

7 Traits of a Pharisee (Pt. 2)

by Shane Idleman

The sermon highlights the dangers of Phariseeism, a mindset that prioritizes following rules and traditions over a genuine relationship with God.

Duration: 53:27

Scripture: Matthew 23:1

Topics: "Phariseeism", "True Faith vs. Legalism"

Description

Shane Idleman addresses the seven traits of a Pharisee in his sermon, emphasizing the dangers of legalism and the lack of genuine relationship with God among those who are overly focused on rules and traditions. He explains that Pharisees often appear righteous outwardly but are spiritually dead inside, lacking love, compassion, and humility. Idleman warns that many churchgoers may struggle with Pharisaical tendencies, urging them to recognize their need for repentance and a true relationship with Christ. He highlights the importance of aligning one's actions with their faith and the necessity of humility in the Christian walk.

Transcript

Matthew chapter 23. The message, the title of the message is Seven Traits of a Pharisee. Seven Traits of a Pharisee.

My dilemma is I know Pharisees aren't going to listen to this. So I was trying to word it to where they might want to listen because they desperately need to hear this message. I talked about part one last week and I didn't get through very many points.

So I'm going to re- kind of reiterate what I talked about last week and then go right into part two. But I want to be clear on this area. A Pharisee, a Pharisee is somebody who just is by the book.

There's nothing wrong with that necessarily. We go by the book. We love the Bible.

But it's all about the truth void of the spirit. So they beat people up with the word of God. They're so legalistic, so on tradition.

They're so focused on God's word and they don't even know God. So a Pharisee is actually unsaved. The religious leaders of Jesus' day, the majority of them were unsaved if you can believe that.

Now there's another thing called Phariseeism. I don't even know if it's a word. I made it up.

So I'm thinking it's in- Google it. It's always reliable on Google. So Phariseeism is those who struggle with Pharisee tendencies.

That would be me sometimes. I think all of you, come on, let's get some hands up. We all struggle with Pharisee tendencies because we love the truth.

And sometimes that can make us prideful, can make us arrogant. But the big difference is the Christian who struggles with it repents and they realize they're wrong. The Pharisee, the scary thing is they don't think they're wrong.

They are blinded, Jesus would say. Blind guides leading blind people spiritually. So I wanna make that distinction because as we're reading this, people immediately go, well, I'm not a Pharisee.

Well, you can struggle with one of these traits. All of us do. And if you're struggling with something, if God is convicting you of something, there's a beautiful word in the Bible called repentance.

It means to repent, turn. Lord, this isn't right. I'm turning from this and I'm turning back to you.

So even though you're not a Pharisee, you might struggle with some of these traits. In today's term, Jesus was thundering against many popular preachers and people who seem to be living holy lives because they were practicing human religion rather than serving God with purified hearts. That's from the inner varsity commentary.

Here's the interesting thing, introduction. Pharisees are very serious about their faith, but they're also very arrogant. They may teach, but they don't know the teacher.

And they have a zeal, but it's without love. And they attend church, but they don't know God. And some of us go, how is that possible? I'm gonna keep, the more Jesus, we unpack Jesus's words, it'll make a lot more sense.

And a confession up front, I have a heart for Pharisees. I have a heart to have people that have a zeal for God to get them on track because when a Pharisee comes to know the Lord, it's beautiful. You've never seen more tears in your life because they realize how much damage they've been doing.

And it's wonderful to see that person actually realize that they were not on the right path. And isn't this interesting, a Pharisee, they go through their whole life. In Jesus's day, there were Pharisees.

In today's day, we would call them very religious, legalistic, but they're living their whole life thinking they know God. And then when they get before the Lord, they hear depart from me, I don't know you. You who practice lawlessness.

That word practice lawlessness is an habitual practice of sin that they did not repent from. So the religious leaders think they're God's spokesmen. They think they're gonna be right before God.

And God was gonna say, depart from me, I don't know you. They say, how do you not know us? You taught in our synagogues. You ate at our tables.

We heard you. How do you not know us? And Jesus says, depart from me, I don't know you. I didn't have a relationship with you.

And that's my concern for many people that go to church or they've been in church all their life, but the church isn't in them. And that's really the difference. And Jesus begins his rebuke.

For those who don't think Jesus can rebuke, he can rebuke. Boy, can he rebuke. I mean, he is just, just because he loves the people enough to warn them.

Woe to you Pharisees. And when he says woe, that word means grief, sorrow, misery, heavy calamity. So Jesus, you can almost hear just woe be to you.

Woe be to you Pharisees, you whitewashed tombs. And he's trying to show them that the calamity that they're about to experience. So here's the first trait of a Pharisee.

They say, but they do not do. They say, but they do not do. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

And then they're just mean as a junkyard dog to their spouse. They're just as rigid. They rule their house with a rod of iron.

They know nothing about the love of Christ. So they love to preach at you, minus the love. They're preachy.

Well, Shane, is that what you're doing? Yeah, but it's different. How I talk to individuals is not how I talk to a group of people. I hope you realize that.

