

Characteristics of Pharisees

by Zac Poonen

The sermon highlights the characteristics of Pharisees, including glorying in connection to godly men, external righteousness, not mixing with sinful people, asceticism, and criticism of others in small matters, and warns against these traits.

Duration: 58:40

Scripture: Matthew 12:9-13, Matthew 12:24, Matthew 15:1-9, Matthew 15:12-14, Matthew 19:3, Matthew 21:15, Luke 11:53 - 12:1

Topics: "Legalism", "Humility"

Description

This sermon delves into the characteristics of Pharisees, highlighting their legalistic nature, hypocrisy, hardness of heart, and inability to appreciate true worship. It emphasizes the dangers of being like a Pharisee, including neglecting family responsibilities, seeking to catch others in their words, and being easily offended. The importance of humility, self-reflection, and genuine worship is underscored as key aspects of avoiding Pharisee-like behavior.

Transcript

We're going to be thinking of the same theme throughout these three and a half days that you have over here, led by the spirit and not under the law. And we're going to have a series of three Bible studies in the mornings, the first of which we're going to do right now. And the subject will be characteristics of Pharisees.

If you read the Gospels, almost all of our study will be from the Gospels. If you read the Gospels, you'll find that Jesus was in conflict with the Pharisees most of the time. We read of three leavens that Jesus warned people against.

The leaven of the Pharisees, the leaven of the Sadducees, and the leaven of the Herodians. That's in Mark chapter 8, Luke 12, Matthew 16. And there are three different types of Christians.

The Pharisees were the people who had all their doctrines correct, who emphasized holiness. There are Christians like that, who got all their doctrines correct, who emphasized holiness. And the Pharisees also got involved in missionary work, and very exact in paying tithes and keeping the law.

Then there are other Christians like the Sadducees, or let's take the Herodians first. The Herodians, we can say, were the opposite of the Pharisees. They were people who were worldly.

For example, we read in Mark's Gospel, chapter 6, I think, where it says Herod enjoyed listening to John the Baptist. And two verses later, it says he enjoyed watching half-naked Salome, his second wife's daughter, dance on the dance floor. And there are some Christians like that, who can come to a meeting and really enjoy the message, and go home and watch something filthy on television, and enjoy that also.

These are the Herodians, worldly Christians, who can enjoy a meeting and enjoy a filthy movie at the same time. They enjoy means, they are not going to obey what John the Baptist says. They like listening, because John the Baptist is not a boring preacher like the Pharisees.

Just because you like to listen to a fiery prophet, doesn't mean you are a spiritual man. Herod liked to listen to fiery prophets. Who wants to listen to boring Pharisees? So that's the Herodians, the worldly people, they don't have any laws, they are not self-righteous.

They say, we are Christians, but we believe in enjoying ourselves. Then there is a third group, and Jesus had very little conflict with the Herodians. And then the third group of the eleven was the Sadducees.

The Sadducees were people who didn't believe in angels and spirits and resurrection. In other words, they didn't believe in the miraculous. They are like Christians who don't believe God does any miracles.

If you have a problem, you got to solve it from a human standpoint. There is no way that God can do any miracles for you. And there are many Christians like that.

So there are three groups of Christians represented by the Pharisees, the Herodians and the Sadducees. One group is those who got all their doctrines right and preach holiness. And another group is people who are worldly and they are not serious about obeying God.

But they come to meetings. They enjoy meetings and they enjoy filthy movies at the same time. And a lot of worldly things they enjoy.

And then the third group of people who don't believe in any miracles. They study the scriptures and they come and share the scriptures. But they don't believe in miraculous answers to prayer.

They don't believe in the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. They say it's all human effort. So, some people can be a mixture of these three groups also.

So you know which category you are in. But among all these groups of people, we would think that Jesus' greatest conflict should be with the Herodians. Those are the worldly people.

Jesus should be hitting out at them all the time. Or He should be hitting out at the Sadducees who don't believe in miracles and who got all wrong doctrines and all that. But it's interesting.

You read the Gospels that He was always fighting with the Pharisees. Who had all their doctrines right and who preached holiness. And the people who were really eager to crucify Jesus were not the Herodians, not the Sadducees, but the Pharisees.

They were the ones who crucified Jesus. Okay. Now apply it to today.

Which of these three groups do you think you most closely fit into? You know the answer. If it is the Herodians, well, I'll tell you Jesus doesn't have much of a conflict with you. He doesn't agree with anything you do.

You probably go to hell. That's another thing. But He doesn't have much conflict with you.

At least you are not leading other people astray. Everybody, any sincere Christian can see you are a worldly person and nobody is going to follow you. And if you are like the Sadducees, Jesus may have a little bit of conflict with you but not serious.

You don't believe in miracles, you don't believe in any other doctrines and a serious Christian won't follow you either. But if you have got all your doctrines right and you are preaching holiness and it is a holiness of the law where there is no peace in your heart or no peace with other people and no joy and victory, you are the most dangerous type of Christian on the face of the earth. Because some sincere people will follow you.

They won't follow those other people. They will follow you and they will go astray. And if you are an elder brother like that, boy, your responsibility is ten thousand times more.

