

# The Wisdom of the Pharisees

by Chip Brogden

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*The sermon warns against the wisdom of the Pharisees, which prioritizes external religious rules and customs over the simplicity of Christ, and encourages listeners to prioritize Christ's Kingdom and focus on the simplicity of Christ.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:28, Luke 10:41, John 9:16, Acts 18:12, Romans 1:22

**Topics:** "Religious Legalism", "Following Christ"

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## Description

Chip Brogden preaches about the danger of religious complacency and the Pharisees' failure to recognize Jesus as the Son of God due to their focus on external rules and customs. He contrasts the Pharisees' blindness with the faith of sinners who readily acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah. Brogden emphasizes the importance of focusing on Christ alone, rejecting distractions of religious legalism, and embracing the simplicity of following Jesus.

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## Transcript

"This man cannot be from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath day" (John 9:16ff).

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22).

I have made the statement several times that most churches would not recognize the Lord Jesus even if He walked down the aisle on Sunday morning and sat on the altar. This statement is largely designed to shake people out of their complacency. It is highly unlikely that Jesus will actually go to church this Sunday. I do not believe Jesus attends many religious meetings, and this belief has a Scriptural basis: "He does not keep the Sabbath day." For that matter, He does not keep any day, for every day is His Day and He cannot be contained within a particular twenty-four hour period.

When you read the Gospels two things become quite clear. First, Jesus is undeniably, unquestionably GOD IN THE FLESH, Wholly Other. Second, the more religious you are, the less likely it is that you will see, recognize, and appreciate Him for Who He really is.

Sinners, on the other hand, had little trouble recognizing Him. The Samaritan woman may have been a despised outsider to the Jew's system of religion but it only took her a few minutes to realize that she had found the Messiah. The Roman centurion, an unworthy Gentile, nevertheless knew where to go when his servant was sick, and Jesus said this man's faith was greater than anyone in Israel. The Syrophenician

woman had enough faith to ask Jesus for only a few crumbs from the table, and even though she was not technically not a Jew, Jesus gave her everything she asked for. Yes, Jesus was indeed a friend of sinners, publicans, tax collectors, and women caught in adultery.

But look at His own people, the Jews. Listen to the religious leaders, the spiritual teachers of Israel, the professionals and the experts of prophecy and the Law. What is their verdict? How do they read Him?

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"This man cannot be from G\_d." Cannot be? Are you sure? This man is opening the eyes of the blind, casting out devils, making the lame to walk, raising people from the dead, multiplying food, walking on water and teaching people to love one another - even love their enemies. This man cannot be from G\_d? Why not? On what grounds are we going to reject him? We cannot deny that this man is performing powerful miracles and signs.

"This man cannot be from G\_d, because he does not keep the Sabbath day." Well, I suppose that settles it. Y'shua cannot be from G\_d, he cannot be a prophet, he cannot be the Messiah or the Son of G\_d, or even a good Jew, because he does not keep the Sabbath day! Yes, it is all very clear now. How could we have missed that?

You know, I was almost swept away by this man. For a moment there I really was beginning to believe. He is very, very persuasive. But if he doesn't keep the Sabbath then he cannot be from G\_d. And if he doesn't keep the Sabbath then he probably doesn't tithe, either. Does he pay the Temple tax? We should check on that, I bet he doesn't. You know, that reminds me, his disciples don't fast twice a week either. Even John's disciples fasted. Y'shua told his disciples there was no need to fast as long as He was with them! Oh, didn't you know? He eats and drinks with sinners - a little too much eating and drinking, if you know what I mean.

Something else I noticed, too... he doesn't wash before he eats. It's true! He said the outside of the cup doesn't matter, it's what's inside. Are you sure Y'shua is really a Rabbi? He hasn't been to any of our schools. I'm not sure where he comes up with his teachings. Get this. Y'shua was preaching in Capernaum and told them he came down from heaven! Not only that, but he said if they eat his flesh and drink his blood they will live forever! Strange, very strange. Many of his disciples got right up and walked out. I don't blame them. It's all very strange and very sick.

