

Exposing the Religious Spirit

by Scott Hynds

The religious spirit is a spirit that seeks to find fault and hinder others, manifesting in believers and unbelievers alike, and can be overcome by standing firm in the face of threats and obeying God above men.

Duration: 40:27

Scripture: Luke 11:18

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Unity"

Description

This sermon addresses the religious spirit, comparing it to a critical and fault-finding mentality that seeks to tear down even the smallest imperfections. It emphasizes the need to recognize and combat the religious spirit, which can manifest in believers and unbelievers, through jealousy, division, and opposition to the work of God. The sermon highlights the importance of responding with boldness, wisdom, and at times, silence when faced with the religious spirit, urging unity, grace, and adherence to the teachings of Christ.

Transcript

I want to speak on the religious spirit this morning and exposing, bring a teaching on exposing the religious spirit. What's a comparison to the religious spirit? It makes me think on this. The religious spirit is a little bit like when I was a recruit, an army recruit many years ago.

And during my training, we would have, from what I can recollect, an inspection every day, or most days, in which one of the instructors, one of the corporals, would come around and inspect your room, your bed space, your locker, every day. And your bed had to be right, it had to be made right and fixed right. Your bed space had to be clean, your locker had to be clean, your clothes folded a particular way, there had to be no dust, no fluff, or whatever.

And you would do that, you would clean and fix and press, and you would have everything immaculate. Everything would be immaculate. But here's the thing, that instructor, before he even entered the room, had an agenda.

Before he even entered the room, without seeing the room, he was going to make sure that he would find something wrong. That he would find, I suppose, even the most minutest thing, little bit of dirt or little bit of fluff. And because of something so small and so minute, then that would give him, that would be the catalyst, as it were, to rip everything apart.

And that, my friends, this morning is a picture of the religious spirit. You can have your eyes dotted and your keys crossed, everything can be immaculate, but believe me, it will seek to find something, something so minute, so that it might rack and point, etc., etc. And that's what I want to address, what I believe God wants me to address this morning, exposing the religious spirit.

And believe me, it can manifest, and it does manifest, through believers and unbelievers, both. You will see it rise in both, and I will show you, in Scripture, how it manifests, through believers and unbelievers. Mark 9 and verses 38 to 40.

And so, there has been a man that has been casting out devils in the name of the Lord Jesus. And John speaks to the master here, in verses 38, it says, Now John answered him, saying, Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us. But Jesus said, Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in my name can soon afterward speak evil of me, for he who is not against us is on our side.

So, the religious spirit can manifest in the lives of believers. John and his friends were followers of the Lord Jesus. They followed the master, they were with the master, but there was someone else that was not with them, and so they decided to impede, to try and prevent that person from doing what they were doing.

And here's what he says, he was casting out devils in your name. Some would say, perhaps this man was John the Baptist's disciple, one of his. So, John says, casting out devils in your name.

This person wasn't attempting to cast out devils. He wasn't failing in what he was doing. He was successful.

He was successful in the miraculous, and yet John couldn't see that God was with him. I mean, that's a witness. If someone is casting out devils in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, then that's a testimony that God is with that person.

He was doing it in the name of the Lord, not his name, but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I tell you this morning, if people are having fruitfulness in their lives and in their ministries, miracles, etc., etc., and if they are doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus, what gives me the right to speak against them? Or what gives others the right to speak against that person? Because believe me, they are doing it in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. They may not do it my way or the way that I want to do it or would do it, etc., etc., but I cannot deny the evidence that God is with that person.

Yes, the enemy deceives and so forth. Yes, the enemy will prop some things up that are not real, that look real and are not, but I'm talking about someone who truly does it in the name of Jesus and it's the power of God. You cannot deny that.

And John and the rest of them sought to work against what God was doing through somebody else and that's what the religious spirit and believers can do, can manifest like that. It makes me think of what the master said in Luke 11 18, if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? It's never a work of hell, it's a work of God when it's done in the name of the Lord Jesus and the results are evident. Then John says, he follows us not.