So it is very important for us to understand some of the characteristics of the Pharisees. I wouldn't waste my time having a Bible study on the characteristics of the Herodians or the characteristics of the Sadducees more than just these few statements. In fact, we couldn't take a Bible study on it because there is not much written about them except these one or two things which I mentioned.

But when it comes to the Pharisees, there is so much written about it in the Gospels that it must be that God wants us to study this subject. So, I think it will be good for all of us. It certainly will be good for me because I don't want to be a Pharisee.

And I know that I seek to have all my doctrines right. I seek for holiness. So I know that my tendency is more towards being a Pharisee than towards being a Herodian or a Sadducee.

So that's why I don't need to worry much about... I don't enjoy watching filthy movies on television or on a screen. So, that's not my danger. And I believe in miracles.

I believe in the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. So, Sadducees also is not much of a danger for me. But Pharisees, they believe in miracles, they believe in angels, they believe in spirit, they believe in resurrection, they believe in all that.

I'm more in danger of becoming a Pharisee. And having acknowledged that, I hope you have, I say, Lord, that's what I want to study. And there's such a lot written about it in the Gospels.

And I tell you, if you come with a humble attitude and an honest attitude, God may succeed at last in opening your eyes. So let's come with humility. So, I'm really going to go through the Gospels.

And I want to mention in these three studies, 50 characteristics of Pharisees. All in the Gospels. These are not my inventions.

You may find 49 of them fit you perhaps. Well, then you have no doubt. Even if one of them fit you, you have no doubt.

Okay, the first verse we're going to look at is Matthew chapter 3 verse 9. A Pharisee is a person who glories in his connection to godly men. I mean, he may not be godly himself, but he says, I'm connected with brother so and so, who everybody knows is a godly man. See, that's one characteristic of a Pharisee.

Matthew 3 verse 9. John the Baptist saw the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism and he told them, don't say to yourself, we have Abraham for our father. There are a lot of Christians like that today, who glory not in their own life being godly, but glory they are connected to a church that preaches godliness. Or a person who has a reputation for preaching godliness.

And they live off that reputation. They are proud to say, we have so and so for our spiritual father. Or we are connected with so and so church knowing that that gives them a certain reputation for holiness, even though they may have zero holiness themselves.

This is one of the primary characteristics of a Pharisee. He doesn't have anything himself, no living connection with god, but his glory is in his associations with certain people. I mean, he may mingle with certain people and he can think he's holy.

You know, some of you can go to a good church and you can think you're holy because you go to a good church. I've often said to people who sit in CFC, I personally believe some of you will go to hell. I'll tell you why, because you've got a grudge against somebody.

You don't talk to somebody. You speak evil about others. You backbite.

I don't care if you sit in CFC for 50 years you'll go to hell. You glory in your association with CFC or with brother so and so. And you think that condones, God will therefore condone and ignore all your backbiting and evil speaking.

I'm sorry to say he won't. You'll get a big surprise in the day of judgment. Maybe you were saved once upon a time, but you're probably lost today.

Don't ever glory in your connection with godly people. Second, I'm going to go through these fairly quickly, but if you jot them down or you listen to the tape later, you can meditate on each of them and there's a tremendous amount that you can think on in each aspect. Because when I say something like glorying in your connection with godly men, it's not exhausted in 3 or 4 minutes.

Maybe God has to speak to you for 20 minutes on just that one thing. So I'm just planting a seed. You know what you need to do? Water it, so that each of these 50 characteristics will become a big tree in your understanding and you can chop it down from the roots.

Secondly, Matthew chapter 5, verse 20. A Pharisee is one who glories in external righteousness. Now we'll come to that more often, but that's one of the characteristics of a Pharisee.

Jesus said, Matthew 5, verse 20. Jesus said, Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the righteousness of the Pharisees, you will not enter God's kingdom. Now, how can your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees? If they fasted twice a week, does it mean you've got to fast 3 times a week? If they paid 10% of their income, does it mean you've got to pay 15% of your income? If they prayed 3 times a day, does it mean you've got to pray 4 times a day? No.

He was not talking about surpassing in number. He was talking about surpassing in quality. Quality.

It's like cars. It's not a question of producing more cars or more scooters, but better quality cars, better quality scooters. You know the difference between made in India and made in Japan.

What is it? Is it because Japan produces more? No. They produce better quality. So when Jesus said, Your righteousness must exceed the righteousness, surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees, it means the quality of your righteousness must be way beyond the righteousness of the Pharisees.

And then he said, what did he mean? He explained it in the next verses. He said, I'll explain to you what I mean. He said, The Pharisees righteousness was, you shall not commit murder.

Your righteousness must be, you must not get angry. Got it? Verse 21, 22. If you get angry and you don't overcome it, verse 22, you will go to hell.

Have you ever heard any preacher tell you that? You get angry and you don't overcome it, you'll go to hell. Jesus preached it. He died to save people from that hell he preached about in verse 22.

