

# Luke 11:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

## Analysis

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**Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets** (ὅτι ἀγαπᾶτε τὴν πρωτοκαθεδρίαν ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς καὶ τοὺς ἀσπασμοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς)—the second woe targets pride and status-seeking. Prōtokathedria (chief seats) refers to seats facing the congregation, reserved for honored teachers. Aspasmous (greetings) in the agora (marketplace) means public recognition. They loved (agapaō) honor more than God.

Jesus exposes religion as performance for human applause. The Pharisees' motivation was public honor, not God's glory. This contradicts Jesus's teaching to pray, give alms, and fast in secret (Matthew 6:1-18). Their religion was theater, not worship.

## Historical Context

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Synagogue seating reflected social status—prominent teachers sat facing the congregation on elevated platforms. Public greetings used elaborate titles ('Rabbi,' 'Father') that reinforced hierarchical religious culture. Jesus later forbade his disciples to seek such titles (Matthew 23:8-10).

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What modern equivalents to 'chief seats' and 'marketplace greetings' tempt you—social media affirmation, ministry platform, professional recognition?
2. How can you cultivate hiddenness and obscurity as spiritual disciplines countering the desire for recognition?
3. What motivates your religious activity—God's glory or human applause, internal transformation or external reputation?

## Interlinear Text

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οὐαὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς Φαρισαίοις ὅτι ἀγαπᾶτε τὴν  
**Woe unto you** G3588 **Pharisees** G5330 **! for** G3754 **ye love** G25 G3588  
G3759 G5213

πρωτοκαθεδρίαν ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς καὶ τοὺς  
**the uppermost seats** G4410 **in** G1722 **the synagogues** G4864 **and** G2532 G3588  
G3588

ἀσπασμοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς  
**greetings** G783 **in** G1722 **the markets** G58

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 20:46** (Love): Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;