The Shutting up of the Kingdom  
Matt. 23:13

Introduction:
A. Two families find Opryland shut at end of long journey.  
B. Likewise, many Jews had kingdom door shut by religious leaders.  
   1. Some intimidated by their power.  
   2. Others turned off by their brand of religion.  
   3. Jesus and John opening, Pharisees shutting.  
C. Professed Christians’ brand of religion shuts up kingdom to many.  
D. Things of the Pharisees that tended to turn many off:

Discussion:
I. Their Mere Lip Service (vv. 1-3; Matt. 15:9)  
   A. Must transcend mere words (Matt. 7:21; 1 John 3:18)  
   B. People watch what we do more than what we say.

II. Their Lack of Self-application (v. 4).  
   A. This caused God’s name to be blasphemed (Rom. 2:21-24).  
   B. This will turn people off to our message.  
      1. Our children  
      2. Our friends.

III. Their Public Relations Religion (vv. 5-12; 25-28).  
   A. Outward/public display differed from inward/private reality.  
   B. When people see past the front they are turned off.

IV. Their Hair-splitting Loopholes (vv. 16-22; Matt. 15:5).  
   A. Religious people devise loopholes.  
      1. Mark 16:16 doesn’t say “he that is baptized not...”  
      2. Acts 20:7 doesn’t say “every” first day.  
      3. Bible doesn’t say must attend EVERY service.  
   B. Such loophole hunting gives religion a bad name.

V. Their Selective Obedience (v. 23-24)  
   A. Lord did not fault them from strictness - but inconsistency.  
   B. Partial obedience is really no obedience (Jas. 2:10; King Saul)

Conclusion:
A. Many would not enter the kingdom, no matter what.  
B. Make no mistake about it, such adverse influence shuts many out of the kingdom.