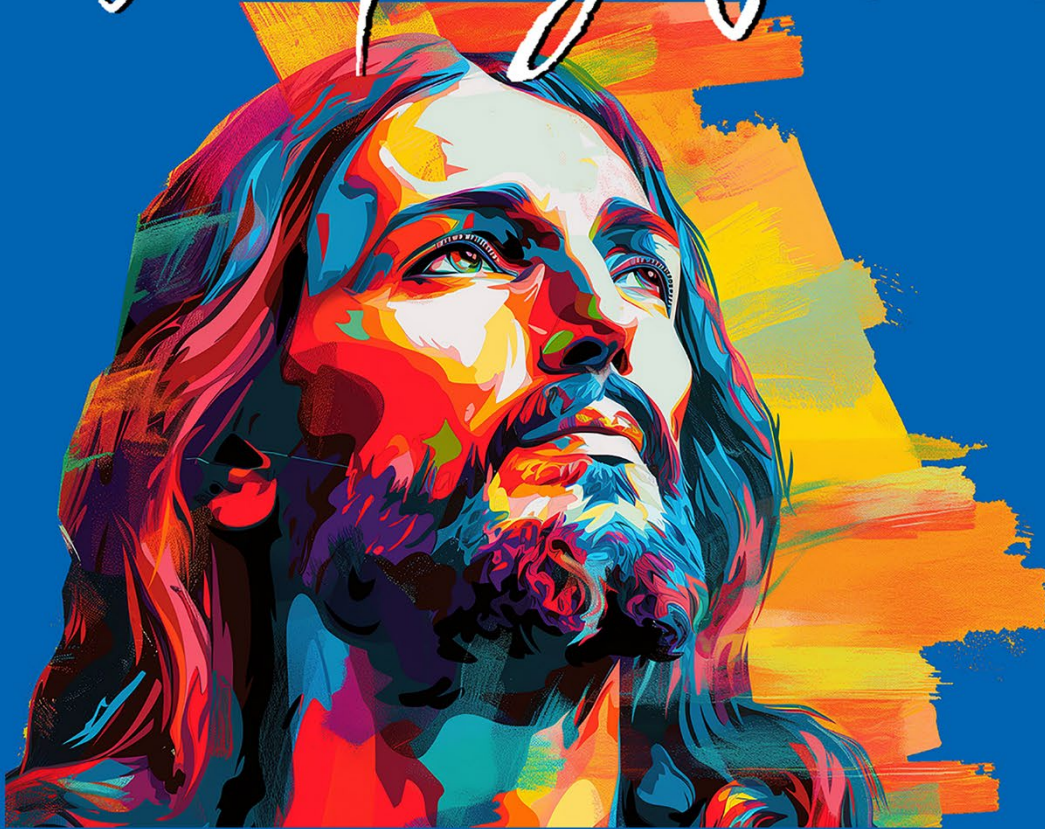


Finding Jesus



Embracing the Complete
Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

Study Guide

CHARLES S. STUART

Let's Just Imagine!

Let's just imagine what might happen in our family, community, church, nation, and world if all believers **KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH!** helped usher in the

When people embrace their role in the Kingdom of God here on earth, their **EYES, EARS, MIND, HANDS, FEET & VOICE** will be used to reflect their faith.

They will use their **EYES** to look for needs that are unmet, and to watch over those in positions of authority.

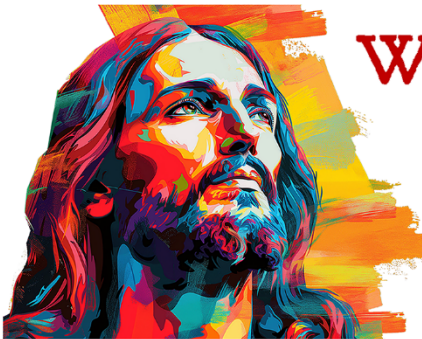
They will use their **EARS** to listen for the cries of those in pain, and to hear and address comments that demean those in need.

They will use their **MIND** to think of ways to get involved and to question for themselves what God would have them do for Him.

They will use their **HANDS** to do what is needed, remembering that it is through their hands that Jesus touches the "least of these."