I want to say to all of you, because you'll never hear it in another pulpit, if you get angry and you don't overcome it, you will go to hell. And in the day of judgment, when God sends you there, don't tell him that I did not warn you about it. Anger is worse than AIDS.

Nobody ever went to hell by getting AIDS. Lot of people have gone to hell by getting angry. Secondly, your righteousness, he's giving examples of how your righteousness must be better than, surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees.

He says, The Pharisees righteousness was, verse 27, don't commit adultery. I say to you, your righteousness must be, you don't even lust with your eyes. But if you keep on lusting with your eyes, and sin sexually with your eyes, verse 29, and you will go to hell.

Or if you sin sexually with your right hand, verse 30, you will go to hell. Twice he says, you'll go to hell if you sin sexually with your eyes or with your hands. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

It's very clear. Jesus didn't go into ugly details about sexual sin, but he said, and I tell you, there are very, very, very few Christians who take these things seriously. Because they're Pharisees.

They glory in an external righteousness. I don't do these things externally. In other words, I've got a good testimony before men.

It may not be just these areas. This is a sample. It could be in a whole lot of areas where your righteousness is on the outside.

Everybody sees that you're holy. The Lord says, it must be on the inside. What's your inside like? Not how do you dress, how do you look, what do people think of you on the outside.

What is your inside like, where nobody knows? Your thoughts, your motives, your attitudes, your attitude to money. Do you keep your accounts properly? Are you just showing other people you're generous? Or you're just a miser, secretly. Don't glory in what reputation you have got before people.

That is a mark of a Pharisee who's got a good testimony before others because it was outside righteousness. Number three. Matthew chapter 9 and verse 11.

A Pharisee does not mix with sinful people. He only mixes with his holy crowd of people. And he thinks that he's holy because of that.

They looked at Jesus and they asked the disciples, why does your teacher mingle with sinners? Jesus mingled with sinners. The Pharisees don't mingle with sinners. Is your holiness something that cannot mingle with unconverted relatives, cannot mingle with unconverted people because you'll be defiled? You only sit with your own people all the time? I want to say, that's not holiness.

You may have fellowship with God's people, that's true. But if you're only friends, Jesus was the friend of sinners, can he be better than him? No. We're supposed to be the friend of sinners if we are like Jesus.

But if you're like the Pharisees, they'll say, ah, sinners, they're another category. We mingle with other Pharisees. All our fellowship is with other Pharisees.

So if you're like that, it's a mark of a Pharisee. You know, a lot of people think, we must have nothing to do with our unconverted relatives. That's what the Pharisees said.

Oh, I won't go to my unconverted relatives' wedding reception. Pharisees didn't. That's not holiness.

It's a deception. Jesus would have gone to an unconverted relative's reception. He would have gone.

He went to sinners' houses where they have all type of dancing and drinking. He'd go there and share the gospel with those people. He didn't defile them.

His righteousness was inward, so he did not avoid sinful people and think he was holy just because he mingled with holy people. Most of the time, he spent with his disciples. That's true.

He wasn't always hanging around with sinners. No. Most of his time, he spent with really godly people.

Those were the 11 disciples. But he was a great friend of sinful people. Otherwise, how would he win them? How will you ever win sinners to the Lord if you don't seek to be friendly with them? A good question you can ask yourself is, very searching question.

In your own church, how many people have been brought to your church by you? Okay? Please ask that question throughout 2005. How many people have come to your church because of you? Probably the answer after 20 years is zero. Because you are so holy, you will not mingle with sinful people.

And some of you may be elder brothers. You've been elder brothers for years and you've not even brought one person to your church because of you. You just stand up there and preach to them.

You're a Pharisee. It's good to see that. It's great hope for honest people.

And then, number four. Number four. Matthew chapter 9 and verse 14.

The Pharisees are ascetics. Ascetics means one who disciplines their body. They won't eat and they won't... They emphasize a lot of fasting.

And now we also believe, Jesus also fasted. The Pharisees also fasted. But the Pharisees boasted of their fasting.

And they openly, they tried to show that we are ascetics who... You know, it's not only Christians who fast. I hope you know that. There are a lot of people in other religions who do yoga and fast and deny themselves even sex with their wives and all types of things.

They live like Brahmacharyas even after they are married. They won't have any sexual relations with their wife and thinking that they are very holy people. It's all dog-dung.

Got it? Dog-dung. This type of external asceticism, self-control and... I'll tell you what you need to control. It's not sexual relations with your wife.

It's just your tongue. Just start with your tongue and you'll be holy alright. The rest is all rubbish.

You know, what we... We must control our thoughts and our eyes. But... Jesus could enjoy a good meal. He made so much wine.

Which is the first miracle Jesus did? One would think the most unnecessary miracle. Our fellows already drunk so much wine. Why make more wine for them? I mean, he should have done some spiritual miracle like raising somebody from the dead or something.

But Jesus starts his miracle ministry by making more wine for fellows who are already drunk. Do you know how much he made? He made about 600 liters of wine. Maybe that family had maybe 200 guests.

Each man 3 liters of wine. Do you know how much 3 liters is? Of wine? Making so much for... You know why he did it? Because he came to devilish this religion of externals. This religion of don't do this and don't do that and don't touch this and don't eat that and don't taste this other thing.

