



**April 11, 2024**

**Social Time**

**Thanks to those who brought Treats!**

**Bible Study Business**

**Music – led by Lisa Scholterback**

- ELW 606 - *Our Father We Have Wandered*
- ELW 590 - *Salvation Unto Us has Come*
- ELW 627 - *O Day Full of Grace*

**Prayer Requests and Update Prayer List**

**Opening Prayer**

**Bible Study – Matthew 23:1-28**

1. Why is Jesus so angry with the Pharisees?
2. The Pharisees were so caught up in trying to impress each other with their piety that they missed the point. What should they have focused on?
3. What caution does this passage have for us?

**Book Discussion – *What's So Amazing about Grace?* by Philip Yancy, Chapter 15 & 16**

4. What is legalism?
5. Where have you encountered legalism?
6. What makes aspects of legalism appealing?
7. On P. 205 Yancy says, "Jesus' critique centered on what legalism does to the law-keeper: it forces feelings of pride and competition." How might this happen?
8. On p. 206 he explains, "Jesus took an altogether different approach to sin. Rather than ranking sins as more significant or less significant, he raised his listener's sights to a perfect God, before whom all of us are sinners. We all fall back on the grace of God." Do you agree?
9. In what ways does legalism corrupt grace?
10. On p. 207 Yancy writes, "The spiritual games we play, many of which begin with the best of motives, can perversely lead us away from God, because they lead us away from grace. Repentance, not proper behavior or even holiness, opens the door to grace. And the opposite of sin is grace, not virtue." Can you think of any examples of this?

11. On p. 208 Yancy quotes Martin Luther describing his struggle with legalism.  
How do you think Luther’s experience shaped the Lutheran Church?
12. Why is legalism so destructive to the life of faith?
13. Read the last paragraph on p. 210. Which is harder – legalism or freedom in Christ. Why?
14. What did you think about the story of Big Harold? – Have you known anyone like this?
15. What do you think of Yancy’s conclusion to chapter 15, “The solution to sin is not to impose ever-stricter code of behavior. It is to know God.”

**For Next Time – Read Chapters 17 & 18**

**Birthdays**

**Closing Prayer, Lord’s Prayer**

**Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Chapter(s)</b>	<b>Title(s)</b>
April 11	15 & 16	Grace Avoidance Big Harold: A Story
April 18	17 & 18	Mixed Aroma Serpent Wisdom
April 25	19 & 20	Patches of Green Gravity and Grace Concludes <i>What’s so Amazing about Grace</i>
May 1		We begin a series on <i>Singing our Faith</i> based on favorite hymns

## Matthew 23:1-28

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup>“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; <sup>3</sup>therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. <sup>4</sup>They 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. <sup>5</sup>They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. <sup>6</sup>They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup>and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. <sup>8</sup>But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. <sup>9</sup>And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. <sup>10</sup>Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. <sup>11</sup>The greatest among you will be your servant. <sup>12</sup>All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

<sup>13</sup>“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. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>“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.’ <sup>17</sup>You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup>And you say, ‘Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.’ <sup>19</sup>How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup>So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; <sup>21</sup>and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; <sup>22</sup>and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it. <sup>23</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, 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. <sup>24</sup>You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel! <sup>25</sup>“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. <sup>26</sup>You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean. <sup>27</sup>“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. <sup>28</sup>So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

## phy·lac’ter·y

/fəˈlakt(ə)rē/

*noun*

plural noun: **phylacteries**

a small leather box containing Hebrew texts on [vellum](#), worn by Jewish men at morning prayer as a reminder to keep the law.