

Jesus warns us to beware the scribes. Those who are experts in following all of the rules. It is not just that they need to be on the lookout for them. It's not just a warning that the scribes are not great religious leaders, but people to be avoided. It is that they need to be on constant alert that they themselves do not turn into them. This is one of the most common temptations that we can have as Christians. Some of us are tempted to fall off the wagon and walk away from Jesus and chasing our sin. Some of us are tempted to walk away from Jesus by walking further into legalism and self righteousness. And we can think that we're following Jesus because of how awesome we are but we are in fact, becoming like the scribes and the Pharisees.

This morning in Luke 20:45-21:9 Jesus gives us three ways we can avoid becoming like the scribes and Pharisees.

#### Point 1: **Beware the greater condemnation (20:45-47)**

By condemnation, I mean the judgment that will come for sinners who do not repent. Because not all sins are equal.

This is a mistake and idea that sometimes we can get.

Now there is some nuance here, All sin is wrong.

It all, even the smallest violates God standard of justice and righteousness.

And as our cubbies learned this last week, all sin makes us fall short of God's glory.

And it makes us worthy of judgment.

However, there is the reality that some sins deserve more judgment than others.

Lying on your taxes to save a few hundred dollars is a sin.

Murdering a child is a sin and it is worse.

Here Jesus wants us to be sure that we can avoid the greater condemnation and the greater judgment that is coming.

And we see in verse 45 who Jesus is directing this to.

**"And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples"**

He no longer is talking to the scribes or to the religious leaders.

Now he is addressing his disciples.  
He is addressing those who are his followers.  
Because these are the people that need to be beware .

Verse 46

**"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts."**

Just look at that first part of the phrase.  
They are to beware of the scribes.  
This is where the title of the sermon comes from.

So, how does this happen?

Look at the rest of the verse they like to walk around in long robes.  
Now we don't know exactly what these robes are.  
They wear some kind of robe that lets everybody they see know who they are.  
And they love the attention that comes from wearing it.

And they are doing this pridefully.  
They are doing this because they like to be known as scribes.  
Now we might do something similar not even realize it.  
This is actually pretty common today.  
Most every American likes to wear things that express something about who we are.  
We wear clothes that proclaim which team we root for.  
And we often wear clothes proclaim Jesus.  
A cross or distinctly Christian imagery or words on them.  
Not necessarily something wrong with that.  
But we do have to be where that we do not become like the scribes.  
That we don't wear a shirt even that just says Jesus loves you because we want everyone to see that we are someone who loves Jesus.  
This kind of attitude leads to a greater condemnation to the person who wears something offensive.

They also **love to be greeted in the marketplace.**

They love to be seen and noticed and people to say hello teacher teacher. Hello Pastor hello Rabbi.

They want that honor and that comes from their position.

They want to be the one that everybody comes up to when they walk into the room.

They love the best seats in the synagogue, and the place of honor at feasts.

They want glory for themselves.

We've talked a little about how there's a kind of jockeying for power that goes on at meal time.

That where you sat when you were the guest in someone's home revealed to everybody your status.

It proclaimed something about who you were.

And it's not just that it was nice to be honored, they loved it

They did not love honoring and uplifting others they love to be honored and uplifted themselves.

The problem is also what they are doing .

Looking verse 47 **"who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."**

They make a show of their righteousness.

While they like to pretend to be religious, moral people.

They are committing evil. They are devouring the homes of widows.

Listen, one of the marks of really being a follower of Jesus is how you treat who have nothing to offer you.

Your religiousness is not revealed by what you do publicly when everyone is watching, but what you do when no one else.

Your holiness is revealed by how you treat the widows, the orphan refugee, the illegal, immigrant the homeless.

And what we see here is that describes who pretend to be righteous are lying.

They walk into the synagogue to worship God walk around town being seen as righteous and then they go home and they make plans on how they can steal a widow's house and profit from her pain.

He uses the word of devouring them.

It is meant to give us the image of their greed, and their wickedness literally consuming the week.

And while they do this, they also pretend to love God in their prayers.

Notice it tells us that their prayers are long.

They want to be seen as those who have lots to say.

Their prayers are filled with the names of God, or with great theological statements.

They pray for a long time, not because they have people that they care about to pray for,

Not because it is flowing out of their hearts,

But because they want others to see them as people who pray great prayers.

If we are not careful, we can fall into this trap.

We may be tempted to throw things in our prayers so that people think of us.

It is not about praying long or short, but with a pure heart.

And we need to beware.

But we would be mistaken in thinking that Jesus is only asking us to avoid these specific things.