But they preach at you, and they don't obey the preaching that they're giving. They add heavy burdens to their preaching. You know, you can't do this.

You can't go here. It's very narrow. It's on this road.

They make this very narrow road that nobody can walk down, but they expect you to walk down it because they load you with heavy burdens that you cannot bear. So let's read the first point, Matthew 23. Jesus spoke to the multitude and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do. But do not do according to their works, for they say and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens hard to bear and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

So Jesus is saying they sit in Moses' seat, meaning they are proclaiming the word of God. So Jesus says, Do what they say, because what they say is true, but don't do what they do. In other words, their lifestyle does not match up with the word of God.

And on this point, I was reminded that obedience to God's word is not legalism. Obedience to God's word is what I call very healthy. It's not legalism.

And sometimes people say, Oh, that's legalism making me obey. No, Jesus said, Obey. Do what they say.

And you can imagine they're looking at Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus and Deuteronomy. And Deuteronomy talks about the cursing and blessings of God and raising their children and not provoking

them. So he's saying, Do what the word of God says, but don't follow their lifestyle.

So obedience is not legalism. So that's the first point. They say, but do not do.

And if you're convicted about that, you can leave here different. And parents are real good at this, aren't we? And we just push sometimes. We push our kids too much, and it causes them sometimes to walk away from God.

So it's important in our lifestyle. The kids should see how much we love Christ as much through our actions as our words. They should see us apologize.

They should see us humble ourselves. And so now I'm preaching. I mean, I'm backing what I'm preaching by my actions.

The second thing that Pharisees love to do is they love to show off. They enjoy the praise of men. They just enjoy when men praise them.

Jesus said, But all their works they do are to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. So let's stop there for a minute.

Phylacteries, we talked about that last week. It's a little box that goes right here. And what's rolled up in it? The Hebrew text of the Bible.

To remind them to obey the law. So instead of a little box, they would get a big box. And they would walk around like this.

I have the word of God in my little phylactery, and I'm so spiritual. So the bigger the box, the more spiritual. The longer the gown, and it was, can you imagine a gown? It was just flowing.

It just had these little tassels, and it just looked beautiful. So they love the praises of men. And they love to be just, oh, wonderful, isn't that? And yes, thank you, thank you.

And God says, that's your gift. I mean, that's your reward, the praises of men. And they love the best places at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues.

And I don't know if you remember many years ago, churches used to have, sometimes they still do, they have chairs up here. And the real important people would sit up here. You know, the board or the elders.

You know, they would sit up here. So they love those seats. Can I sit up there and look at the praises of men? It was, God says, it was a stench in his nostrils.

They love greetings in the marketplaces, and everybody calling them Rabbi, Rabbi. But Jesus said, but do not be called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father, for one is your father.

He who is in heaven. And do not be called teacher, for one is your teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. It's not in my notes, but this is a good point, that Pharisees will not humble themselves. They will not humble themselves.

They want to exalt themselves. And he's not saying that you can't call your father, father. This is, you're putting titles on people that elevate them.

Like in the Roman Catholic Church. You know, Father, the Papacy, the Pope, and these titles that put them way up there with God, equal to God. He's saying, don't do that.

You're all equal. You're all brethren. These people want their name in the bulletin.

They want to be leaders. They want, recognize me, recognize me. It's about showing off when they get that opportunity.

And I pulled up some titles from, I guess, pastors in different denominations. Some are called the most reverend. Or there's the most right reverend.

Or there's worshipful master in Masonic places. Or it's like the most right reverend. And they want these titles.

They want this position. Pharisees love their position at the church. Whatever that position is, they love it.

They hold on to it. And they don't want to let it go. Because their value is in that title, in that position.

Because they love recognition and they want to show off. They look for opportunities to pull others down. Now, this is huge.

Because they like to show off, what's the best way to look better? By pushing others down or by pulling others down. As I pull others down, I look better. And they'll do this.

They'll look for opportunities to catch people in sin. And I asked a question last week. I want to ask it again tonight.

What do you think when you see someone caught in sin? Do you pull them up and help them? Or do you continue to push them down? And that's what Pharisees do. They'll point out things. And they'll just nail people on the sin that they're caught in.

They're not there to love and nurture and care and support. Because they don't have the love of the Father in them. So they'll pull other people down.

And this is a good time to remind you that our love for one another proves to the world that we are disciples. I don't care how much Bible somebody knows. If they don't have love in their heart, they're on a very dangerous path.

And that's a sign of a Pharisee. They didn't have the love of God in their heart. How can you express something you yourself don't have? So that's why it's hard for them to love people.

Because they don't have the love of God. It's hard for them to say, I'm sorry. Or I was wrong.

Or be teachable. Because they don't have the Holy Spirit residing in them. See, the Holy Spirit will teach you and guide you and lead you.

But without that Spirit, you become hard, rigid, and arrogant. It's what I call modern day Pharisee. And it's sad.

It's sad because they think they're spiritual. They think that they're following all of God's rules. And it's not about following rules.

