

The Danger of Pharisaism

by Zac Poonen

The sermon warns against the danger of Pharisaism, which is a form of religiosity that masquerades as spirituality, and emphasizes the importance of being genuine and real in our Christian lives.

Duration: 52:59

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 23:3, Luke 1:1, Luke 12:42, Luke 12:45, 2 Corinthians 3:9, James 1:5

Topics: "Pharisaism"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Luke chapter twelve, verse forty-five, which talks about a slave who becomes abusive towards other slaves because he believes his master will be delayed in returning. The preacher emphasizes the importance of ministers giving people the spiritual nourishment they need at the right time, rather than using their position to criticize and condemn others. He warns against comparing oneself to others and despising them based on external appearances or behaviors. The preacher also highlights the danger of creating a culture of guilt and condemnation within churches, instead of offering hope and assurance of God's love and forgiveness. He references the parable of the laborers in the vineyard to illustrate the idea that even those who have wasted much of their lives can still give themselves to God and receive His grace.

Transcript

The Church is called the Body of Christ. And there is a reason why that name has been given to the Church. Because Jesus came to earth with a body, with a physical body, and it was through that body that the world could see what God was like.

If Jesus did not have a body, or if his body was sick or not functioning properly, the world would not have known what God was like. And so, God gave Jesus a body. And as he moved around in Nazareth and Galilee, people could see what God was really like, because nobody had seen God.

And when we, in our different localities, our little groups gathering together, we call ourselves the Church in that area. It's the Body of Christ, and it's got to fulfill the same function that Jesus fulfilled when he was walking in Israel 2,000 years ago. That means people who see us must know what God is like.

And there is a lot of similarity between Jesus' time, the way things were in Jesus' time, and it is in our time. If you look at the Gospels, you find that Jesus was in constant conflict with the Pharisees all the time. And yet, they were, in the eyes of all the people in the world, all the people in Israel, the most religious, the

most spiritual, the most godly of all people.

If you had met Peter, say, one year before he met Jesus, and asked him, Well, Peter, can you tell me the names of some godly people whom you know? He would have mentioned the names of some of the Pharisees in his synagogue. And James would have said the same thing, and John would have said the same thing, because that was their understanding of spirituality. That people who were always praying and reading the Bible and looking very holy and dressing very simply and in a very holy way were godly people.

And then can you imagine the surprise they got when Jesus came into that synagogue and hit out at those Pharisees and said they were the first candidates for hell? It must have been quite a shock, but his eyes were open. What is the body of Christ to do today? The same thing. Exposed religious hypocrisy, unreality.

What is the difference between Jesus and the Pharisees? There's one verse that's been of great help to me in this area, and I want to point out this to you. The contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees. It's important for us to know that, brothers, because if we don't see that difference, however sincere we may be, we will build religious churches, not spiritual churches.

And there's a lot of difference between being religious and being spiritual. I come from a country which is full of religious people, extremely religious people, people who deny themselves in so many ways and sacrifice in so many ways, who give up marriage, give up their job, roll on the ground and do all types of things, difficult things in the name of religion, who will renounce the world, who will renounce sex, renounce money because they're religious, who will pray regularly because they're religious. And it's possible for Christians to be religious and know closer to God than all those people in those heathen religions.

And if we who minister God's Word do not understand clearly what is the difference between being spiritual and religious, we could be like Peter, like I said one year before he met Jesus, and think that this is godliness. It isn't. Jesus came with the light of God.

In Acts chapter 1 in verse 1, it says, Luke is writing about the gospel he had written, and he describes that gospel like this. The first account I composed, Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach. Now, I just want to take that little phrase, and I want you to notice here that Jesus first did and then taught.

He did not practice what he preached. He preached what he had already practiced. He first did and then taught.

He never taught anything that he hadn't done. I want you to see the contrast between this verse and Matthew 23 and verse 3. In Matthew 23, Jesus speaks about the Pharisees, and he told his disciples that everything that the Pharisees tell you to do, verse 3, you can do, but don't do according to their deeds, and you see now this phrase, they say things, but they do not do them. Now, when you compare that verse with Acts 1.1, it's the exact opposite.