That, as long as we don't pray, too long, and pray with the wrong heart, and as long as we don't take advantage of widows, then we're good we're not becoming like them.

Jesus is trying to teach us a principal.

Jesus is trying to keep us from becoming particular kind of person.

Jesus does not want us to be like those who pretend to follow Jesus but I only using as cover.

Because the people who live these kind of ways will face a greater condemnation.

They will face more judgment.

When they stand before Jesus one day,  
they will face a worse time in hell than others..

We've seen Jesus say things like this, when he warn some of the towns that he works miracles in that because they have rejected Jesus, they're going to face a harsher judgment than Sodom and Gomorrah.

Jesus saying the same thing here.

Those who pretended they follow Jesus to cover their evil will face judgment.

The people who will be punished the worst and judge harsher.

We're going to be those who claimed to follow Jesus, not those who wanted nothing to do with him.

They're gonna have to face judgment too.

They will have to face justice for rejecting the salvation that was offered to them through Christ.

But they will not be judged as harshly as those who came up and preached every single week, and then went and abused women and children.

They will not be judged as harshly, as those who told everyone that they were Christians and then robbed others.

And all of us need to be careful.

We need to beware that we don't just sit here and think yes, God go get them.

We need to be aware that we do not become those people.

Because the transformation happens slowly.

It does not happen all at once.

All of our ordinary daily decisions or steps, we take on a path.

And we are either walking alongside Jesus, following in his footsteps, slowly being transformed more and more into his likeness. Or we are walking away from Him, and slowly being transformed into the likeness of the scribes.

Point 2: **Give the greater gift (21:1-4)**

Here we move from the discussion about what scribes have been doing wrong, and how we avoid them and God instead gives us a positive example.

Verse one of chapter 21 **"Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box,"**

Jesus is watching people as they put money into the offering . And mostly it seems that he is watching the rich give their money. He is watching Person after Person with affluence come and give their money in the offering box.

He is watching how they all behave.

And he notices someone who stands out.

All of the rich and those with money keep coming when someone comes who has nothing. **A poor widow** with her offering.

Now, they didn't have checks back them so it's a little more obvious how much money people are putting in.

You can tell by the coins and also the amount of the coins.

Somebody comes with a big bag versus one coin it's a little more clear who has money.

Jesus notices that she **put in two small copper coins.**

She put a tiny amount of money.

She basically puts in nothing.

A significant coin would be like the denarius which is one days wage for the average worker.

You need 128 at the small copper coins for them to be one days wage.

You could probably go ahead and just two pennies that is about what she puts in.

And when Jesus sees this, he praises her .  
He wants everyone to stop and look at this woman .

What stand out to me is that Jesus says this publicly in her hearing.  
Jesus does not just talk about a random widow, that he saw he was talking about this widow.

Jesus honors her publicly.

Everyone else have been looking may have thought to themselves that's cute. She's trying to give something to you.

But Jesus wants everyone to stop and acknowledge that what she has given us significant.

We often do this when people give big gifts don't we?

If a company or family or foundation gives a large donation they might have a really big check and will call the newspaper and take pictures or put it on Facebook and put it online.

Everyone can see the significant donation that has been given.

That's what Jesus does.

Jesus is calling the paper.

He's pulling out a big check and he's saying honor this one because look she has given the biggest donation today.

And it's not just that she is given more money than those other people that have come she has given more money than all of them put together.

Why? Because verse four **"For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."**

Those people were giving out of their abundance and their leftovers, but the woman gave all she had.

She gave out of her poverty.

Like most widows at this time, she lives in poverty.

She might be lucky if she has a place to live.

These two coins are all she has in her bank account.

They might be all the own.

And she comes, and she gives them to God.

There's two things here I think we're meant to see.

One of the things I think Jesus wants to show us the sin of the scribes again.

Here in their midst is a widow with nothing and she is giving things to God. Here is someone that they should provide for.

Here is someone that they should care for and love.

This should not be all that she has.

But it is because the religious elite are taking advantage of her and all of her money while they themselves don't give very much.

But also because this widow deserves to be honored, and she deserves to be emulated and held up as an example for us to follow.

And it also serves as a judgment of those in charge of the temple.

She really is giving the great gift.

She gives all that she has.

This is kind of the principle for how we can give the greater gift.

You give the greater gift by giving something that's costly.

True Jesus filled Christ generosity isn't tied to an amount, and it's not tied to percentage.

Because a billionaire giving 10% is a ton of money. But it doesn't hurt the same as somebody in poverty giving 10% of all that they have.

And this woman gives everything.

She is going to go because of what she brought to God.

She will experience real suffering and discomfort, because of what she has given God.

Now we often praise the people who give big gifts.

And it's good.

