

## Fall Semester 2017 – Devotion #5 – Matthew 23:2-3

*The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell. But do not do everything they do, for they do not practice what they preach.*



Dear Friends & Family of St. John's and True North

My wife and I belong to two different fitness centers. She has one on the way to/from work. I have one closer to home. Hers allows her to bring in a guest so I get the best of two places. The picture above is from this summer as I was thinking about some devotional topics. It was later in the evening (I usually work out early in the morning) and I was mulling over the theme of Planet Fitness. It states it's a judgment free zone. Along with that you'll notice how there are "no critics". They stand by that to the point where they have a big red alarm called the "lunk alarm" or something similar because they want their fitness center to be a place for the everyday person.

While I was exercising, I noticed their long string of televisions. One program was highlighting the verbal bashing going on between Conor McGregor and Floyd Mayweather. No judgments, no critics on that TV. Then there was a program with a gal trying on wedding dresses and people bashing her tastes. No judgments, no critics on that TV. On another was a statement about one of the Trump children being an idiot. No judgments, no critics on that TV either. Then there was the baking reality show a person said something to the effect that baked sawdust would be better than the cupcake they just tasted. No judgments, no critics on that TV either. In fact as I went down the row of TV after TV every program was all about critics and judgment. I've always wanted to see the "lunk alarm" go off so I thought of telling the person behind the desk there was a need because they advertise this "no critics" and "judgment free zone" and look at what all the TVs had on them. Jeopardizing my ride home wasn't worth an attempt at the flashing red light.

Why the long story? Our Savior sought to save individuals who could be hypocrites. The messages on the TVs in Planet Fitness were very hypocritical. In Matthew 23 he addresses the crowd in regards to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. We see Jesus address them in other parts of Scripture too. Here is a good summary of what their main issue is, they don't practice what they preach. They didn't see the need for the Savior who they would read about. They emphasized their own rules that they forgot to examine God's Word and their hearts and see their desperate need of a Savior because their hearts were corrupted with sin.

With the ministries we have with True North and St. John's we have to remember neither ministry is perfect. As sinners we are very good at being hypocrites. Others hear we are Christians. They hear that from our mouths. And then they hear the things we say about others. Often what we say can be very degrading. Think about how many times the "lunk alarm" should be sounded on us. That's just one area in our life. Oh what a wrestling match it is between sinner and saint. That's why we always need to go to the one who came to save. We also need to admit to those we meet that we aren't perfect, that we do sin, and that we do need our Savior's constant reminder to watch how we conduct of life. One of the gifts of how we do that is through one another. God gives us brothers and sisters in Christ to point us to our Savior and also help when we are acting in a sinful manner. May the Lord helps us in that work.

The Lord's blessings on your week!

Pastor Lindner