Now, that for me is quite impacting. He follows us not. He's not part of our crowd.

They perhaps thought that they had the monopoly on everything. You know, we sit at the feet of Rabbi Jesus. We have learned from him and gleaned from him.

We have followed him. If anything's going to happen, it will be in amongst this wee crowd. It won't happen outside and perhaps was their thinking indeed and that, my friends, is also the thinking of many today.

If God's going to move, he will move in this denomination. If God's going to move, he will move in this church, etc., etc., not outside but here. That's a religious spirit that speaks.

You see, when I think indeed of why they sought to prevent him, I believe, I believe it was down to jealousy. I believe they were jealous of that man. Why? Because if you read even Mark 9, a few scriptures before Mark 9 34, they had disputed amongst themselves who should be the greatest.

That was in their hearts. I mean, they're having this feud in their own crowd about who should be the power. So, when it comes to somebody outside of their crowd, of their pick, I mean, that person's not going to get away with it.

Jealousy and people are, alas, believers are jealous of other believers because of their ministries or because of their gifts and it should not be for the greatest in the kingdom is the servant. Jesus himself said, I said this, I put this on Facebook, a quote, this quote, we may not be on the same page but we are in the same book. In other words, I may not see eye to eye with everybody within the body of Christ.

Theologically, there may be some differences when it comes to secondary doctrine. I may not see eye to eye with you but listen, we are in the same book. We are part of the same church.

We are brothers or sisters in the lord Jesus Christ. Let's focus on that. Let's have unity, not disunity.

People will seek to hinder. People will seek to prevent someone moving and operating when it comes to a particular ministry because they don't have the same theology, different denomination, different dress code, different translation even of the bible and so on and so on. I mean, I shared this.

I don't know if I shared it to you but I uploaded a little video of of the folk in Nepal and when I was there and Josh and some of you saw it on our Wednesday night and they were dancing and they were rejoicing and somebody commented, is that people dancing in a church? Now what I didn't reply was, they are dancing in a building because they are the church. And I said, yes, they are dancing and this individual replied with something like this, um, I will keep my mouth shut, you know, I'll not, I'll not say any more and that irked me. That got under my skin because I knew where it was coming from and I know those people and you have known and heard about those people.

Those people have been jailed. We have been praying for them and there's one at the moment I believe that is still in jail because of the gospel. They have the right to dance.

They have the right to rejoice. Who am I or anyone else to say that they cannot do that there? That they have to wear a particular dress or be attire or do this or do that? What gives me or anyone else the right to speak against them? The religious spirit it manifests in all sorts of ways and in the lives even of believers. Um, you know what it makes me think of? The Lord gave me this analogy.

Ronaldo, the footballer, um, the greatest, one of the greatest, the greatest footballer, footballers in the world. And when Portugal were playing Iceland during the Euros, Iceland held them to a one-all draw and

that didn't go down well with Ronaldo, the star player of Portugal. Why? Um, because you see, they didn't play his type of football and he didn't like it.

And he didn't commend them on their performance. He didn't commend them on being tight in defense. No, he used a derogatory slur against them.

He said that they had small mentality because he didn't like the way that they played. That's the religious spirit that manifests in the lives of some believers. Because someone else does it different to them because someone else again is dressed different or has a different translation or lifts up their hands or whatever, they don't like it.

And they will use negative and derogatory comments and slurs. And that's the truth of it. And we know it's prevalent in this land, above all lands, in the land of Ireland, in the north of Ireland.

What gives anybody the right? What gives anybody the right? They forbid him, the scripture says. We forbid him, John says. Do you know what that means? By word or act.

I don't know if they lambasted him with their words or actually manhandled him because it can mean that. Can you imagine that? You see, you see, that's what the religious spirit does. If it doesn't get anywhere with the, with words, that will take other measures and actions to get where it needs to go or do what it wants to do.

And many will use words and many will use other measures perhaps to prevent and to hinder and to try to stop a man or a woman operating in the spirit of God, operating in the ministry of God, not the ministry of the devil, but the ministry of the living God. And so that was the heart of the apostles, John and the rest of them when they're speaking to Jesus. And I don't know, perhaps, perhaps they were thinking to themselves, well, I'm sure the Lord will see it our way.