He came to demolish it. That's why he started with that miracle first. But many Christians have gone back to the old one.

And they think they are holy. They are Pharisees. They are Pharisees ascetics.

They say, we Pharisees fast. But your disciples don't fast. They are not like us.

Maybe they were fasting. They didn't talk about it. You know I have met certain Christians.

Certain Christians in particular groups. They are always talking about their fasting. Anytime you meet them.

Sometimes they say, you know the other day the Lord spoke to me when I was on a 21 day fast. Main point in the conversation is I fasted for 21 days. What is this? Pharisees to the core.

And these are some of the most self-righteous people I have met in the face of the world. I am sick and tired of them when I hear them. Jesus said, when you fast, don't let anybody know.

When you pray, don't let anybody know. But the Pharisees are ascetics. Ok, number 5. If you want to get liberated, this is the place.

Matthew chapter 12 verse 2. The Pharisees are people who are very critical of other people in small matters. Why do your disciples break the Sabbath rules? Why do they pick heads of grain? Matthew 12 verse 1 and 2. And eat them on the Sabbath day. I mean, they are hungry.

And according to the law, you are permitted to pluck grain when you walk by anybody's feet. That is permitted under the law. That's not the point.

The point is, why did they do it on the Sabbath day? So the Pharisees are people who are always very critical of other people in small matters. This particular thing, that person is wrong. And this other particular thing, they are wrong.

And if you are an elder brother like that, I tell you, I can, without seeing your church, I can say, your church is just a bunch of Pharisees. Because the church becomes like the elder brothers. If you don't believe that, read Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3. When the elder brother lost his first love in Ephesus, the whole church lost its first love.

When the elder church, elder brother was lukewarm and self-satisfied in Laodicea, the whole church became lukewarm and self-satisfied. When the elder brother was following the principles of Balaam, the whole church followed that. That's how it is in Pergamos and Thyatira.

What you learn from Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3 is a church becomes like its elder brother. If the elder brother is free from legalism, the church will be free from legalism. If the elder brother is legalistic, the whole church will be legalistic.

And I have seen it with my own eyes in the last 20 years. And I would say to all of you dear brothers, if your elder brother is legalistic, please do not follow him. Submit to him when he tells you to stand up.

Now we're going to sing number, song number 45. Sing song number 45. Don't sing 46.

Obey him in all these. When he tells you now, we'll sit down. Sit down.

And when he tells you meeting is on Wednesday, come on Wednesday. Don't come on Thursday. All these things follow him.

But please don't follow his life unless you want to destroy yourself like he's destroying himself with his legalism. Okay? It's my advice. If you want to really follow Jesus, do not follow a legalistic person.

Even if he's the senior most elder brother. They are critical of other people in small matters. They're watching.

Why? In another place, you know how they said, why don't your disciples wash their hands? That's another thing they asked. In Matthew 15 verse 1. Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? Small, small things. You know, this little thing, that little thing.

They're always examining people. This thing, that thing. Now we go to 12 verse 9 to 13.

Pharisees lived by the law. Verse 6. Pharisees You know, there was a man who was healed who was going to be healed. And Jesus said, to heal on the Sabbath.

What does the rule book say? It says this. And they check up the rule book and say, no, you can't do that. You can't do that because in our church we have certain rules.

You can't do that. Does your rule book say that? I don't know. They're different rules.

Different people have. Jesus says, what does your rule book say? So, and they asked this question. You know, they asked Jesus this question actually.

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath so that they might accuse him? See, that's the thing. They have a spirit of accusation. And they live by rules in order to catch somebody who's not obeying those rules so they can immediately accuse that person and say, hey, we caught you.

It's very easy to catch people if you live by rules. And take this matter of covering the heads. The person who I've really seen covering the head properly is Mother Teresa.

Her head comes up to here. Nobody in our church is anywhere in any church does that. If we live by rules we just bring everybody into bondage.

And I've seen elders who are very particular about this who don't correct their own wives. They're critical about other people. Rules.

I say, if you want to follow that rule, follow Mother Teresa. She's the only one I've seen who really covers her head properly. But to me that's not a rule.

It's a principle. It's a symbol. I believe a sister should cover her head but I'm not going to examine can I see one hair underneath there? Hey, I see one hair there.

This is the Pharisee. I see one hair. No, I saw five hairs there.

I saw half an inch of your hair there under your covering. Dear me, my brother, sister, don't follow such elders. You'll destroy yourself and you'll destroy all those who hear you.

Because you know, very often these Pharisees they are very lenient towards their own family members but very strict on other people. It's a mark of Pharisees. Very critical about live by rules.

If their own family members violated the Sabbath, that's what Jesus said. If your donkey falls into the pit on a Sabbath day, what will you do? What rule have you got? You'll pull out that donkey. But when somebody else comes who's a poor needy person who's got a withered hand, you won't let him be healed on the Sabbath day.

Be very careful, my brothers and sisters that you make rules for your own family which are lenient. I've seen so many elder brothers in our churches who are extremely partial towards their own family members. Who are very strict with other people.