They will use their **FEET** to go where needed...overseas, across the street or into the voting booth...to bring the Kingdom of God to those in need.

They will use their **VOICE** to speak up and out for those without a voice, and to hold those with power accountable to remember "the least of these" when making decisions.



**Wouldn't it be lovely to live
in a world like that!?!**

Charles Stuart

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About the Author.

Charlie Stuart was raised in the church by faithful, loving parents whose lives of service to “the others” inspired Charlie and his five siblings to purpose their lives to serve others, particularly the “least of these.”



Charlie has been active in the local church all his life serving as: Deacon, adult Bible study leader (20+ years), member of a pastor search committee and all the other committees in the local church.

Charlie graduated from the University of Florida in 1973 with an undergraduate degree in Marketing, with a focus on Economics. He worked in the family's office products company for 16 years and spent the following 20 years as a professional speaker, author, and consultant.

He also made time to volunteer for 25+ years with the YMCA as a local board member and on national task forces for the YMCA of the USA.

Charlie and his wife Barbara have three grown children and six grandchildren. They live in Orlando (College Park), Florida.

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Finding Jesus

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SEVENTH FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

Woe to you...

Foundational Truth.

VII. Woe to you...

Beware of False Teachings! *

Our focus here is drawn from Matthew 23. Jesus is outside the Temple talking with the crowd that includes 'scribes and Pharisees.'

A 'scribe' was an expert in the Law of Moses and the prophets. He interpreted what was said in the scriptures and commentaries by learned rabbis. The 'scribe' concentrated on the 'jot and tiddle' of the law, not the bigger, fuller picture of the spiritual applications. 'Pharisees' believed in resurrection of the dead and were also experts in the law and tradition.

23²"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; ³therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. ⁶They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces . . .

Matthew 23:2-7a ¹



This is a different teaching of Jesus. Here, Jesus is warning, in the strongest possible terms, the religious leaders who are pretending to be followers of Jesus but are, in fact, hypocrites, full of personal greed for power, status, and wealth.

* See page 110 for additional background.

1 Additional scriptural background found at Matthew 23:1-36.
Other versions found at Mark 12:37b-40 & Luke 20:45-47.

VII. Woe to you...

Meriam-Webster defines hypocrite as “a person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion; or a person who acts in contradiction to his or her stated beliefs or feelings.” We all know about being a hypocrite; if we are honest, we only need to glance in a mirror.

There are many types of hypocrites — political, parent, spouse, business, and religious. It’s bad enough to be of two-minds, or two-faced, when dealing with a child, a spouse, or at work; but it is something else entirely when we profess spiritual belief with one face and ignore or reject those beliefs with a second face. The consequences can be misleading and catastrophic at the same time.

These leaders taught falsely what they themselves would not do. Even worse, they used their position of control to make sure the people had no chance to rise beyond their oppressed state. All while puffing up their personal standing as superior to the very people they were meant to serve.

Jesus expects transparency and honesty of those who follow Him, and certainly for those in positions of leadership in His churches.

Jesus’ words in this passage fly from His lips, as someone has said, like claps of thunder and spears of lightning. Out of His mouth on this occasion came the most fearful and dreadful statements that Jesus uttered on earth.

The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* on Matthew 23

* From *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 16-23*. By John MacArthur. ©1988 Moody Publishers & John MacArther.

Foundational Truth.

David Platt, in a sermon preached on August 17, 2020, summarized how Jesus's 'Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!' might apply to us today.

It is possible for you and me to genuinely believe that we are doing God's work, obeying God's Word, and accomplishing God's will, yet to be deceived and to experience eternal damnation.

Let me say that again.

It is possible for you and me to genuinely believe that we are doing God's work, obeying God's Word, and accomplishing God's will, yet to be deceived and to experience eternal damnation.

Excerpt from a sermon preached by David Platt on August 17, 2020.

"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

23¹³ "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them.

Matthew 23:13

Woe to you church pastors, teachers, and those professing Christ but not following the Gospel of Jesus, you hypocrites!

Your false teaching keeps people out of heaven.