I'm sure the Lord will be on the same page as us. And was I? No. In verse 39, he says, forbid him not.

They weren't expecting that. Forbid him not. Do you know something this morning, church? I don't believe in regards to necessarily you this morning, but I do believe I'm speaking to somebody.

Perhaps somebody that's watching or listening. Forbid him not. And that's the word for you.

Forbid him not. Forbid not that ministry or that person because God is with them. Don't try to prevent or hinder or stop.

Why? Because the man which shall do a miracle in my name that can soon afterwards speak evil of me. Miracle translated from the Syriac translation actually means plural miracles, miracles, miracles of deliverance, miracles of healings. There is no man or woman that can do such a thing.

And then the next day speak evil of me or blaspheme. It can't happen according to what the master says. Yes, there is apostasy.

Yes, men or women apostasize from the faith, but that isn't overnight. That's over a period of time. No one can do these things.

And then the next day speak evil of me. Forbid him not. And then in verse 40, the master says, he that is not against us is in our part.

What a wonderful truth. You see, this man was not against the Lord Jesus. This man was not against the disciples.

This man was not against what the Lord was doing, saying, or what the disciples were doing or saying. In fact, this man was destroying the works of darkness. He was destroying the kingdom of Satan by doing what he was doing in the power and in the might of the anointing of God through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus says, forbid him not. And there are many again out there. They may not be like us.

They may do it a different way. But they are doing the work of God and they are destroying, indeed, the kingdom of darkness. And to that I say, to God be the glory, to God be the glory.

And may God use them more so. May God use them more so. You see, I think on this, here's another analogy.

And this is the way it should be to those that watch and listen. The huntsman spider is one of the big hairy ones that you get in Australia that makes its way into the house. And most Australians, I would say, don't kill it because it's beneficial.

It's not a killer itself. And so they leave it alone because the huntsman will end up killing other spiders which are more dangerous than itself. It's not correct.

Like the red tail or the red back, white tail. So these are the killers. So you leave it alone because it's doing a job.

You leave it alone because the huntsman is killing the killers. You may not like it. You may not like what you see.

You may not like what's on the wall, but you're not going to kill it because it's doing a job. And friends, perhaps this morning, someone that was watching this, listening to this, you may not like it. You may not like what you see, but leave it alone because it's doing a job and it's doing God's job.

And that's the prophetic of the Lord. It's doing the Lord's job. He that is not against us is in our part.

That's how the religious spirit can manifest the fruit through the lives of believers. But what about unbelievers? What about the unsaved unbelievers that are dressed in religious garb, religious attire, religious garments? What about those? Well, we see those in Acts chapter four. It manifests through unbelievers in a more sinister, threatening way.

And in Acts chapter four, we read about Peter and John being arrested for preaching and they are put in jail and then they are brought before the Sanhedrin, the council. And the scriptures say in Acts chapter four in verse 18 to 20, so they called them, speaking of Peter, John and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God you judge, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

So these men of God, spirit filled men of God are standing before the Sanhedrin, the council, the religious unsaved. And what do they say to the men of God? They charge them, command them not to speak truth, not to speak, to teach in the name of the Lord Jesus, because you see they were anti-Christ. They were

against grace.

There are two that stood before them that preached grace, that preached Jesus Christ and the ones that they were facing were anti-truth, anti-Christ. No doubt about that. I watched on the news this morning, I believe it's the United Reformed Church has now passed a law within that church that same-sex people can get married within the churches.

That's now been passed. You see there are many dressed up, many unsaved dressed up in religious garments and they are anti-truth, anti-Christ. They are against the fundamentals indeed of the Word of God.

They are against the virgin birth. They are against the very word which Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life that no man comes unto the Father but by me. No, they are against that.

They say there are many ways indeed to God, but believe me the scripture says there is only one way. Neither is there salvation in any other. There is no other name unto heaven.