Who are so tolerant of their wives but are very strict with other people but they don't have the guts to open their mouth to their own wives. That's exactly the type of person whom Jesus spoke about. Your donkey falls into the pit, you pull it out.

But this poor person he's got a withered hand, you're not bothered about him. I want to heal him, Jesus said. And I don't care for any of your rules.

Okay. Number seven. Matthew chapter 12 and verse it says here about I want to speak about something which is implied here.

Verse 14. The Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how they might destroy him. Pharisees are motivated by jealousy, hatred and which leads to even thoughts of murder.

Maybe you don't go as far as murder but this is a progression. Jealousy, hatred, murder. You may have taken only first step, jealousy, like Cain.

Cain was, how did Cain progress to murder? Jealousy, hatred, murder. The Pharisees here, verse 14. The Pharisees are people who begin with who are jealous of other people that can lead to hatred and it can even lead to murder.

It depends how far you go. In Cain's case it was jealousy, hatred, murder. You may take only step one but it is step one which leads to murder finally.

You may never go as far as step three but you may go to hatred. Why were they jealous? Because Jesus could do something they couldn't do. If you are jealous that somebody can preach like you can't preach or somebody can do a miracle which you can't do.

You can be jealous of him and you can be critical of him because he is violating some small rule. That's how the Pharisees were. They couldn't heal the man with a withered hand in their own church but they were so critical of Jesus who could do it.

So that's another mark of a Pharisee. Jealous of somebody who can do something which you can't do. And this comes again.

I'll show you later. Jealousy, hatred, murder. It's Cain's religion.

Right in the beginning of the Bible you have two religions. The religion of Abel. The religion of Cain.

And one is you know with the blood covenant with the father. Jesus follows in that footsteps. Abel and the Pharisees followed in Cain's religion.

This is Jerusalem and Babylon. So if we follow Cain's religion we'll ultimately build Babylon. Even if all our doctrines are right.

Okay, number eight. Pharisees are those who are suspicious and assume the worst about other people. A godly man will assume the best but a Pharisee assumes the worst.

Matthew 12 verse 24. When a demon was cast out, they were suspicious. How does this man cast out demons? And they assume the worst.

It must be because he's the prince of demons. That's what I mean. Assuming the worst.

They don't assume the best. Oh, perhaps it's because he's the Messiah. They don't assume that.

You know, human nature is such that we assume the worst about other people. Even when somebody is doing a good thing, they say, ah, I know, he must be doing it with some ulterior motive. We always have this tendency to assume the worst about other people.

And that is a mark of a Pharisee. And I really believe we've got to change this way of thinking. When you see somebody doing something right or wrong and you always assume the worst, you know you're a Pharisee.

Now the interesting thing is, when you see your own children do it, you don't assume the worst. When your own children are doing it, you assume the best. Ah, brother, but there must be some reason why my son

did that or why my daughter did that.

You deserve to go to hell for being such a partial person towards your own family members and so critical of the other poor brothers and sisters in the church. I tell you, you deserve to go to hell. I will support God's decision if He sends you to hell for being partial towards your own family members and being critical of other poor brothers and sisters who don't happen to be your family members.

Beware of that. Suspicious assuming the worst. Why do you assume the worst? Do you know anything about how he's casting out demons? Do you know anything about his inner walk with God? Do you know anything about why he's doing that? What is the motive? Why do you assume that his motive is the worst? Why not say, I don't know.

I don't want to be suspicious. I don't want to judge. Pharisees are extremely suspicious.

And if you're the suspicious kind, suspecting that other sisters are like this, other brothers are like that, well, that's a Pharisee. Alright. Okay.

Number nine. Pharisees are very careless in their speech. They carelessly say rude, hurting things and even pass judgments in their speech.

The same verse. He is casting out demons by Beelzebul. Imagine saying like that about the most godly person that ever walked on the earth.

Perhaps you also sometimes carelessly say against a godly brother. He's like this. Have you ever spoken like that? I remember reading an article when I was a young Christian.

Written by, I think it was, I'm not sure whether it was by A.B. Simpson. He said there, Do you have a sickness which is not being healed despite all your prayer, medical treatment and everything? Okay. You've tried all that.

You've tried the doctors and medicines. Consider this possibility. Have you disobeyed the command in Psalm 105, verse 15 which says, Do not touch my anointing and don't do any harm to my prophets.

And I read that article. He said, Have you ever touched God's anointed? Have you ever spoken against God's prophets? Maybe that is why you have a sickness which will never be healed till you rectify that. You carelessly speak against God's anointed and you carelessly speak against God's prophets.

You carelessly judge people who have done 10,000 times more than what you have done for God. And you sit in judgment over somebody who has done 10,000 times more than what you have done for God. And who probably is 10,000 times more holy than you are.

That is the mark of a Pharisee. Careless in their speech. But what is the attitude of a godly man towards this Pharisee? See what Jesus says.

He says, Okay, I'm just an ordinary man. Verse 32, If you spoke against me, you're forgiven. But make sure you have not insulted the Holy Spirit.

