

Pharisees Are Hard-Hearted

by Zac Poonen

A Pharisee's heart is hard because it is far from God, and this hardness is reflected in their treatment of others and themselves.

Scripture: Matthew 7:1, Matthew 15:8, Luke 6:37, Romans 14:10, Galatians 6:1, James 4:6

Topics: "Hypocrisy", "Self-Examination"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the hard-heartedness of the Pharisees, illustrating that their outward honor of God is superficial as their hearts are distant from Him. He compares the heart of a Pharisee to butter in a freezer, becoming hard and unyielding due to their separation from God, who is the source of softness and compassion. Poonen points out that those who are hard on others often reflect their own distance from God, while true followers of Christ judge themselves rather than others. He also highlights the hypocrisy of Pharisees, who impose strict rules on others but show leniency towards their own families. The sermon calls for personal convictions without imposing them on others, urging believers to maintain a soft heart through closeness to God.

Transcript

"This people honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me." (Matthew 15:8).

The heart of a Pharisee is hard, because it is far from God. If you place butter close to a fire, it will melt immediately. But if you put it in the freezer, it will become hard. It can even become as hard as a rock, so that you will need a chisel to cut it. The heart of a Pharisee is like that. God is a fire, and if you live close to Him your heart will always be soft. Even rocks will melt in the presence of God.

If you are hard towards others, you can be certain that you are living far, far away from God. The Pharisees were hard on others because they were millions of miles away from God. Pharisees honour God with their lips and sing beautiful songs of praise, "O Lord, Thou art worthy", etc. But they do not judge themselves. A person who listens to God will judge himself always and never judge others - that is one mark of a man who has a soft heart.

I have observed however that even though Pharisees are very hard on people, many of them are very tender towards their own family members. They make rules for others but will not impose those rules on their own family members. They are full of partiality and hypocrisy.

We must have convictions. I have my own convictions as to what I permit myself to possess or to do. But I do not impose my convictions on others, in matters where Scripture is silent. I don't tell people whether or not to have a TV set. I think a computer connected to the Internet is far more dangerous than any TV set. I warn people of the dangers of both of these gadgets. But I do not make rules for others, like the Pharisees do. I know Pharisees who told others never to possess these gadgets, but who had to eat their words later on, when they themselves bought computers out of necessity.

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