There we read Jesus did and taught. Here we read the Pharisees taught, but did not do. But they taught great fantastic things, because they wanted to give people the impression that they were very, very spiritual.

And that is a temptation that comes to anyone who preaches God's word, to make ourselves bigger than we really are. You know, there's an Old Testament verse in Proverbs, which we may think we're never guilty of. It says, an unrighteous balance is an abomination to the Lord.

And I don't think any of us would ever in business use an unrighteous scales, which are weighted down on one side. But spiritually, that's what we may be doing. You know, when we give an impression to people of being more spiritual than we really are, when we are striving to create an impression, it's an unrighteous balance.

It's an unrighteous pair of scales. We're trying to sell something when it doesn't actually weigh that much. We say it weighs 15 pounds, and actually it's only about 5. Do you see that in yourself? I believe it's a tremendous grace from God if we can see ourselves.

To me, that's one of the greatest marks of God's blessing upon my life, that I can see my true condition. And that's what the Pharisees couldn't see. They couldn't see their condition, even when Jesus walked in their midst.

And so he sarcastically told them, I didn't come for you people, you fellas are healthy. I came for these sick people. These sick people who need a physician.

And I see that the ministry of the church is to expose this type of hypocrisy constantly. Unreality. About 26 years ago, I was in full-time Christian work.

I'd already been in full-time Christian work for about 8 years at that time. And I was preaching, traveling here and there to deeper life conferences, and speaking many wonderful things. But God showed me that my life was not real.

I wasn't genuine. I wasn't speaking what I had done. And I came to the end of myself.

And I said, Lord, I want you to do something for me. I want you to meet with me. I want you to fill me with the Holy Spirit.

And I ask you for one thing only. That what I speak will really be true in my inner life. That I will never speak what's not true in every area of my life.

And I sought God. And I prayed with another brother who was in similar need for a year. And God met with me and turned my life around.

My life in ministry has never been the same since. I want to encourage you, dear brothers. Seek for reality.

And I remember the day when God turned my life around. It was January 1975. When I was ministering in a church where I was very highly respected.

And God asked me, He said, Can you stand up in that church and tell people honestly that you are not genuine. That you are not real. And I said, Yes, Lord.

I don't care what anybody thinks about me. I want reality at any cost. And that's the day God turned my life around.

When we look at the history of Christianity, there's something we can learn. You see, a fool is one who doesn't learn from his own mistakes. We're better than him if we learn from our own mistakes.

But we're even better than that if we can learn from the mistakes of others. Then we don't have to repeat those ourselves. And what do we see when we look at church history through whatever years church history has been recorded, particularly since the Reformation? I've tried to study as much as possible of the different Christian groups that have been raised up since the Reformation, different groups that have come up, raised up by godly men, who were concerned with the worldliness and the compromise that had come in Christendom in their day.

Men who were raised up by God with a prophetic message to the church and to restore the church to something closer to the New Testament. I believe God raised up men like Martin Luther and John Wesley and others at different times to do that. And many other groups.

But when we see particularly those groups that emphasized holiness, I was particularly interested in seeing the mistakes they made because the burden that was in my heart in India was when I looked around I saw that the problem in India was not that we were only 1% nominally Christian. India's got 1% of population of... Protestant population of 1% of India's total population. And I saw that the problem in our country was not that we were 1%.

If we became 50% like this 1%, the country would get even a worse impression of Christianity. What was needed was that these people, even those who claimed to be born again, were not disciples. They were just converted.

They were not disciples. They didn't love Jesus more than father, mother, brother, sister, job, possessions, property, house, everything. They didn't.

They wanted to go to heaven. And so they accepted the Lord, they said the formula and they thought they were converted. And I saw that they had no interest in a holy life.

They had no interest in overcoming sin. And this is what made me pull out of all these groups 25 years ago and start with 2 or 3 families in our home. And we preached holiness.