Make sure you have not spoken against the Holy Spirit. Jesus forgave them. But do you think God forgave those Pharisees? No.

You know, in every sin like that, when you speak against somebody, there are two elements to it. One, horizontal. That man has to forgive you.

The other, more difficult, vertical. You have sinned against God in speaking against a child of his. That was not forgiven.

For that, a person has to repent. He must confess to God and to men. So even when some godly man forgives me, it doesn't mean I escape the judgment.

Because God hasn't forgiven me till I have repented before him and asked forgiveness. If the Pharisees had gone to Jesus and said, if one of those Pharisees had said, Lord, I'm so sorry. One year ago, I also joined those people who said that you're casting out demons by and I'm really sorry, Lord.

Will you please forgive me? Then he would have been clear. Not otherwise. So that's something important for us to remember.

Carelessness in speech. Number 10. A Pharisee is one who neglects his family responsibilities in the name of religion.

He neglects his family responsibilities in the name of religion. Matthew 15, verses 1 to 9. Jesus said to them, when they asked him a question, verse 3 onwards, why do you also disobey the commandment of God? Because verse 4, God clearly says, respect your father and mother and anyone who denounces father and mother should be killed. But what do you say? You get around that by saying, if anyone says to his father and mother, you know, I need to support you financially but I'm sorry I can't do that because I've given that money to God.

Oh ho, what a holy person. The money he's supposed to send to his poor father to support his poor father who's struggling financially, he has given for missionary work. So let his poor father be sick and die because this holy man has given his money for missionary work.

God says, you hypocrites. That's not respecting your parent. You've cancelled the word of God.

You're the fellows about whom Isaiah said, these people make a big show of all their religion but their heart is not in it. They say they're worshipping me but they don't mean it. They're just using God as a cover for doing whatever they want to do and teach what they want to teach.

Do you neglect your responsibility towards your wife by saying, oh, I've got to do this. I have to go for a meeting so I can't help my wife at home. You're a Pharisee, alright.

You heard me say, the example of the man who is reading the Bible, having a quiet time early in the morning when his wife is struggling trying to send the children to school. The baby is crying. She's got to cook breakfast and everything else in the kitchen.

The man is studying the tabernacle in Exodus chapter 26. Holy man. He says, Lord, speak to me.

And he doesn't hear what God is saying. Shut your Bible and go and help your wife in the kitchen. He doesn't hear that.

He's trying to analyze what the tabernacle means. Hypocrite. These are the Pharisees.

They neglect family responsibilities in the name of religion. Oh, I'm serving the Lord. I can't help you.

I'm busy doing this. I can't help you and all these things. Sorry.

I don't have time to look after the children. God's called me to serve them. Hypocrites.

Spirituality is to help your family members. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 5, I think it's verse 8, if a man does not know how to take care of his own family's needs, he's worse than an unbeliever. It's true.

If a man does not know how to take care of his own family's financial needs and says, I'm serving the Lord. He's a hypocrite, a humbug. He's a Pharisee.

He's worse than an unbeliever. Number 11. A Pharisee is one who is easily offended.

Matthew chapter 15 verses 12 to 14. The disciples came and said to Jesus, do you know that the Pharisees were offended? When they heard this statement, Jesus said something and the Pharisees were offended. I want to ask any of you brothers and sisters, are you offended when the Lord speaks to you? Are you offended when the Lord speaks to you in a meeting? Are you offended when the Lord corrects you through an elder brother? Are you offended? It's a mark of a Pharisee.

I decided many, many years ago that I'll never get offended in my life. No matter who says what, who doesn't say what. I'm not going to get offended.

I live before God's face. Because I know that getting offended is the mark of a Pharisee. And I want to say this, my brothers and sisters, nobody may know it.

You may not act that you're offended. But if you're offended by some correction, I know people in CFC who've been terribly offended because they were corrected. They wouldn't talk to me.

They wouldn't even talk to my wife after that. Because they were offended. For a long time.

They were offended by some correction. I know young people who are offended because they got some correction. And the way they manifest they're getting offended is they won't talk.

Great. I hope you will turn on from your way to hell before you reach there. I tell you, you're on your way to hell.

If you get offended and you can't talk to somebody, you better repent. Pharisees are on their way to hell. Don't think that because you sit here and sing in the choir, you're gonna go to heaven.

No, you're not. If you don't know how to get over getting offended, brother, sister, you're not on your way to heaven. I'll tell you that.

Pharisees got offended. You know what Jesus told his disciples about the Pharisees? And that's what he's told me also. Wonderful verse.

Leave them alone. Don't go running after them. Oh, brother, are you offended? Oh, sister, are you offended? Let's set it right.

Leave them alone. Let them go. Verse 14.

Leave them alone. They are blind and they are trying to lead other blind people and they will all finally fall into the pit of hell. Those are not my words.

Jesus said it in verse 14. What to do when people are offended? I'll give you good advice. Leave them alone.

Let them go to hell if they want to. They hear enough of what we have spoken about in the church. They hear enough.

And if they don't respond, let them go to hell. So, that's number 11. Number 12.