It's about a relationship. And then because I have a relationship with God, I want to follow His rules. Does that make sense? You know, people say, oh, I hate the Bible.

It's a bunch of rules, a book of do's and don'ts. Well, I want God to tell me what to do and what not to do. Because of my relationship with Him, I want to know where are those guardrails? It's like driving on a highway with no guardrails and you drop off a thousand foot cliff.

Who would say remove the guardrails? That's exactly what we do when we want to live outside of God's truth. Number three, they are unteachable. This is key because all the Pharisees I know are unteachable.

Most people aren't teachable by nature. Do you like constructive criticism? No, right? I'll give you the answer since you're not helping me here. But most of us are not teachable.

It hurts, doesn't it? But a person who is filled with the Spirit understands that they need constructive criticism, understands. You know what, you're right. Let me work on that area.

And you fight it in some things, but a Pharisee is not teachable. You can have a Pharisee right here, right? Pharisee sitting there. You can have the whole church body just about.

The whole church body saying, listen, you're wrong in this area. Look at, no, I'm not. You're all wrong.

That's not teachable. When you have a hundred Spirit-filled believers telling somebody they're wrong and they're not thinking they're wrong, there's a problem there. They're unteachable.

They're blind guides. Jesus said this, So how is this possible? If somebody's entering heaven, how does a Pharisee sidetrack them? Well, I think what he's saying here is there are genuine seekers, people seeking God. They go to the Pharisees.

They go to the religious leaders. They go to the church. I'm seeking God.

I'm genuine. But because they're blind guides, they lead people astray, away from God. So not only do they not go in heaven, they shut up, which is shut out heaven from those who are genuinely seeking God.

But they're following the wrong people. They're following. And sometimes people, you know, they'll get worried like, Shane, well, how do I know? How do I know? It's very easy.

Don't ever forget this formula. Stay, pray, and obey. Stay in this, pray for direction, and obey God's principles.

You cannot go wrong. When you stay in his word, Lord, I'm in your word. I'm seeking your truth.

I'm asking you to guide me. I'm praying for direction. I'm obeying your word.

You cannot be led astray. Anybody that's led astray is out of this. They get off course because of this.

But Shane, a Pharisee has this right, but they don't have the heart of God. They can be as straight as a gun barrel theologically, but they're just as empty. There's no spirit in them.

Jesus said that you worship God in spirit and in truth. They're married. When you divorce truth from spirit, you'll have cults.

You want me to list a whole bunch of cults right now? You know what they are, right? They knock on your door quite often. Not everybody, but they knock, and they have truth, a portion of it. Oh, we believe in Jesus.

We believe in God. Oh, well, maybe we're the same. No, we're not the same.

Keep digging. Digging because it's truth void of the spirit. The spirit wrote the Bible.

The spirit of God wrote the Bible. The word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus, we behold, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Spirit and truth, it's a combination. So Pharisees always have the truth void of the spirit. Well, how do you know, Shane? Because they're unteachable.

They're arrogant. They're blind guides. Everything we're talking about, Jesus nails them with a two-by-four to the head.

And he's just, I would love to see this. I would have loved to have been at this sermon. There's some sermons I would have loved to have been at.

One of the ones is when he explained all of the scriptures on the road to Emmaus, and he broke down showing them Jesus and all the scriptures from the beginning. That would have been wonderful to watch Jesus give that. But this would have been another one, just standing back in the crowd going, oh, man, because he's not going, you hypocrites, you brood of vipers who warned you to flee from the wrath that is to come.

He was preaching, and he was, you hypocrites. Remember, later he goes on to say, oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I wanted to save you as a mother saves her little chicks, but you were not willing, you hypocrites, you whitewashed tombs. You're beautiful on the outside, but inside you're dead.

You're condemned to hell. That's why they killed him. One of the reasons was because they hated what he sang.

And this is a very good test right now. If a person doesn't like what I'm saying, they're probably dealing with, they're probably a Pharisee. If they hate what I'm saying, their heart's not tender.

Remember what the disciples, when Jesus said, one of you will betray me, they all said, Lord, is it I? That's a humble heart. When a person can say, Lord, is it I? Are you speaking to me? Are you speaking to me? That's a humble heart. Versus getting upset and excuses.

They're excusing everything in their mind. He doesn't have a degree. Who's he to preach the Bible? That's not true.

I've given 50 years of my life to this, to God's cause. It doesn't matter. I know people who've given five minutes who are farther in the kingdom than a person giving 50 years because the heart's right.

So that's an important part. Are you teachable? I mean, that might be a good question for us. Are you teachable? Teachable means are you learning from others? Are you learning from the word of God and then willing to make changes? Jesus said, for you neither go in yourselves.

They won't humble themselves. They hold on to their pride all the way to hell. See, this is why I hate pride.

It is the root of all sin. Pride is at the root of all sin. And pride is what leads people to hell.

Well, what about this? No, it's pride. Pride leads people to hell. And pride will blind the Pharisee because they think they are so spiritual.

