

Bad Religion

WHEN FAITH LOSES FOCUS

Corresponds to the 5/7/23 sermon

Matthew 23:25-28


Big Idea: Jesus' call is a call to character - to tend to the inward parts of our soul, not just its outward appearance

GETTING STARTED

If you could have any superpower, but it had to be related to cleaning or tidying, what would it be?

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Read the following Scriptures together and then use the questions below (or any you wish to add) to discuss the text and unpack its meaning.

 Have someone in your group read **Matt. 23:25-28**

- How does Jesus describe the Pharisees and religious leaders in Matthew 23:27-28? What is the source of their hypocrisy?
- What does it mean to clean the outside of the cup while leaving the inside dirty?
- What does it mean to be like whitewashed tombs?

GETTING PRACTICAL

1. Where have you seen hypocrisy displayed in the church?
2. How can we cultivate **authenticity** and integrity in our relationships with others and with God?
3. Do you think everyone is prone to hypocrisy? Why or why not?
4. What is the difference between personal and private devotion? How can we cultivate a greater amount of personal devotion?

TAKING IT HOME

This week is all about an inward-out change. Spend some time reflecting on how you can be transformed from the inside out. Here is a scripture and prayer to get you started.

Psalm 139:23–24

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!

²⁴And see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting!

Prayer

Search my heart, Lord, and reveal to me any areas of my life that are not aligned with your will. Show me where I have strayed from your path and give me the courage to make the necessary changes.

Forgive me for any sins or shortcomings and help me to turn away from behaviors or attitudes that are not pleasing to you. Help me to live a life that reflects your love, grace, and truth, and to be a witness to others of your transformative power, Amen.