

March 14, 2017
Isaiah 1:1-19
Matthew 23:1-12

Isaiah 1:1-19

How to live our lives.

At the time of Isaiah's prophesy, Judah was desolate, their cities burned. The people had lost their way to the Lord. They did not know or consider that they owed their lives and comforts to God's fatherly care. Wickedness was becoming common among the people. There is a comparison of a diseased body to the people of Judah, similar to those of Sodom and Gomorrah. The people were resorting to pagan ways and offerings. But God would not accept this. There is hope. "Though your sins may be scarlet, they may become white as snow." How can this be? He says, "Wash yourself clean; cease doing evil and do what is good; redressed those you have wronged; take care of widows and orphans. If you do these things, you will not perish."

Matthew 23:1-12

Our reading from the Gospel explains how the scribes and Pharisees explained the law of Moses and enforced obedience to it. And they are charged with hypocrisy of religion. They prescribed the rules, placed heavy burdens upon the people, demanded respect and flattered themselves with fancy vestments and headgear, but did not follow their own rules. Jesus tells his followers that to call them Rabbi is a ruse, for there is only one teacher, Christ, and one Father, God, who is our master. In summary, Jesus tells us, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Reflection questions:

Why did Isaiah warn people to change their ways? How could they have done this?
Using the scribes and Pharisees as poor role models of practicing your faith, how does Jesus expect us to be?

Lenten reflection by Deacon Steve Grandfield.