We preached discipleship. Radical discipleship. And so I want to know what is the mistake that people have made who've gone this way before us and I saw as far as I could make out that here were some of the mistakes they made.

They could all be summed up under one word, Pharisees. They made the same mistakes that the Pharisees made in Jesus' time. Now, I don't know much about the origin of the Pharisees but I think they were a group that started many years before Christ and probably was started by godly people who were concerned with the decay and the worldliness and the corruption in the Jewish nation and wanted to restore truth and God's laws, obedience to God's laws in society.

But over a period of time they began to major on minors. They began to be occupied with peripheral things instead of that which was central. That's how they became the Pharisees whom Jesus condemned to hell.

They began to feel that they were better than everybody else because they were different in these peripheral things. They had these little boxes of scripture on their forehead. Like Jesus said, they made long their phylacteries and they gloried in these external things.

They made much of the Sabbath. And if you read in Jewish history, those Pharisees would argue about whether you could, if you are not supposed to do work on a Sabbath day, can you benefit from somebody else doing work for you on a Sabbath day? Can you eat an egg that a hen laid on a Sabbath day? Many things like that, you know, where clever people began to think about what could you do on the Sabbath day and what couldn't you do. There was a law in the Old Testament that you should not lift a burden on the Sabbath day.

And then the clever Pharisees began to think, well, if you wear sandals, what weight should the sandals be before it becomes a burden? Because every time you lift your foot, it's a burden you're lifting on the Sabbath day. These are clever people. And the cleverer you are, the greater the danger of drifting away from God.

And here they were occupied with all these things and they thought they were pleasing God because they were obeying the scripture which said you shouldn't lift a burden on the Sabbath day. You must be a holy people unto the Lord. And they became so holy that they even condemned Jesus when He healed on the Sabbath day.

They were not men of the Spirit. They were prisoners of the letter. And this is what has happened throughout the ages to every group that has preached holiness.

Why is it important for us to know that? Because we are in danger of becoming prisoners of the letter and not men of the Holy Spirit. You see, there's something about a man who's filled with the Spirit, who's in touch with God. There's a radiance about his life.

There's a devotion to Jesus in his heart where he's not occupied with these peripheral things. These are not the main things in his life. He's seen the root of the problem, the root of sin, is that he loves himself and he's seeking his own and he wants to do his own will.

It's not the length of his dress or the length of his hair or whether he wears ornaments or not. These are not the main things. The root of the problem lies in this.

All men seek their own. And as long as we're seeking our own, we're in sin, we're in the depths of sin, no matter what the length of our dress is or what the length of our hair is. It's not in these things.

I believe this is how the devils led the Pentecostal and the charismatic movement astray. They made so much of the gift of tongues as if that is the central thing in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And whenever the devil sees a group of people who are really seeking after God, he gets them to major on some little thing.

And that may be a good thing. Okay, speaking in tongues may be a good thing and modesty in dress and all these things may be good things, but you can take a little finger and make it 12 feet long and you'll be a nuisance wherever you go. And that's been the problem.

The thing is, one group makes this little finger 12 feet long. The other group makes the fourth finger 12 feet long. It's different things.

For one, it may be speaking in tongues. For another, it may be something else. For another, it may be breaking a bread or whatever it is.

But it's always these little things and the heart may be in a pathetic condition, the liver may be diseased, but they've got to make sure the little finger or the fingers and the end result is we make these fingers so long that some people react against that and that's exactly what the devil wants, to react against this extreme position which some people have gone to and say, let's cut off this finger altogether. Is that the solution? They say, look at all these people with all the emphasized modest dresses and this, that and the other. Forget it.

Dresses are not the thing. Let's dress with any way we like. And you see the other extreme which so many Christians go to today.

That's not the answer. The thing is to keep it the right sense. To keep it.

You see, truth is like a body. It's not enough to say the Bible speaks about these 100 things. It's like saying the body has got heart, liver, little finger, eye, ear, hair.