And the sad fact is they are not saved. Woe be to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you devour a widow's houses. You devour a widow's houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers.

Let's stop there for a minute. They would devour everything a widow had. Remember when the widow gave her little mite? It was all she had.

They would require that. Give all you have. And they would just strip the people of all of their money, and they would take advantage of them.

And then for a pretense, which means long prayers. Oh, God, that wonderful, gracious, heavenly, everlasting Father, thou bestowest on us all these good things. Oh, isn't he a wonderful prayer warrior? Wow, look at that prayer.

And they would just be seen by men. So they would devour widows. They would take advantage of people, and then they would say these wonderful prayers to be puffed up by men.

And their cover is getting blown right now, isn't it? Jesus is blowing their cover. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourself.

Man, Jesus, what's wrong with you? Nothing, nothing. Sometimes a Pharisee needs to get hit with a hammer on the head. Wake up.

He's saying you'll travel land and sea to win one convert, and when you have won them, you make them twice the son of hell as you are. The reason is their zeal to win converts fuels their pride. Like, I'm over this ministry, I'm this.

And they've got these, and that fuels their pride. It's like a checklist. I got another one, I got another one, I got another one.

Same thing with the people knocking at your door. You don't think they go back and say, I got another one. I got another one.

And then when they get to the tough houses, they have the bishop come over. But it's fueled by pride. It's a checklist.

Look at these converts. We have to be careful in this area of what God does. Somebody asked me recently about altar calls, and I used to do them.

Morgan, I remember. I used to do altar calls a lot when I preached at different places, and I could get a lot of people to come forward. And I was proud of that.

Oh, look at that. And it's like God was convicting me. Like, you know, you didn't do this.

You just shut your mouth. You know, anybody that would well, look at, you know, half the room came forward, and I'd spoken at a Baptist conference. There was like 300, 600 people, and like 150, you know, wanted to respond.

I'm like, there's that many unsaved people here? And it was like, but you start to think. So now I think altar calls can be biblical if you're careful and you let people know it's not raising your hand or saying a prayer. It's your heart.

It's your heart repenting. You can do that right now. You can do that driving home.

You can do it back with the prayer team. You don't have to come forward. You can do it wherever you're at.

And that's one of the things, though, is we would people gauge, and we hear that even Christians. You know, well, there's 100 people there or 50 or I witnessed this many, and we throw out numbers like to impress people, and God's not impressed. He's impressed with the humble, broken heart that's teachable, and he'll bless the work.

What I've noticed from God, the more you humble yourself, the more he exalts you, and you humble yourself, he'll put you out there. He'll do it as we humble ourselves and become teachable, but they continue to twist and add and distort the truth because they don't have the Spirit of God. So Jesus said, Woe to you blind guides! You say, Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing.

But whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated to perform it. Fools and blind, for which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And whoever swears by the altar, is it nothing? But whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is obligated to perform it. Fools and blind, for which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore, he who ever swears by the altar, swears by it, and by all things on it.

He who swears by the temple, swears by it, and by him who dwells in it. And he who swears the heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him who sits on it. You're like, wow, what's he talking about? Well, you know what swearing on something is, right? We say, I swear to, because people don't believe us, so we have to kick it up a notch.

It's taking an oath on steroids. Like, I'm not going to believe what you say, but if you say, I swear on my mother's, or I swear on God's Bible, you know, it's like, our word's not good enough, so we take it up a notch. But actually in the Old Testament, they were called to swear by the temple.

For example, 2 Chronicles 6.22. When anyone wronged their neighbor, they were required to take an oath. They would swear the oath before the altar or the temple. So if somebody wronged their neighbor, they would say, I swear to the temple, I swear to God's temple that I will repay that sheep I took.

How's that? Right? And it would confirm, okay, if I don't do this, God will judge me. They would swear to heaven, they would swear to the temple. So now the Pharisees are saying, no, you don't have to swear to

the temple, but you have to swear to the gold in the temple.

That doesn't make any sense. Don't swear on the altar, but you can swear to the little gift on the altar. And that's a sure sign of a Pharisee is they'll twist and they'll distort and they'll do all these things so they have a bunch of rules that we have to follow.

The commentary in the InterVarsity Press commentary says this about this passage. Jesus rails in part against traditions that have created inconsistent standard of holiness. Anytime tradition becomes a priority, you're on a wrong path.

Anytime a tradition supersedes God's word, that's what the Pharisees did. Jesus actually would say, by your traditions, you have made the word of God of no effect. So when we can elevate traditions, we make the word of God of no effect.

And here's what the commentary says. I like this. We might compare it today to churches that rightly condemn smoking or overeating as polluting the body.

Hey man, I could preach a sermon on that one. Yet remain silent on watching television programs that pollute the mind. I've seen this a lot.

Some traditional churches regard particular styles of clothing or music as worldly. Yet they harbor jealousy, materialism, and other attitudes that the Bible explicitly condemns. There's a lot of hard words in this sermon.