Give it among men whereby we must be saved. And so they are against truth, against Jesus when it comes to marriage and it comes to salvation and many other things. And you see that religious threatening spirit spoke in the hope I believe that Peter and John would say nothing but just walk away with their tails between their legs.

But these men of God were filled with the Holy Ghost. These men of God were filled with boldness and with courage and the scripture says they opened up their mouths. Peter and John answered and I tell you something, the religious spirit doesn't like it when you open up your mouth.

The religious spirit doesn't like it when you open up and speak truth and speak indeed the Word of God. These men had boldness. These men had courage.

They would not be intimidated by this threatening spirit. And I tell you there's a day in life and there's a day to come indeed where there will be many saved in many denominations and they will be brought before the hierarchy. They will be brought before the bishops and they will be threatened.

They will be threatened with excommunication, that they will be defrocked and so forth and so on. And it's my prayer that God Almighty would give them the boldness and the courage to stand for the gospel and to stand for Christ, for truth, for truth in this hour where many and much have apostatized that they would stand, stand, stand and not be intimidated. You see the response of Peter and John is whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more or God.

In other words, we won't give in to your threats. Yes, you have power. Yes, you are a hierarchy within Israel.

Yes, that's true. But we serve a greater power and we shall not disobey him. We shall not speak nor do contrary to the one and true God that we serve.

Hallelujah. The right thing is always to obey God above men. And that religious spirit will intimidate you into a place of disobedience.

That's what it seeks to do, that you would disobey the word, that you would disobey the truth, that you would disobey God's word and compromise and change your views to see their side, to see their way.

That's how it works. But look at the response in verse 20.

Look at the response of the men of God, Peter and John. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Hallelujah.

They saw and they heard. We can't shut up our mouths. We cannot zip our mouths because we have seen things and we have heard things.

And because of what we have saw and what we have heard, we will continue to boast about it. We will continue to speak about it. We will continue to shout about it.

We will continue to open up our minds indeed. And I tell you, para, this morning, I tell you, church, we have saw, we have saw, and we have heard. We saw indeed tongues.

We have saw tongues in operation. We have heard the prophetic of the Lord. We have saw the miraculous.

We have saw the supernatural. We have heard the prophetic from God. And we will continue to be bold and courageous and declare it and continue to declare it that we believe this is the truth of God.

Many are against us when it comes to those things, the gifts of the Spirit, et cetera. And they will say this thing and the other thing. But I tell you something, I have seen and I have heard.

You have seen and you have heard. And we shall stand our ground. Hallelujah.

We shall not compromise nor cave in when it comes to Holy Scripture. They may not have seen or heard. The hierarchy did not see nor hear the way the apostles did.

And there are many out there that have not seen nor heard the way we have. But we will continue to speak those things that we believe in and know to be true. Amen.

Some would seek to command us to stop. I say never. Never.

Never. Amen. We have seen and heard.

You see, Peter and John responded, would there be a softening in their hearts? No. In Acts 4.21, it says they further threatened them. You see, their hearts weren't open.

Truth was spoken to them. Peter and John were there in the Spirit of God. They were there in the plan of God, in the sovereignty of God.

But the religious unsaved wouldn't listen. You see, Jesus says in Matthew 7.6, neither cast your pearls before the swine. And at times we can speak to somebody, but they don't want to know.

They don't want to listen to us. You see, the religious spirit has nothing good to say about you or I, the born again spirit-filled believer. Nothing good to say about you.

John 10.20, and many of them said about Jesus, he has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to him? That's what they said about the Lord Jesus, that religious spirit. He's got a demon.

He's mad. Don't listen to him. You see, the religious spirit only speaks evil and seeks to discredit before others.

It's not what they tried to do, to discredit the Lord Jesus before those that did believe in him, that were following him. And that's how it works. It will call you all sorts of names.

Indeed, I have faced it and I will face it again. It will call me all sorts of names that I don't preach. I don't, I'm not an expositor.

I don't do a right exegesis on the text, etc, etc. So therefore, I'm mishandling the word of God. I'm not of God and this and that and so forth.