It's all true. But all these are not of equal importance. The heart is much more important than the little finger.

And the same way of the truth of Scripture. There are many things written in Scripture. Many, many things.

There are things written in Scripture about how we are to meet together and about gifts of the Spirit and fruit of the Spirit and about clothing and eldership and so many things. But we need to see what is more important and what is less important. Then only we have understood truth in its proper proportion.

And a good minister of the Word is not just one who preaches on every single subject in Scripture. But one who has understood which is more important than the other. Jesus said, All men will know you are my disciples when you love one another.

That is the central thing. He said, One commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you. And that is central.

It is like the heart of the body. And we must never forget it. So we see that when Jesus was on earth he was in conflict with this type of religious, religiosity which was masquerading as spirituality.

And he was always exposing it. And they got mad at him. They killed him.

They didn't want it to be exposed. And even today people don't want it to be exposed. Because when this religiosity is taken away they've got nothing left.

And Jesus stripped that. And when he sent out his disciples he had trained them through all the years. For example, think of the number of times he healed people on the Sabbath day.

It's amazing when I think of it. Sometimes it's almost as though he deliberately did it on the Sabbath day to provoke and irritate these people who made so much of the Sabbath day. To show them that this is not what God meant.

And he, think of the first miracle that Jesus did. I've often thought about that. I mean if God had given me the responsibility of planning Jesus' miracles I certainly wouldn't have made the very first one.

Multiplying, why? What a miracle to start with. I mean, that's not a spiritual miracle. I would have started with raising Lazarus from the dead or something like that.

But to start with making extra wine for fellas who've already had enough to drink. Have you ever thought of it? Why he did that? Why did God in his great wisdom arrange that to be, it says in John chapter 2, this beginning of miracles he did in Cana of Galilee. And I worked it out there once.

It says there, there were about 150 gallons of wine or something that 20 to 30 gallons each, 6 water pots. That's, even though 200-300 people at that wedding, it just means each person got 5 or 6 extra glasses of wine. It was such an abundance that Jesus made.

I thought, what would a person who didn't, who whose idea of spirituality depended on food and drink, on avoiding these things, what would he have done in such a situation when the wine ran out? He would have said, well, let's fast and pray. And it's interesting, Jesus didn't say that. He just made extra wine.

And I believe there's a reason behind it. And we need to face up to it. Jesus came to demolish a religion that consisted of rituals and external things like this, of avoiding this.

Like it says in Colossians 2, don't touch this and don't taste that and don't handle this other thing. Which all have, it says an appearance of wisdom. Which all have an appearance of spirituality.

But with all of that it doesn't deal with dirty thoughts in our minds. It doesn't deal with anger that comes from our lips. It's all a holiness which is to impress people.

Jesus came to demolish it. He came to make a man like himself inside, at the center of his being. And the other great danger in this type of holiness, of don't touch, don't taste, don't handle, and on sabbath days and holy days and many things like this, the great danger of this is that it gives us a feeling that we're better.

Do you know the number of parables that Jesus spoke? I was studying the parables once and I was amazed to see I don't know whether you've noticed it the number of parables he spoke to expose where he exposed legalism and religiosity and pharisees. Think of the story of the you know the well known parable he spoke about the pharisee and the public and going to pray. And there he says about this pharisee who was saying God I thank you that I pray and I fast and I it's all these external rituals again.

So many times a week and I type and I'm not like this other person. I thank God that I'm not like other men. You know this phrase has been at the root of all pharisees and throughout the ages.

Because I do these things because I dress in this way or because I don't touch that and I don't taste this. God I thank you that I'm not like people in other denominations. I thank you Lord that I belong to the remnant whom you have chosen.

And the sad thing is we don't even see the phariseeism in the whole thing. We think we're really God's elect. That's exactly how the pharisees felt.

They didn't realize that they were a stink in God's nostrils. There's nothing that God hates like pride. Spiritual pride.