Do you see the distinction here? It's so ironic. They'll say something is worldly, but they'll hold on to bitterness and jealousy and anger and unforgiveness. And they'll hold on to those like, they're okay, but let me tell you off about how you're ruining your life in this area.

You're smoking, but I'm going to hold on to all these bad attitudes. There's inconsistency. A Pharisee is always inconsistent.

They'll promote this, but then they'll be dropping the ball in this area. Some churches fight for the authority of Scripture, yet they care so little for it in practice that they ignore the context and the verse. So they'll say, we are a Bible-believing church.

Okay, well, where's the love and the grace and the mercy? Have you ever reached out to your community? Oh, we're just a Bible-believing church. Have you ever went to the homeless shelter? When was the last time you witnessed to somebody or gave them some food? We're a Bible-believing church. I got it, but when are you doing what the Bible says? And we can hide behind that.

We're so into the Word, but the Word's not in you. Pharisee. Pharisee.

And that's why a lot of churches you'll see in the years to come, obviously, and in the past, when they begin to worship the Bible, almost, instead of worshipping the Lord. And I love the Bible. Don't get me wrong.

It's God-inspired. I study it. I've given my life to it.

But I don't worship the Bible. I worship God. And when they start to elevate this, and all the other things begin to be minimized, the fruit of the Spirit.

There are churches that will elevate this, and there's no fruit of the Spirit. There's no love, joy, peace, contentment, gentleness, kindness, goodness, faithfulness. There's none of the fruit, but they have this.

Well, what they have is, they're a Pharisee. And it's not healthy. It's not good.

When tradition, I said this earlier, tradition becomes the priority. You're on a very slippery slope. Then the fourth point, mercy and compassion are lacking.

A Pharisee, this is one of the saddest things to watch. A Pharisee lacks mercy and compassion. They don't have compassion on people.

They're not merciful. They're just, you know who they are. Just, I don't care if your mom died yesterday.

Get up and pick up that trash. Stop whining. Get over it.

You know, it's just this hard, rigid. But the sad fact about that is, because they've never experienced the mercy and love of the Father. Because once you truly experience God's mercy and love and forgiveness, and if it wasn't but for the grace of God, there go I, you treat people a lot differently.

Notice I didn't say perfectly. Because we all stumble. We all fumble.

We all, I should have said that. I should have did that. I get in this rut, and we call it a funk at our house.

When the kids get in there, throw their tantrums and fits, and kids do all these things, and you know, please shake your head so I know it's not just me. Right? Okay. When you're, you know, this is not feeling good today.

But you're back on track. You repent. There's that beautiful word again.

And you have compassion for your kids and for others. But Pharisees lack compassion. That's why they're so hard and rigid.

And just, I mean, I often think of a stone statue. That's what they remind me of, just a stone statue with the Bible in one hand. But there's no love and compassion.

That's what breaks my heart, is because they don't know the love and compassion of the Father. That's why they'll rarely talk about the love and compassion of the Father. They'll beat you up with truth, but they'll forget the other side of the coin.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees. Jesus says right here about mercy and compassion. You hypocrites, for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith.

These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, you strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Have you ever, I got a gnat, get rid of that gnat, but then they swallow a camel.

That's how ridiculous this is. They're blind guides. Now it's interesting, he said you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin.

Those are herbs, like we would use today, herbs in the herbs garden and oregano or different things. And they would give eggs or milk or herbs, they would give 10% of their givings. And so Jesus is saying, that's

good, Pharisee, but don't forget justice and mercy and faith and love.

Those are more weightier. And a Pharisee will get caught up on the tithe aspect or what the word says, but they'll forget the heavier things. I mean, all of the commandments in all of the Bible can be summed up on this.

Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. Everything else hangs on that. So why are they not obeying that main commandment and they're pushing all these other commandments? Because they don't have the love of the Father in them.

Now this is interesting, Jesus didn't get rid of tithe. Now I don't teach that you have to tithe. We're under, you know, people say you're not under the law.

Well, I mean, the truth be told, God loves a cheerful giver. And a cheerful giver usually gives a little bit where it hurts. And I believe that giving's got to hurt a little bit.

David said, I will not give the Lord something that costs me nothing. And we joke about it, but it reminds me of, I mean, I've done this. I give my refrigerator that's 22 years old to Grace Resources and think I'm so special.

Why don't I go buy them a new Whirlpool refrigerator? I couldn't do that. But see, it doesn't hurt. Look, I gave to Goodwill.

Of course, you just cleaned out your closet. Of course you gave to Goodwill, come on. I mean, I'll take bags.

Oh, I just took everything to Goodwill. No, I just cleaned my closet. So it's got to hurt.

When you give to God, I believe, and that's why I promote a tithe. Not that you have to. God loves a cheerful giver.

I don't need lectures. I don't need emails. I've read both sides of it.

But it hurts. You make \$4,000, \$400 hurts. You make \$6,000, \$6,000 hurts.

You make \$10,000, \$1,000 hurts. I mean, it's like you feel what you're giving. Now, there's people in financial bindings and they can't, and God sees the \$5 as much as the \$500.

