

Weightier Matters

Matthew 23:23-24 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!"

It's a passage that has meant so much, especially during my years of preaching, because it's the bedrock of how we think and therefore act. Jesus had a mess before Him. They neglected the more important issues, and acted hypocritically without reasons (Leviticus 11:4 & 41 restricted the eating of both camel and gnat by the way!). I've seen variations of this among religious folk play out time and again in my life.

Four kinds of religious individuals:

- Those who neglect all of them.
- Those who neglect mint, dill, and cumin.
- Those who neglect justice, mercy, and faithfulness.
- Those who embrace both while acknowledging a distinction.

Four personal observations of each kind:

- This group won't leave due to a fear of hell or parental disapproval.
 - They don't necessarily cause waves, but aren't helpful or taken seriously.
- This group is known for its kindness and service, but many times lacks depth.
 - This creates shallow disciples. This is why many are looking for decisive preaching.
- This group is known for its knowledge and commitment, but lacks the ability to inspire.
 - This group creates brutal disciples, if any, and pushes seekers to indecisive preaching.
- This group attracts seekers because of its depth and its ability to inspire genuine transformation.
 - This group doesn't major in the minor because of their thorough knowledge, leading to service.

The reason for such a lesson?

- *Your personal* understanding of God and His word will impact you, but into what? You can have a healthy or unhealthy view. You can have an ignorant or informed understanding. The problem isn't with God or His word - it's with your handling of it. This dictates what you want to study, what motivates you, and the fruit you bear (or don't bear).

Do you . . .

- Know how to answer Jesus' greatest question?
- Understand how to prioritize the sum of God's word?
- Notice what kind of issues Jesus and the apostles focused on?
- Take note of the kind of questions the religious leaders asked Jesus.
- Recall the kind of actions that consistently impressed Jesus?
- Make disciples that mold into the image of Jesus?
- Mold into the image of Jesus every day?