

DON'T LEAVE THE OTHER UNDONE

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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Matthew 23:23

The Pharisees were known for their strict observance of the law and also the multitude of traditions they had added to the law. In our text, Jesus recognized that they were so careful to tithe on their “mint and anise and cummin.” These were all herbs, which were of relatively little value, normally used only for their fragrance or aromatic qualities. The Pharisees made sure they tithed on these tiny plants, but they ignored more important things such as “judgment, mercy, and faith.”

This is a perfect picture of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They emphasized the things they wanted to emphasize and neglected the things they wanted to overlook. Jesus called the other things, the things they ignored, “weightier matters of the law.” While they were tithing in a meticulous fashion, they were leaving other things of greater value undone. This would include the way they treated others, their compassion on the hurting, and living a life of trust and dependence on the Lord. Interestingly, Jesus said, “these ought ye to have done,” referring to their tithing. Some people say that Jesus did not teach tithing, but here is a clear place that Jesus commended these people for their tithing. But He brought attention to the more important issues that were not being taken seriously and were, in fact, left undone.

It is easy for a similar thing to happen to us. It is common for us to give attention to certain things that are a matter of Christian obedience while leaving other matters undone. There is probably any number of reasons this might occur. For one thing, some things are easier for us than others. It stands to reason that we might leave the more difficult or unpleasant things undone, and do the things that come more naturally.

Another explanation might be that we can attempt to justify our neglect of certain things because of the areas in which we are obedient. In other words, because I am doing this one thing, it is excusable that I am not obeying in some other areas. In any case, we are not to leave things undone. We can see in this Scripture the value of being careful, while obeying in some areas, we should not ignore the other areas of responsibility.