In God's eyes, it's really an issue of the heart. We need to realize that God doesn't need our money. This has everything to do with the trust issue.

The reason we don't give is because we don't trust that God will see us through. I've done it. Not this month.

We've got truck, this came, the kids. This is going to be tough this month. What I'm saying is, God, I don't trust you to see me through.

And that's one reason why we don't pass a plate or a pouch or anything. We want just people to give as a cheerful giver. We don't want them to feel pushed.

I remember recently I heard about a lady who the bag went by and she actually apologized. Said, I'm sorry, I don't have anything to put in there. And they felt bad and the church felt bad and so did she because she didn't have anything to put in there.

So you put kind of people in an awkward spot. God loves a cheerful giver. People are going to give.

They're going to find a way to give. A real giver will give. It doesn't matter if you hide the box.

There's a box hidden under your seat somewhere. They'll make sure that they give to God's work. But I just want to encourage you that giving, it hurts a little bit.

To really be giving. I mean, I know people high up at aerospace, and I mean, \$150,000, \$200,000 a year, and they might give \$20 here and there. That doesn't hurt.

That's not giving. You're just pleasing. I got to give something.

I feel guilty. So keep that in mind. Giving hurts a little bit, but then God blesses the hurt because what you're doing is you're saying, King pocketbook, you're not the king anymore.

King Jesus is on the throne. You're not holding me captive. And the only reason, or the only way you can really get rid of that desire and lust for money is to give it away.

That's the only solution. Not all of it. Some people do.

But, okay, I've got to, I'm going to give something. I mean, shouldn't we give God the same as we give Chrysler or Toyota? I mean, a car, you know, it's like, but what you have to do, here's the secret. You have to live below your means.

You have to get a little bit smaller house. You have to get your bills down to where God becomes a priority in your giving. But back to what they did, they were giving.

I'm giving 10%, and they were proud of it, and they were letting people know, but they've neglected everything else. That's not a cheerful giver. That's not coming from a good heart.

Number five, they focus on the external but not the internal. They focus on the external but not the internal. Jesus said, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish.

Here's an interesting thing. Pharisees always like to look clean on the outside. I mean, they'll be sharp dressers.

Their Bible's probably calfskin, \$150 leather, and they'll let you know. And they just look, man, that guy is polished. They just have the, that's a look of a, I don't know, is that what a Christian looks like? No, a Christian looks like many different things, but they're concerned about the outside appearance.

Everything's just tidy and clean and perfect because they're more concentrated on the outside. You cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisees first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside will be clean also.

See, he's saying here a wonderful scriptural truth. Clean the heart. As the heart goes, everything else goes.

Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth is going to speak. So when the Pharisees spew out all this stuff, it's simply coming from what's in the heart. So Jesus has cleaned that.

Everything else will fall in place. But what they're doing is it reminds me, actually I told my wife, don't let the kids do dishes again. I mean, you'll find oatmeal in a bowl a week later.

Like what, what's this? Oh, I cleaned it. No, you clean the outside. But I'm not eating that.

Now I've got to throw this in the trash. See, that's what they were doing. How silly does that sound? That's what the Pharisees are doing.

Let's clean the outside of the bowl. Let's leave this oatmeal in and put it back in the shelf, and then you grab it a week later, and it's nasty. It's disgusting.

But they're trying to give that perception. That's the sad thing. That's why I have a heart for Pharisees.

Is it sad? They're trying. They want to know God, and they want people to think they know God, and they're trying. They don't know the love of the Father, so they can't give love themselves.

And they're trying to clean the outside because they feel dirty inside. And if you just clean the inside, clean the heart, repent and get the heart right, everything else will fall into place. It's sad.

It's very sad to see where these people end up. And they're not happy. They're not happy people.

Pharisees are not happy. They're miserable. They're upset.

They're angry all the time. And that can't be healthy. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

Even so, you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. And Jesus couldn't have picked a stronger image. You see a nice casket.

Oh, that's beautiful. Well, don't open it up in a few months. Why? And that's what they were doing.

They're so concerned about the outside. The inside's perishing. The inside's dying.

See, a Pharisee is dead to the things of God. They don't know God. They're dead spiritually.

It's a corpse inside. They dress the part, they act the part, and they play the part. Did you hear what he said? They dress the part, they act the part, they play the part, but that's not a definition of a Christian.

That's a definition of a hypocrite. That's what a Pharisee is. They play a part.

I'm not right with God, but I want people to think I am. I don't know God, but I want everybody to know that I know God, and they play a part. It's a hypocrite.

That's where the word... A lot of people... Every time... This is funny. This will be a good thing you can do too if you ever want to shock people. There's too many hypocrites in church.

There's too many hypocrites in church. Have you ever heard that? Well, no, no. Actually, there's not a lot.

Oh, yeah, there is. No. You're confusing a hypocrite with somebody who struggles with sin.

See, most Christians struggle. You know, they'll see... My friend's been going to church for a year, and he fell off the wagon. No, that's a struggler.

