "Myself" or "Me" only ranked ninth out of ten possible answers.
 So - most of us think that we are better-looking, smarter, and more honest
 than the rest of our family. (2)

The Pharisees were supposed to be the best people in the land.
 Following God's commands was the focus of their lives as well as everyone else's.
 Nothing wrong with that.
 But, In their desperate desire to obey God's laws,
 they begin piling on more and more rules
 that a Jew must follow to be considered righteous.

Jesus' view for a life of faith was quite different.
FOR ONE THING, THE PHARISEES VALUED RULES OVER RELATIONSHIPS.

The Pharisees were caught up in following the rules.
 And where there was no rules they made them to keep order.
 Jesus was passionate about establishing relationships.
 He taught about loving God and loving one's neighbour.
 He's saying to everyone,
 "Faith's not about rules; it's about a relationship.
 It's about falling passionately in love with God.
 And once you know God and love God,
 then a pure and holy life will be a result.
 The rules will come naturally." ^{iv}
 That's the promise of what happens when we are in a true relationship with God.

Be careful condemning the Pharisees though.
 We are so often guilty of the same thinking--substituting rules for relationships.
 There are still people today who believe that the Christian life
 is one of rules and regulations,
 rather than transformed living. (5)^v

THE PHARISEES' RELIGION ALSO VALUED APPEARANCES OVER AUTHENTICITY.

In other words, looking good was more important than doing good.
 Jesus said, "Everything they do is done for men to see:
 They make their phylacteries – the boxes they put on their heads - wide
 and the tassels on their garments long;
 they love the place of honour at banquets
 and the most important seats in the synagogues;
 they love to be greeted in the marketplaces
 and to have men call them "Rabbi."

There is an old Jewish folktale.
 The men of the city of Chelm decide that they must do something
 to prove their town's importance.
 So they choose the wisest man in town and name him "Chief Sage."
 None of the surrounding towns had a chief sage.
 Everyone agreed,

and so Moishe the tailor is chosen to be chief sage.
 To make Moishe, stand out they decide he must wear a pair of golden shoes.
 But as Moishe tramps through the streets of Chelm in his gold shoes,
 he steps right into a mud puddle and makes them all dirty.

The men of Chelm decide to craft a pair of leather shoes
 To cover Moishe's golden shoes and protect them from mud.
 But now the leather shoes cover up the golden shoes.
 How will anyone know that Moishe is the town's chief sage
 if they can't see his golden shoes?

Finally, the men of the town come to a solution:
 Moishe will wear the golden shoes on his hands.
 Now, if any outsider wants to know who Chelm's wisest man is,
 they can point to the fellow who wears gold shoes on his hands.^{vi}

Be careful if you laugh at the people in that story.
 We also live in a society where appearance is everything.

In today's reading

The Pharisees were following the directions laid down in Deuteronomy 11: 18
 And wore small leather boxes called phylacteries on their wrists and foreheads.

These phylacteries contained verses of Scripture in them.

Unfortunately, some of the Pharisees began wearing larger and larger phylacteries,
 as if to show that they were even more religious than their colleagues.

The Pharisees did the same thing with the tassels they wore
 at the corners of their garments.

A fierce competition developed over who wore the longest tassels on his robes.

AND FINALLY, THE PHARISEES' RELIGION VALUED "RESPECTABILITY" OVER RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Remember Jesus' words in verse 6:

"...they love the place of honour at banquets
 and the most important seats in the synagogues;
 they love to be greeted in the marketplaces
 and to have men call them "Rabbi."

Some of the Pharisees were using their religious position as a status symbol.

A young girl announced to her father that God was calling her to serve as a missionary in Uganda.
 At first, he refused to let her go.

Uganda is a very dangerous place for Christians. he said.

2 years later, the young woman did finally set out.

As the father watched her plane rise into the sky, he commented
 he had wanted his daughter to be a respectable Christian--not a real one. (8)^{vii}

What makes the difference between a respectable Christian and a real one

And are they mutually exclusive?

Jesus makes that very distinction in verses 11 and 12:

"The greatest among you will be your servant.
 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled,
 and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Jesus never wore fancy robes with long tassels.