And all these names will be said, etc. And then they seek to galvanize, to discredit you amongst those that do follow or listen or blessed, etc, by your ministry. That's how it works.

It seeks to cause division. It seeks to polarize. It seeks to pull apart.

That religious spirit has nothing good to say about you. In fact, that religious spirit seeks to use the word against you. It has an agenda to take the word of God and use the word of God against you.

It makes me think of the woman that was taken in adultery in John chapter 8. So, she's before the Lord Jesus and there we have the enemies of the Lord and they want to test, to tempt the Lord. And so they take the word. They use the word of God.

John 8, 5 and 6. Now, Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do you say? This they said testing him that they might have something of which to accuse him. They took the word of God and they sought to use the scripture to get a response to, to cause the Lord to be ensnared in a place where they could accuse him.

Make a fool out of him. Make a fool out of him. That was their agenda.

Now, the word was used to test, tempt, wrong heart, wrong motives. And there are many today that will use the word of God against you and their heart is dark. They have no agenda within their hearts whatsoever to have a civil chat or even debate or whatever to help you in any way but to pull you down.

That's the reason why they're using the word. That's their motivation to pull you down, to make a fool out of you. That's the truth.

To make a fool out of you. Chomping at the bit. There's somebody somewhere sitting on a computer and they're waiting for a reply.

They've sent an email or they have sent something, a comment on Facebook and they're chomping at the bit to get a reply. They're their flesh, their darkness. Because they then will detect something else of the word and ridicule and mock and make a fool out of the person on the other side of the screen.

That's not God. That's from the pit of hell. That's another spirit.

That's not the Holy Spirit. And there are many of us in this land and that's what they do. And I pray that this word is a word that rebukes and challenges many indeed and pulls them out of a state of wrongness into a place of rightness.

God is a merciful God and God indeed will chasten and God indeed will correct. The word of God is given indeed for reproof, for rebuke, for correction according to what the the apostle Paul says. They use the word to to entrap and snare.

Now in closing, I want to close. How should we respond to the religious spirit? We have heard how it manifests through the believer and through the unbeliever. We have saw different traits and different fruit.

But how should we respond to it? Well we saw how Peter and John responded with a boldness and with a courage. And at times that's how we may respond. Through the Holy Ghost with a boldness and a courage.

But there are two other ways in which we can respond to that religious spirit. One is this. We respond in wisdom.

Wisdom. As in the case of the woman in adultery. That was brought before the master and they were using the word.

Oh how they were chomping at the bit. Oh how they perhaps thought we'll get him now. We'll get him now.

And they referred to the law. And what was the reply of the master? We all know the wisdom of God. He that is without sin cast the first stone.

And what does the scripture say in John 8 and 9? They went out one by one. They had nothing to say to the wisdom of God. Oh friends that's what happens.

We have the wisdom of God as a response. It doesn't matter who they are. They can't do anything.

They can't say anything. All that they can do is walk away. Because you've used the wisdom from heaven.

And that'll shut their mouths. Amen. That'll shut their traps.

It will. The wisdom of God. But it has to be the wisdom of God.

Do you remember they tried to do it again with the Lord? To tempt the Lord. To trap the Lord. Remember with the coin? With the image of Caesar? Oh how they were motivated to pull him down.

And what was the master? Or what did the master say? Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's. And unto God what is God's. Do you know what the scripture says in John 22 22? When they had heard these words, they marveled and left him and went their way.

He shut their mouths. They had nothing to say because that's what the wisdom of God does with the religious, religious spirit. It shuts its mouth.

Because it hides within religion. And it uses religion to argue. And so therefore when you bring the word through the wisdom of God, it can't do anything but walk away.

So, that's how you respond to the religious spirit. But it has to be the wisdom of God. And lastly, lastly, there are times.

How do you respond to, to the religious spirit? Well, in silence. There are times when you say nothing. And it makes me think of the master, the Lord Jesus when he was arrested and brought before Herod.