VII. Woe to you...

23¹⁴ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive greater condemnation. False teaching keeps people out of heaven. Matthew 23:14 +

Woe to you church pastors, teachers, and those professing Christ but not following the Gospel of Jesus, you hypocrites!

You use pious or arrogant teaching to take advantage of the "least of these."

23¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

Matthew 23:15

Woe to you church pastors, teachers, and those professing Christ but not following the Gospel of Jesus, you hypocrites!

Don't teach a soft, easy Gospel, teach the complete Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

+ This verse is not found in many original manuscripts of Matthew. It does appear in Mark 12:37b-40 & Luke 20:45-47.

Foundational Truth.

23 ¹⁶ "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.' ¹⁷ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? *(verses 18-22 omitted for brevity)*

Matthew 23:16-17

Woe to you church pastors, teachers, and those professing Christ but not following the Gospel of Jesus, you hypocrites!

Do not put wealth, greed, or anything before following the Gospel of Jesus.

23 ²³ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. ²⁴ You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

Matthew 23:23-24

Woe to you church pastors, teachers, and those professing Christ but not following the Gospel of Jesus, you hypocrites!

Stop concentrating on the inerrancy of scripture minutiae and legalism, instead teach loving others, doing good, and showing mercy and kindness for all.

VII. Woe to you...

23 ²⁵ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean. Matthew 23:25-26

Woe to you church pastors, teachers, and those professing Christ but not following the Gospel of Jesus, you hypocrites!

Stop wearing the mask of a clean, holy life when you are really hiding greed and selfish indulgence. Seek first the Kingdom of God on Earth for yourself and others you know.

23 ²⁷ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. ²⁸ So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Matthew 23:27-28

Woe to you church pastors, teachers, and those professing Christ but not following the Gospel of Jesus, you hypocrites!

Don't present a self-righteous or prideful facade. Let your light reveal your love of God as expressed by the Gospel of Jesus.

Foundational Truth.

23 ²⁹“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, ³⁰and you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ ³¹Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Matthew 23:29-31

Woe to you church pastors, teachers, and those professing Christ but not following the Gospel of Jesus, you hypocrites!

Don’t pretend you are more righteous than others. Be humble, pure of heart, showing mercy and compassion, obeying what Jesus said in the Gospel of Jesus.

23 ³³You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell? ³⁴Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, ³⁵so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, (rest of verse 35 omitted for brevity) ³⁶Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

Matthew 23:33 ~ 36

You snakes, you brood of vipers!

Stop persecuting others for their belief in the Gospel of Jesus. Fill your heart with what Jesus taught, leave no room for anger toward others or ridicule of what they believe.

VII. Woe to you...

CONCLUSION.

From the Hebrew to the Greek, 'woe to you' was an intense exclamation of preventable grief, a wailing against who is responsible for the grief. Use these synonyms for 'woe' and see how the meaning becomes even more pointed.

Anguish, Grief, Affliction, Distress, Sadness,
Despair, Misery, Calamity, Trouble, Trial

_____ to you *church pastors, teachers, and those
professing Christ but not following the Gospel of Jesus, you
hypocrites!*

While the "woes passages" speak to all people — they have special emphasis for religious leaders since they were addressed to them. The Temple leaders had destroyed and polluted the law — making it to be something far from God's original intention. No wonder Jesus was so angry!

Jesus did not say all these things lightly, but with deep sorrow and righteous anger. The 'scribes and Pharisees' had harmed His people; the ones He came to free.

Their teachings and actions were just wrong — and Jesus convicted them of it in no uncertain terms, so much so that they retaliated by conspiring to have the Romans crucify Him for "threatening Pax Romana."

It seems to me that we should take Jesus's
'woes' in Matthew 23 seriously.

Very seriously, indeed.

Don't you?

CHARLES STUART

Foundational Truth.

Where do you stand?

What application, if any, is there in these passages to today's Christian faith? Are any of us still in bondage to false leadership today?

Why do so many make it easy to claim to be a Christian? ("here's your ticket to heaven")

Too many ignore the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus. Why?

Why aren't believers aware that it's their responsibility to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth?

How is it that far too many who call themselves 'Christian' fail morally, pursue greed, power, and control more than pleasing and obeying Jesus?