He hung out with outcasts and sinners, not with the movers and shakers.

Instead of expecting the place of honour at banquets,
 Jesus took the place of the lowest servant and washed his disciples' feet.
 "Respectable" members of society got nervous when Jesus entered the room.
 He didn't play by their rules.
 But Jesus wasn't trying to abolish the Law of Moses.
 He was trying to go beyond it,
 to show people the need for living in a true relationship with God.

Here is a story about two famous Brothers David and John Livingstone.
 John dreamed of being rich and famous. David dreamed of following Christ.
 Both boys achieved their goals.
 John Livingstone became rich and famous.
 David Livingstone became a medical missionary to Africa.
 He was never rich, although he did become famous
 as one of the best-known missionaries of the 19th century.

In his later years, he was offered the chance to return to England as a hero
 to bask in the admiration of the people!
 Instead, David chose to remain in Africa, till he died.
 Both brothers lived out their dreams.
 And yet, on John Livingstone's tomb are engraved these words:
 "Here lies the brother of David Livingstone." ^{viii}

"The greatest among you will be your servant.
 For whoever exalts themselves will be humbled,
 And whoever humbles themselves will be exalted.

Hymn/song

SCE 348/AOV/ATN 95/TIS 607/SOF 381 Make me a channel of your peace Temple

Offering

OFFERTORY SENTENCE:

Sometimes it is difficult to comprehend
 what good might come from what we give.
 We might think that what we give has little impact,
 but as we give today,
 hold on to this thought
 all things work for good with those who love God.

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

**Ever-giving God,
 take these good gifts
 and turn them into good deeds
 and great acts of service.**

Amen

Notices

Prayers for all people

Consider

- *Who do you most respect and look up to?*
- *What qualities inspire you the most?*
- *Pray for all whose lives are role models in our world, and especially for those who inspire you.*

Lord, grant us:

courage to speak the truth when it is uncomfortable;
 grace to live quietly when we would like to be noticed;
 perseverance to do ordinary tasks well,
 rather than to seek glory in the spectacular;
 confidence to entrust our strengths and weaknesses to you;
 integrity to pray as we can, not as we think we ought to;

and the joy of knowing that

no praise, no privilege, no position

matter more than being surrounded

by your love and faithfulness every day.

We pray for those

who are considered to be great in our world
 all who have power and influence over others
 that they may have serving hearts:

hearts that speak up for the poor, and not flatter the rich;

hearts that embrace unity, and not enforce division;

hearts that would free justice, and not imprison truth;

hearts that would respect all creation, and not destroy her riches;

that your kingdom may come,

and your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

**Your kingdom come, your will be done
 on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

**Save us from the time of trial,
 and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever.**

AMEN^{ix}

Hymn/song

Come people of the Risen Christ

We are sent out

Look to the good of others,
 be great at giving encouragement,
 and bless as you are blessed.

In Jesus' name.
 Amen.

May the Lord bless us
 and keep us
 May His face shine upon us
 and be gracious to us
 May he lift up His countenance upon us
 and give us peace

Benediction

Make Me Like You - The Witness Musical (Steve and Tim Archer)

Thank you

ⁱ © Copyright 2002-2020, ROOTS for Churches Ltd. All rights reserved. Print ISSN: 2040-4832 and 1477-0555; Online ISSN: 2635-2818.

ⁱⁱ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱⁱ Emphasis, Nov/Dec 2001, p. 32.

^{iv} Contributed by Michele Miller, Reader's Digest, Nov. 88, p. 16.

^v 5. Richard Exley. Deliver Me (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), pp. 84-85

^{vi} Josepha Sherman. Rachel the Clever and Other Jewish Folktales (Little Rock: August House Publishers, Inc., 1993), pp. 147-149.

^{vii} 8. Robert H. Spain, How to Stay Alive (Nashville: Dimensions, 1992), p. 13.

^{viii} Michael P. Green, Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House, 1989). Cited in Tommy Barnett. Adventure Yourself (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2000), pp. 131-132.

^{ix} English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988