A hypocrite is intentionally deceiving. Here's my Sunday mask. Here's my Monday mask.

And they're intentionally... They're hypocrite. Hypocrisy. It's pretending you're playing a role, but that's not a Christian who's struggling, and they fall, and they make a mistake, and, God, she went back.

And that's not a hypocrite. That's called a struggler. That's what most of us are.

I didn't say all, because I don't want to offend the Pharisees. But it's... Everybody struggles with sin. So the next time somebody says, oh, there's only hypocrites in church.

No, there's a lot of people who struggle with sin, but they're not hypocrites. And then it actually opens... What do you mean by that? Well, do you struggle? Yeah, and you can actually present the gospel very easily because you show them the only way to get rid of that struggle they feel is through the cross. And once I've given my life to Christ, and now I'm a Christian filled with the Spirit of God, sin wants to take me down.

So now I've got to fight going on inside my heart. That's why you'll see Christians fall from time to time is because they're getting wounded. They're getting shot in this battle.

And you can explain the difference between a hypocrite and somebody struggling in sin. It really helps people understand. Here's the interesting thing too.

Don't forget the Pharisees fooled the people until Jesus exposed their heart. See, Pharisees can fool. What's the old saying? You can fool some of the people all the time, you know, that thing.

That's what Pharisees do. They fool, they'll fool you. But Jesus exposed their heart and it came out.

As my mom taught me, I was saying many years ago, when a vessel is struck, what's inside spills out. So when a Pharisee is struck with adversity, with not getting their way, with being challenged, what's inside spills out. Eventually, you cannot hide your heart.

But they keep a lot of people fooled because they'll show up on Sunday. They'll teach. They'll give.

They look the part. They're spiritual. They know doctrine.

But you get that person in a sticky situation and watch what comes out. Is it dead men's bones? Or is it love and mercy and grace and forgiveness? And you can see that that adversity brought out the fruit of the Spirit. Or does that adversity bring out death? I mean, I actually could just do the sermon on this one point.

When a Pharisee is hit, what's inside spills out. If they're hit by challenges or action when they don't get their way. See, Jesus was calling them.

He was saying, nope, you're doing this. Nope, you're doing this. Your motives are wrong.

He was pointing out. So when a Pharisee's sin is pointed out, what comes out of them? Do they say, you know what? You're right. I apologize.

I was wrong in that area. Or do they go into excuse mode and defend everything and they get harder and more proud and arrogant. That's a Pharisee.

And it's not a good spot to be. Number six, they do not learn from the past. Pharisees do not learn from the past and they actually excuse their actions.

Can you believe that? So they don't learn. And then when somebody challenges them, they'll make excuses. Verse 29.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you build the tombs of the prophets and you adorn the monuments of the righteous and say, if we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would have never, never been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Therefore you are witnesses against yourself that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Oh, man.

He's going to get crucified soon. Because what is happening here is these Pharisees are building these monuments to say Zechariah or Nahum or Habakkuk or Isaiah or Jeremiah. They're building these monuments to the prophets.

Oh, look at these monuments. And Jesus is saying, your fathers killed them. The Pharisees who came before you killed them.

And you're building these monuments. If you were to live back then, you would have killed them too because you are murderers. And they're going to murder the greatest prophet of all.

Jesus Christ soon. They'll murder the prophets. And Jesus says, he changes his language and gets a little softer right here.

He says, you serpents, you brood of vipers, how can you escape the condemnation of hell? In case you're wondering, there's nothing worse you could say. He's calling the religious leaders of their day, you brood of vipers. Google brood of vipers.

It's scary. It's like out in the Mojave Desert. You've got 55 rattlesnakes going into a big hole.

And they're just all out everywhere. They're brood of vipers. It's just dangerous.

It's wicked. And he said, you will not escape the condemnation of hell. Why? Because they didn't listen to the prophets.

Why do you think the prophets were killed? Any guess? Because they didn't want to hear the truth. For example, I'm more worried over my life than probably Joel is of his. Right? I mean, let's be honest.

Not gonna kill him for speaking the truth. But they don't like people speaking the truth. And they'll kill the prophet.

They'll kill the messenger. Don't get weird and charismatic prophet. A prophet, the one we're talking about now, is somebody who would proclaim God's truth in boldness.

Pastors, pastor, teachers, teachers, the prophetic element would call the nation back to God, would call the people back to God. Woe be to you, you backslidden people. Return to God.

That was that prophetic element. God would send messengers. Remember I told you right before the fall of Jerusalem, the Bible says that God sent messengers to his people, rising them up early and sending them because he had a compassion on his people.

But they mocked his messengers, despised his word, and scoffed at his prophets until the anger of the Lord arose against his own people. I like what William Still said. Many people who for the first time come under the sound of Holy Ghost preaching are mortally offended because they have never been exposed to the white light of the gospel.

What he's saying there is so true. Sometimes, and I'll speak mainly at funerals, like you can tell people's eyes are like, what is this guy talking? I mean, it's like they are mortally offended. I've never heard, I've just watched TV.