It's not that it's a bad thing to give a lot of money.

But God wants us to know that in the kingdom of God, those who give what cost are those who are giving the most.

So our gifts should be costly gifts. It should hurt.

It should be a sacrifice and a struggle.



We shouldn't just give what we have left in our pockets.  
We should give NOT out of our abundance.

But giving out of our abundance, is how many of us approach giving.  
We spend our money on ourselves.  
We take care of our bills are obligations or responsibilities, and also the things we want to spend money on.  
And then we look at what we have left over our abundance and we decide what we're gonna give. We should just give.

Followers of Jesus should have lifestyle of living than those who aren't.  
We should be a kind of people who intentionally don't have the kind of houses we could have because we want to give more.  
We should be people who don't drive the kind of cars that we could drive because we want to give more.  
We should be the kind of people who don't have everything that we wish that we could have because we're too busy giving what we do have away.

That is the greater gift.

I don't just mean what you put in the offering box back here at Tanglewood.

I mean what you give to the kingdom of God.

I mean what you give to missionaries who are serving to proclaim the Gospel all over the globe.

I mean what you give to the many nonprofits, who are being the hands, and the feet of Jesus, and meeting the real, tangible need of the poor and the widow, and the orphan and the unborn in our community.

I mean the money that you give to the homeless man on the side of the road you're really not sure if he's gonna use it right or not.

All of those times we give that money when we give it costly and generously it's going to God and his kingdom.

Some of us are going to need to be convicted.

Some of us might need to hear that.

Wow, the amount we give seems like a lot of money it really isn't because it's not costly.

So some of us need to be convicted.

Some of us need to recognize that our gift is not quite as good as we think that it is.

Others of us need to be encouraged.

Because if you were like this widow.

When you give it does not feel like very much.

When you put your two small coins in the box, you almost feel ashamed that you have so little to give.

And you wish you could give more but you don't have anything. Because of your life circumstances or where you are.

If that's you, I want you to see is the Jesus sees you.

You are giving the greater gift it seems like nothing to you is everything to God.

Because when you give a costly gift, it is a great gift to God.

You were small, ordinary obedience is not unseen and it is not an important.

So don't wish you could be like others.

We need to wish that we could be like you.

Give the greater gift by giving something that's costly.

Point number 3: **Look to the greater temple (21:5-9).**

Jesus looks at the temple.

Jesus wants them to take their eyes off of the temple, made out of bricks and stone and look to the temple made out of flesh and blood.

And look at verse five. **"And while some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, he said"**

He overhears their conversation, talking about the beauty and the wonder of the temple.

You might remember that this is the second temple.

And when Herod built it, he restored it and made it even greater than it had been before.

They adored it with massive stones that were impressive to look at.

You might remember when we talked about the grapevine that was made out of gold that would be filled with peoples offerings and gold, berries, and gold leaves.

And they were proud of this temple.

They were excited about its beauty and about what it represented.

Because the temple to them is not just a simple church building.

It is much more.

I mean, the temple is the heart of their religious life.

It is where the sacrifices take place.

It is where the holy of holies and God's presence uniquely rested.

But it is also more than that.

It is their national pride.

It is a symbol not just of their God, but of their nation.

It might be helpful for you, when you think of the temple.

Don't think of it just in terms of like a cathedral, or our religious center.

Picture instead the White House, or the Washington Monument, or the capital building.

It is something that they viewed in a way that we viewed those buildings.

They represent us as a nation and there's a pride in having them and seen them.

And Jesus wants tell them after the right perspective.

In verse six, **“As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”**

**H**e tells him it's all going away.

All of the stuff that they love about this temple will fade.

Every single stone, that they are amazed by will be knocked down.

And all of those proud stones, those wonderful offerings all the stuff that they look at and see, will be dust.

We might wonder why Jesus is saying this.

He isn't saying it just to predict the future.

He is not telling him this, just so that they can know when 70 A.D. when the temple gets destroyed that Jesus says I told you so.

Jesus is trying to do something different.

He wants them to know this temple wasn't meant to be here forever.

Because the temple was built to teach people how to worship, and to prepare them, for what worship was going to become.

The temple was built to shadow, the true temple that would come in the future.

The temple was unique, because it is the place where God's presence was, and it was only here.

And if you wanna come into God's presence, and you need to come to this temple.

But now Jesus is himself in his body, the true temple of God.

Jesus is the incarnate God.

Jesus is the greater temple.

And now that Jesus is here they do not need this temple in the stones anymore they have him.

The temple was great and served a wonderful purpose and its time is over.

We don't need it anymore we have Jesus.

It's a naturally they ask the question in verse seven when is this gonna happen?

