

August 24, 2020

Self Serving Religion

Danger: Severe Punishment ahead

Mark 12:38-40

As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

As a pastor, I read these verses through that lens and let the Holy Spirit realign me accordingly. I am a teacher and a leader in the gathering place of God's children, so there is a parallel that leads to the ominous final words of this passage; "punished most severely."

However, the danger is real for any follower of Christ.

Having been redeemed by the blood, filled with the Spirit and brought into a relationship with the creator, we have some pretty cool stuff in our possession. It's better stuff than the world has.

Pride in my religion can lead me to think I'm better than another. Better than an unbeliever for sure, and even better than other Christians because I have or did or do ...(fill in the blank). This attitude of supremacy and the thought that my religion serves me must be dealt with and eliminated.

*John the Baptist serves as a great example as he says, "He must become greater, and I must become less. He established a following outside the temple unequalled at that time. He had many followers, friends, and fans. He also **refused** the flowing robes, the demands of respect, the places of honor and the opportunity for selfish gain.*

In the church today, may God's children be known for using the platform we have to serve others and to refuse gaining accolades for ourselves. May our religion truly be a relationship with God and with those around us that prioritizes them and not ourselves.