

# Pharisees Are Sticklers for the Letter of the Law

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of balance in teaching and the dangers of the Pharisaical approach to the law, which majorizes on minors and neglects the weightier provisions of the law.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:17, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 23:23, John 4:24, 1 Timothy 6:10

**Topics:** "Legalism", "Spirit Led Ministry"

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## Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the danger of majoring on minors, similar to the Pharisees who focused on tithing minor things while neglecting the weightier matters of God's Law. He emphasizes the importance of preaching on foundational topics like repentance, poverty of spirit, purity, love, humility, and other key teachings of Jesus, rather than getting caught up in legalistic details or cultural preferences. By studying the emphasis of Jesus in the gospels and the Holy Spirit in the epistles, one can learn to prioritize essential teachings in their preaching, leading to a balanced and Spirit-led ministry.

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## Transcript

"You Pharisees tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law" (Matthew 23:23).

Pharisees take some small aspect of a commandment in Scripture, and emphasise that. They "major on minors". There is a lot of preaching like that today. Such preaching will make a church full of legalistic people who are proud of their obedience in minor matters but who are unconscious of their utter disobedience in major matters. Jesus did not tell the Pharisees not to tithe dill and cumin etc. What He did say was that the major matters in God's Law needed more emphasis than tithing.

I studied through the four gospels once and wrote down all the subjects that Jesus emphasised: He preached on repentance, poverty of spirit, gentleness, purity, mourning for sin, paying one's taxes, being born again, worshipping God in spirit, love, humility, marital faithfulness, breaking with human traditions, etc. But He never once spoke on how people should dress or whether women should wear jewellery or veil their heads. He did speak however on living a simple lifestyle and on not loving money.

I then studied the epistles to see what subjects were emphasised much by the Holy Spirit, and what subjects were emphasised very little, or not mentioned at all.

Thus I discovered what I should emphasise most in my preaching and what I should give less importance to. If you study Scripture like that, you will be balanced in your teaching and you will avoid becoming a Pharisaical preacher.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/pharisees-are-sticklers-for-the-letter-of-the-law/>

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