I've never heard the gospel presented like that and they get mortally offended. They are upset. So when the Holy Spirit is unleashed in a sermon and he's hitting people, people are offended.

They're upset. How could he? But that's the job of the spirit to go and, how does a person change if they're not convicted? How do they change if they're not confronted? They don't. Nobody changes unless they're confronted or they experience the love of God in their life.

Those two elements. I've known people, hardened atheists, experience the love of God through a love of a Christian and they came to know the Lord. But many times it's through God using the hammer of the word of God and saying, you're nothing, you're a sinner, you need Christ.

No, I'm not. And then they fight that, they fight that, they fight and eventually they go, okay, gotta give up. Because it was a difficult things that they had to hear.

Jesus says condemned to hell. Do you know what that is? That's a death sentence. These Pharisees were condemned to hell.

The only way of escape is repentance. And here's my concern for Pharisees. They'll say I'm sorry or they'll say I repented and there's no change.

But you look at the story of the prodigal son. It was interesting. He realizes he was eating the pig's food.

And he said, he didn't say I'll just go back. He said, if I just go back, I'll be underneath the servants. If I could just be underneath the servants, eat of my father's food, that's good enough for me.

See, the heart's right now. He didn't come back, I just want my stuff back, get away servants. Yeah, I had a tough life.

The Las Vegas lifestyle, you know, and I'll leave it at that, right? That's what he did, riotous living, the Bible says. And he didn't come back arrogant and pompous. He came back broken and humble and said, I'll just be a servant.

That's how you can tell if the heart is truly repentant. I don't wanna hear, I'm sorry. I wanna see a truly repentant heart.

I don't wanna hear excuses. I wanna see a truly repentant heart saying, whatever you need me to do, Lord, however I can rebuild this relationship. That's a truly repentant heart.

Because anybody can say, I'm sorry. And that's just like pacifying. Oh, thank you for your token, sorry.

That was wonderful. But that real sorry is backed up by a heart changing. I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes.

Some of them you will kill and crucify. And some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth from the blood of righteous Abel, Genesis, to the blood of Zacharias, son of Bacchaea, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Now, I could keep you for 20 minutes just on this part. But let me just say this. Zacharias, son of Bacchaea, is found in Zachariah.

Sometimes people say this is a different Zachariah that we talked about in 2 Chronicles who was killed between the, actually here's the altar, the temple is here, they're killed right here, they're stoned. But there's another Zachariah 300 years later who was actually the son of Bacchaea that Jesus is talking to, and they speculate that he was killed as well. And it's funny because that would close out the Old Testament time period.

So you have from the blood of Abel, Genesis, Adam and Eve, all the way to the blood of Zachariah killed at the end of the Old Testament, all that blood will be required upon this generation. They didn't learn from the past. They knew that their fathers had killed righteous men, but they excused it.

Today, Pharisees can look back at their actions and see that they hurt people, but instead of repenting, they become cold and callous, and they excuse their actions. Like the old prophets used to say, the pride of your heart has deceived you. And then the last point, number seven, they are unwilling to repent.

Pharisees are unwilling to repent, and this is tied to being unteachable. So a Pharisee is unwilling to repent. That's why Jesus, if we keep reading, says, oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I wanted to gather you, like a mother gathers her little chickens, but you were not, what, willing? Yes, you were not willing.

You were not willing to repent. We're willing to remove that pride, and the reason is it's humiliating to remove pride and say, I've been wrong all of these years. I've been wrong all of these years.

I've treated people wrong all of these years. I've been following a fake God. I've been God, and I can't admit that all of these years I've been wrong, and it's humbling to say, I've been wrong, and would you take, it's a very humiliating process, and the scary thing, the thing that upsets me the most is you can deal with the Pharisee at 20, but by the time he's 60, it's difficult.

The older a person gets, the harder it becomes to repent, because they've been getting harder, that heart's been getting harder, and harder, and harder. And I would encourage you, if you know any Pharisees, that you need to pray and fast, because you can't tell them anything. That's the other part, is the Pharisee thinks they're up here, that they are the remnant, that they are the chosen, that they are the call, that they know everything, and who are you to tell them anything? So all you can do is pray and fast, and pray that God will break their hearts.

They need to have a Pharisee altar call in their heart, where the hypocrisy's removed, and everything is out in the open. They'll cry like babies, once God breaks their heart. And Jesus said, See your house has left you desolate, for I say to you, you shall see me no more, till you say, Blessed is he who comes in the

name of the Lord.

One day Israel will say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Make no mistake about it, every knee will confess, I'm sorry, every tongue will confess, and every knee will bow down, that Jesus Christ is Lord. But these people, their house will be left desolate, which means empty, bleak, deserted.

That's the end result. That's the end result of rejecting God all of their life. In the end, they will be deserted.

They will be condemned to hell. That's a hard truth. But if you can come away with anything else, out of all the scripture, please let me know.

Because Jesus is warning them, you sons of hell, you're condemned to hell, because your hard heart is deceiving you. Amen.

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