They want to know how they can tell it's about to happen.

They want to be able to be prepared for when that day comes.

Almost always when it comes to prophecy.

When it comes to eschatology in Jesus telling us about what is coming in the future, we want to know when.

We want to know how to be prepared.

We want to know so that we can look for the right things when we turn on the news and we read the newspaper we pay attention to what is happening in the world.

But Jesus never answers that.

At least he doesn't answer at the way that we wish that he would.

He vaguely answers it and he side steps it.

Not because he doesn't know the answer but because we don't need to know the answer.

The most important part of eschatology.

Or at least what you and I need to know about the end is not what is going to come, but how we are supposed to act now.

We don't need to know when things are going to happen we need to know how we're supposed to act when they do happen.

So that is what Jesus is focused on in his answer.

Jesus tells them what they need to know.

Verse eight, **"And he said, "See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is at hand!' Do not go after them."**

He doesn't want them to be let astray.

He does not want them to get sidetracked or get off mission.

Because there are many people who are going to come, in the name of Jesus.

There will even be those who come and claim to be Jesus.

This happened after Jesus came, and this continues to happen even on our day.

And you will always find stories and documentaries about culture bring up or people claim to be Jesus and people believe them.

Of course, all of us here in this room are way too smart to fall for any of that. We would never be led astray.

No, we don't fall for people who claim to Jesus.  
We just fall for people who claim to speak for Jesus.

We get fooled all the time people claim they are teaching us the truth.  
About God or are using the name of Jesus for their own agenda we get  
lead astray by those people.

I think this happens, especially when we take our eyes off Jesus.  
We act just like the people in that temple there this morning who had God  
in front of them, and instead were looking at some pretty rocks.  
We are distracted by the good things instead of the best thing.

Jesus also warns us to not listen to the people who tell us the time is  
coming.

If somebody starts telling you that they know when Jesus is going to  
return, and they are setting a date to be ready.

Jesus tell you to ignore them.

But Jesus is also telling us to ignore anytime someone says the time is  
close.

This is the part we sometimes forget.

Because we get that we aren't supposed to listen to the person who tells  
us that Jesus is coming on Friday.

But we do fall for the person who tells us oh this war that's happening in  
Israel right now means the time is hand.

Jesus says, ignore both of those.

That we should not listen to people who are obsessed always telling us at  
the end is coming.

Instead look to Jesus.

The other thing Jesus tells us to do is to not be terrified in verse nine.

**"And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for these  
things must first take place, but the end will not be at once."**

He tells us don't worry.

And he's telling them to not worry when there is war.

He tells them not to worry when those that they love ones are killed, and their home is taken from them.

He told us not to be terrified.

That it does not have to shake us.

And that we can trust because some things have to take place.

Many terrible things will happen in the world before Jesus returns.

You do not have to be terrified.

Because God is in control.

And you don't know what his plan is.

You don't know how will work out.

You do not know when it will work out.

But you can trust that God is doing something.

And we have to know that the end isn't gonna come all at once.

Some things take time.

Again, the point of what Jesus was saying, here is to get them to look past the temple, and to Jesus.

And for us need to be willing to look past, what's in front of us and look to Jesus.

Remember, Jesus is giving them truly terrible news.

The destruction of the temple leads to a massive spiritual crisis for the Jews. And it's one that they are still deeply impacted by.

Jesus is telling them that everything is gonna fall apart, but not to be terrified and it's gonna be OK.

And it's going to be OK because what is coming is even better than what was.

This is what we need to hold onto as we look to the better temple.

We don't know what is coming. Wars and turmoil.

Our entire country could collapse. I don't think it's going to, but it could.

That would be traumatic.

But Jesus is, encouraging us, said even even if that could happen. Even if the worst thing that you could imagine for you or for your people or for your nation happens.

We do not have to be terrified because what is coming is going to be even better.

Jesus is a greater temple.

The kingdom of God is a much better nation.

And the world of Jesus is going to bring is a much better world.

So look to the better temple.

Don't fall into the trap of the scribes, who were so in love with what was here but they missed what was coming.

#### CONCLUSION:

We need to beware turning into the Scribes. Beware the greater condemnation. Give the greater gift. Look to the greater temple.

And we can only do this by embracing the gospel.

We cannot do it on our own and we need Jesus' grace again and again.

One of the central problems of scribes and Pharisees is that they think they can do things on their own strength.

They think if they try harder or follow the right rules, then they can be righteous holy people.

But it only comes through faith.

It only comes by acknowledging how much we need Jesus.

And if we are willing to embrace the gospel of Christ, He makes us clean.

And He will sustain us and transform us into becoming more and more like Christ.