So where does Y'shua get his power? If He doesn't keep the Sabbath then whatever power he has can't come from G\_d. If the power doesn't come from G\_d then it must come from Beelzebub. How else can you explain it? That's why it's so easy for him to cast out demons!

Fellow Pharisees, this man Y'shua must be stopped. Not only that, he deserves to die. First, because he calls G\_d his father. Y'shua also says he has the power to forgive sins. No one but G\_d can forgive sins, so he is obviously guilty of blasphemy. Second, he does not keep the Sabbath. Now the Law of Moses says if anyone does not keep the Sabbath they must be put to death. Third...

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Friends, you are witnessing the wisdom of the Pharisees in action. Jesus called them fools, blind leaders of the blind, snakes, and hypocrites who will not escape the damnation of hell. Amen, we say. How easy it is to look back on this evidence today and condemn the Jews for failing to recognize their Messiah and our

Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

However, I suggest that the sect of the Pharisees is alive and well today, only it is no longer a sect within Judaism, it is a sect within Churchianity that continues to differentiate people based on external religious rules and customs. The names and customs have changed, but the same old "wisdom" prevails:

"You cannot be a Christian if you don't go to church."

"God will not bless you unless you pay your tithes."

"You cannot know the truth unless you get it from the 1611 King James Version."

"If you leave the church you lose your spiritual covering."

"If you don't submit to authority you have a Jezebel spirit."

"Submission means never asking questions."

"A true prophet always encourages and never judges."

"Women be quiet."

"Jesus' real name is Y'shua."

"God's real name is G\_d."

"Saturday, not Sunday."

"Sunday, not Saturday."

When you take all these things and add them up, what do you get? What is the result? Pride, spiritual elitism, narrow-mindedness, dullness, and darkness. In a word, I describe these people as **DISTRACTED FROM THE SIMPLICITY OF CHRIST!**

Religion is the result of becoming consumed, absorbed, vexed, and stressed out over the "many things" while completely overlooking that only One Thing is needed (cf. Luke 10:41,42). It is the scrupulous, agonizing work of straining out gnats and swallowing camels (Matthew 23:24). Taken to its absurd conclusion, it actually feeds that Spirit of Antichrist that is always fighting against the Testimony of Jesus.

In Acts 18 we find Paul preaching Jesus in Corinth. As is always the case, whenever you decide to preach **JESUS AS HE IN FACT IS**, it will attract the ire of the local religious establishment:

"When Gallio became governor of Achaia, some Jews rose in concerted action against Paul and brought him before the governor for judgment. They accused Paul of "persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law" (Acts 18:12,13, NLT).

You see? There it is again - the Law of Moses, Torah, the traditions and customs of the elders. Paul was always ready to debate the Jews. Being a Jew and a Pharisee for many years, Paul enjoyed the arguments and usually won them. Yet something different happened that day...

"Just as Paul started to make his defense, Gallio turned to Paul's accusers and said, 'Listen, you Jews, if this were a case involving some wrongdoing or a serious crime, I would be obliged to listen to you. But

since it is merely a question of words and names and your Jewish laws, you take care of it. I refuse to judge such matters.' And he drove them out of the courtroom" (Acts 18:14-16, NLT).

Hallelujah! Thank God for Gallio! If an unbelieving Roman judge has enough discernment to confound the wisdom of the Pharisees, what about us? I pray God will give us the gift of single-mindedness in our pursuit of Christ and Christ alone. May God give us the courage to say, "If it is a question of Christ and His Kingdom I would be obliged to look at the issue more closely. But since it is merely a question of words and names, Sabbath days and holidays, religious rules about outward things, Bible versions and denominations, you take care of it yourself. I refuse to argue over such matters."

His yoke is easy! His burden is light! Come to Him and learn of Him. Repudiate the wisdom of the Pharisees and embrace this Man Who does not keep the Sabbath, because this Man is the Son of the Most High God, and there is therefore now NO condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus!

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