Matthew 15 verse 14 again. Pharisees are spiritually blind. Spiritually blind.

That means they can't see. Maybe they can read the Bible. They study the Bible like anything.

But they are blind. They don't know where they are going. And here he speaks in verse 14 about Pharisees who are elders.

And when an elder brother is blind, just picture on the road one totally blind man leading a bunch of 50 blind men. Can you picture this in your mind? Have you ever seen it? You'll never see it. But you come to some of our churches, you'll see it.

One blind man leading 50 blind men. And I know where they are headed. I would say, my brother, sister, please, please, please, please don't follow such a blind man.

As I said, sing song number 45. When he says sing 45. When he says stand up, stand up.

When he tells you sit down, sit down like these PT masters. Stand up, stand up. Sit down, sit down.

Follow all that. But when it comes to the real issues of life of godliness, please do not follow a blind man unless you want to fall into the same pit he's going to fall into. Look for a man whose vision is clear.

Who knows how to love people. Who's not condemning people. A man who loves Jesus.

Who sees Jesus so clearly that he can lift up Jesus and show him to you. That's the person I want to follow. That's the person I want to admire and say, boy, I want to be like that.

But don't ever follow a blind person. So Pharisees are spiritually blind. Then, number 13.

And this is the most well-known characteristic of Pharisees. A Pharisee is a hypocrite. Jesus said about the Pharisees in you know, in Matthew chapter 16 verses 6 to 12.

He said, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy. Luke chapter 12 makes that clear in verse 1. That leaven is hypocrisy. And the word hypocrite means an actor.

Hypocrite is not an English word. You know, there are certain words in English which have been imported from other languages. If you look up an English dictionary, you may find the word dobie there.

But you know that dobie is not an English word. It's an Indian word which has been imported in the English language. You know what a dobie is, a washer man.

But in the same way, hypocrite has been imported from the Greek. And it means actor. If you went to Greece in those days and said to people, where are the hypocrites? Oh, they say, go there.

The theater is there. All the hypocrites meet over there. You know, they have regular shows where the hypocrites will get on the stage and do their hypocrisy for a couple of hours.

They collect the money and then they go home. That's the meaning of hypocrite. Hypocrite means an actor.

I mean, like if you went to some place and said, where's all the actors here? You say, yeah, they're in Bollywood there. You go there, all the hypocrites are there. But today we have the hypocrites in the church.

Where there's acting going on for two hours, everybody's acting holy. Everybody's acting as if they're praising the Lord. You should hear them the rest of the week.

Oh boy, if you listen to them the rest of the week, you know the whole thing on Sunday morning is only an act. It's only an act. Pretending to praise the Lord.

They're not praising the Lord the rest of the week. They're just going through an act. And Jesus said, beware of that.

Pharisees are actors. That means their life is different at different times. That fellow who's acting like John the Baptist one day, he's a drunkard the next day.

That's only for the Hollywood movie. He's acting like Moses or John the Baptist. But then he goes back to his, he's divorced three or four times and he's a drunkard and a gambler.

This is hypocrisy. Where for the period of the shooting, which is sometimes Sunday morning, 9.30 to 11.30 the shooting goes on. And they do all their performance.

And then after that is over, they're back to the old life. Are you like that? Acting a particular part when the shooting is going on. And then when that's film shooting and then you live your same old life.

Definitely that's the clearest mark of a Pharisee. Okay. Number 14.

Pharisees are those who seek to catch other people in their words. They seek to catch people in something they say and catch them and say, hey you said this. Matthew chapter 19 and verse 3. You read that the Pharisees came to Jesus testing him.

You know, ask him a question. Let's see if he can trip him up. Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? You know, they were trying to catch him.

As you read later on in chapter 22 and verse 15. We read in Matthew 22 and verse 15. The Pharisees went and plotted together how they might trap him in what he said.

I've had people who have come to my house. Not from our churches. But, you know, they have heard this word that goes around, Brother Zach is preaching some strange doctrine.

So they come to try and catch me in something I say, so that they can go and publicize, hey, we heard him say this. I mean, this is exactly how the Pharisees were. They came to Jesus trying to trap him in some

word that he said and they'll take it out of context and say, ah, he said this.

Do you find you do that sometimes? The Pharisees were like that. I want to just read one more verse in that connection. That's Luke chapter 11 verse 53 and 54.

Luke 11 verse 53 and 54. Verse 54 particularly. They plotted against him to catch him in something that came out of his mouth.

And if you are a person who is always listening carefully to what somebody is saying and you got some half a sentence in what that person said and then you go and tell other people, ah, this is what I heard him say. You are Pharisee of the Pharisees. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

You know how Jesus would listen? That's the way I want to listen. I say here, I don't want to catch a person in some sentence or half a sentence or a word that he said and then quote him to denounce him. No.

I say, well, maybe he was just being casual in the way he spoke and maybe he wasn't serious about what he said or maybe that's not what he meant. Maybe what he meant was something different from what I understood. I mean, a Pharisee will never make that type of allowance.