And Herod wanted to see him. And Herod was glad to see of Jesus. Jesus, he had heard much about the Lord Jesus.

He wanted Jesus to perform a miracle. He wanted Jesus to speak. Here's what the scripture says.

In Luke 23, 23 and 9, then he heard questioned him, Jesus with many words. But he answered him nothing. And sometimes friends, it's best to say nothing.

If you haven't got the leading of God, say nothing. Because again, at the end of that computer screen or phone or at the end indeed of the meeting, standing at the door or in the workplace, at the table at lunchtime, that person, that person wants, wants to get something out of you. But if you remain silent, let me tell you, the Lord shall vindicate.

The Lord shall vindicate you. The Lord shall speak for you. The Lord shall defend you.

Hallelujah. There's times to be bold. There's times to use the wisdom of God.

And there's times to say nothing. And we need the leading of God in all matters, in all things. When we face the religious spirit that manifests through, through believers, through believers.

And when the religious spirit manifests through the unsaved. We need God's helping in this, don't we? Hallelujah. Quite a strong word.

You can see why I didn't want to bring this word before we broke bread. It's a challenging word. It's a, a direct word, a direct word from heaven.

I, again, I'm, I'm not saying that it's for you, but it's for somebody. And it's my prayer that they would take heed. That's what I was told.

Take heed. Rightly divide the word of truth. Incoherent, unbiblical nonsense.

That's what somebody said about me in one of my videos. But, you know, how did I respond? I didn't respond in a, a derogatory way, in a nasty way. No, I responded through the wisdom of the spirit and the leading of the spirit.

I am not getting down to someone else's level in the gutter. And that's the truth of gutter. And there are many in the gutter and they use, could I say, know the reason why they're in the gutter? Because they use gutter language.

I mean, at the end of the day, in closing, I mean, as I said on Wednesday night, Philadelphia, the church had a reputation because they loved one another. They loved one another. And many, many, not a minority, but many fall short of that.

Forbearing one another and forgiving one another. If any man or woman have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgive you, so also do you. Be slow to speak.

Let your words be seasoned with grace. Isn't that a powerful scripture? That's a challenging scripture to us all. Those words that were sent to me weren't seasoned with grace.

That came from a religious spirit, a religious spirit. I don't have it all going on. Neither do you.

But we pray humbly that the spirit would lead us and give us wisdom. Amen. That we will be a blessing and not a curse.

That we will bless. There are many ministries out there, churches out there. And theologically, they may in many ways be different to us.

But listen to me, the fundamentals are the same. It's the secondary doctrines that we may be different. But our response, the Lord bless you.

The Lord bless you in your ministry. Amen. The Lord bless you in the work.

Hallelujah. Let's all be right. Amen.

Let's all indeed walk only in that old time religion of God and only his religion. Amen. And amen.

Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Lord, I know this morning that this has been a challenge, that this word, God, is something from you that you desire to say, to speak on, to address, because there is much harm that's taken place. There is much opposition that's taken place. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

And yet God, there are so many divisions within the body of Christ. There are so many fractures within the body of Christ. There are so many Christians, God, that oppose one another.

There are so many, Lord God, that manifest the religious spirit even before unbelievers. God, which indeed is a terrible witness before men. Oh God, we pray for the spirit to convict and the spirit to challenge and the spirit to make right.

We pray that there will be a grace, God, and a humility for all, Lord God, to understand that, Lord, that it's only your way that is the right way, not the way of men, but the way of God, not the way of Calvin, but the way of Christ, not the way of Wellesley, but the way of Christ. It's Christ's words. It's Christ's commandments that we adhere to, not the doctrines of men, but the doctrines indeed that have been set forth out in Scripture by the Lord our God, the great teacher, the great rabbi.

And so, Lord, help us, grant us wisdom, grant us insight, grant us discernment, grant us, Lord God, what is needed, that when we face these religious spirits, God, in the church, outside of the church, wherever they are, that God, that we would not, God, be drawn in to their trap, drawn in, God, into a verbal fight, but Lord, that we would respond how you would want us to respond. In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

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