No, no, no, no, no. I heard with my own ear what he said. That's why it says about Jesus in Isaiah 11 verse 3. He would not judge by what his ears heard or what his eyes saw.

I thank God for that verse. I decided I will not judge by what my ears hear or what my eyes see because I could be wrong. Okay, number 15.

It's going back to something which we looked at earlier in Matthew 15 verse 8. Pharisees are hard hearted. Hard hearted. Matthew 15 verse 8. These people honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me.

The heart cannot melt because it is far from God. You know, if you put butter in the freezer, it just will never melt. But you put butter out in the sun, keep it close to the stove.

The closer it comes to the stove, the hot plate, the quicker that butter melts. But the further away it's from the stove and it's inside the freezer, it's as hard as ever. It can melt but it's hard.

It can be like rock. You know, you can freeze butter to the point where it's like rock. You need a chisel almost to break it if it's frozen hard enough.

And a person's heart can be like that when he's far away from God. God is a fire. And the closer you come to him, anything will melt.

Rocks will melt in the presence of God. Leave alone butter, even rocks will melt. There's no person who can have a hard heart if he's living close to God.

And when you are hard towards other people, you can be pretty sure you're miles away from God. Yeah. Pharisees were hard because they were miles away from God.

Their heart was far from me but their words with their lips they honor me. Oh Lord, we honor you. Thou art worthy.

And all the right songs they sing. But their heart was hard. They were hard towards other people.

They were hard towards listening God speaking to them. They did not know how to judge themselves. A person with a soft heart, how do you know you've got a soft heart? Listen.

You will judge yourself and never judge other people. That's the mark of a man with a soft heart. What is the mark of a man with a hard heart? He doesn't judge himself or his wife or his children.

But he judges other people severely. But his wife and children will escape. Some people may even judge their wives but not themselves.

They won't judge themselves. But I found in my observation most people are tremendously lenient with their own wife and children. They are very hard on others.

We've had examples like that in CFC of people who would say, Ah, what's the use of sending our children to college? Because their children were still in school. We must be wholehearted. We must live for God and all that.

And then their children came to college growing age. Then they sent their children to school and said, yeah brother, I've changed my mind. Then there were people who said, Ah, we must never go to Gulf or America and all.

Till they themselves years later got an invitation to go to Gulf or America. Ah brother, I've changed my mind now. Change your mind after what? After putting people in bondage for 25 years, you change your mind? Hypocrite! Pharisee of the Pharisees! When it comes to yourself and your children, you change all the rules.

These are the first class Pharisees and we've got lots and lots of them in our churches. Who make laws for other people. Hard hearted.

Hard on others. Very soft on their wives and their children and themselves. I hope we'll change.

I'll give you a little bit of advice. Don't go around telling other people, nobody has ever heard from me in 30 years not to go to the Gulf or not to have a television or not to have not to go to America or not to have this or not to have that. I say, I have my convictions.

You have yours. I'm not here to tell you what you should do. But there are a lot of people who are much much younger to me who made rules like this and later on they've had to eat their own words.

Because they do the same thing themselves. Because their children are grown up or they got an invitation to go somewhere or something like that. And do you think they became Pharisees then? They were Pharisees from the beginning.

And the sad thing is they don't even get light on it even later. They're still... Imagine they are proud instead of humbling themselves to the dust and saying, I'm a rotten old Pharisee. They don't even get light on that.

Even after they see their Phariseeism and that's why it never goes well with them even after that. It's really sad. So, don't be hard.

Number 16. Pharisees are people who cannot appreciate true worship and praise. Matthew 21 verse 15.

In Matthew 21 verse 15 we read about people in the temple shouting and praising God and saying, Hallelujah, Hosanna, the son of David. It says here the children began to shout in the temple, Hosanna to the son of David. And the Pharisees were angry saying, what is all this loud noise in praise and worship? Don't you know God is holy God and we must be silent in His presence? They don't really appreciate.

We have a lot of Pharisees today who can't appreciate noisy praise and worship. No, no, no. You mustn't make any noise.

You mustn't play any drums or have loud music or anything. Just softly. Jesus was so happy when He heard it.

You know why He was so happy? Listen. Because it reminded Him of Heaven. At last, I heard something that sounds like Heaven.

Innocent children with clear hearts saying praise the Lord. That's the closest to Heaven. Because Heaven is a place of praise.

It says in Revelation that such loud noise is like thunder. We haven't got there yet in our praise and worship. But some people are offended.

They don't like, you know I'll give you an example. Supposing I say something really good and somebody out there says Hallelujah. Who's that saying Hallelujah in a holy place to say Hallelujah? Or I say something which is really true and somebody says Amen.

Who's that saying Amen? You shouldn't say such things in church. Don't you know this is church? This is not the place to say Hallelujah or Amen. This is the place to sit like you're in a funeral and remember that Jesus has died.

He has not yet risen from the dead. He has died. We must sit seriously.

God have mercy on us. God have mercy on us. Let's pray.

We'll continue. Heavenly Father, open our eyes to see ourselves, our need. Things which are so clearly written in Scripture deliver us from Pharisee-ism.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ZQMWOL9KsFM.mp4>
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