And that's why Jesus said that parable. Whenever that feeling comes into us. Lord I thank you that I'm not like other people because I do all these things.

So what's the answer to that? Cut off the little finger? What's the answer to that? Stop reading the Bible? Become immodest in our dress? No that's not the answer. The answer is to please God and to be humble about it. And not to compare ourselves with anybody else but to say well maybe they don't have life.

I remember hearing a story of one of the disciples of Francis of Assisi. I think his name was Juniper. They had this vow that they had taken in that brotherhood that we'd all wear very simple clothes and a vow of poverty and they were never to own anything.

They were never to own anything. And you know different groups that have pursued holiness through the years have made certain rules for themselves and with very good intentions. I don't despise them.

I think they were sincere and God appreciates sincerity and I believe when they did it, they did it as unto the Lord and the Lord accepted it. The danger was when they began to compare themselves with others and despise others when those other fellows didn't take a vow of poverty or when the other fellows didn't dress simply, that's where the problem arose. And here was Juniper one day with his very simple clothes and one day he saw one of his brothers wearing a very fancy dress and he said to himself, perhaps under that fine coat that my brother is wearing he has a humbler heart than I have under this simple dress that I'm wearing.

That's true Christianity. To consider that it's quite possible that under that dress which is perhaps not as modest as mine that sister has a humbler heart and a better heart than I have. Then we can pursue these things that we pursue.

It's when we begin to feel I thank God that I'm not like other people, that God withdraws because the Bible says God is against the proud. He opposes the proud. He gives grace to the humble.

And it's easy to be humble when we begin the Christian life because we're nobodies, we're nothing. But as we go on a little and God's begun to bless us, I've come to see it's a very difficult thing for God to bless us. Because when God blesses our head becomes bigger.

And then immediately He has to oppose us because that's the law of God that He opposes the proud. He's the enemy of the proud. He can either be behind me, pushing me forward, giving me grace or He stands in front of me and pushes me back.

And I always want Him to be behind me. And God gives grace to the humble. So I was thinking of these parables that Jesus spoke and one of the parables was this of the Pharisee and the publican.

Think of the other one of the story of the prodigal son. I really believe that parable was meant to highlight the elder son more than the prodigal son. It's actually the parable of two sons.

And here was this one son and in the story, that story in a nutshell is that at the beginning of the story, this terrible sinful son is outside the house and the this holy elder son who's kept all the commandments is inside the house. And at the end of the story, the tables are reversed and the elder son's outside the house and the younger son's inside the house. That's what Jesus was trying to point out.

And it was primarily directed at the Pharisees. And you see the attitude of that elder son towards his younger brother. It was just like the Pharisee.

Lord, I thank you. I'm not like him. I kept all your commandments.

I haven't ruined my life like that fellow. I haven't wasted your money or your time. I've done all your commandments.

I've done everything and he's outside the house. And this other person who one would think could never have a place at all. The father makes him sit at his right hand.

I've often thought about how sinners were attracted to Jesus. You know the sinners one would normally think that a sinner would feel more comfortable with a less holy person than with a more holy person. But interestingly enough the most sinful people in Israel were not so comfortable with the Pharisees.

But they felt so much at home with Jesus. Even though Jesus was holier than all these Pharisees. Adulterous women felt free to come to them.

Thieves and sinners. How is it with our churches? Where two or three gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them. If Jesus is really in the midst of our church one mark of it will be that sinful people will feel drawn.

I mean those who want to give up their sin. The people who detested Jesus the most in Israel were not the gamblers and the drunkards and the prostitutes. It was the Pharisees.

It was the religious people. The hypocrites. And if Jesus is in the midst of our church.

It's the hypocrites who should be trembling. And it's the sinners who should be drawn. To the Saviour's feet.

Is it like that? What about the young people? Who are on drugs and various other sins in the world today? Do they come into our church? Do they feel well? This holy bunch of people don't understand my problems. They will never understand. They've got messages to preach to me but they can't understand what I'm going through.

Sinners didn't feel like that about Jesus. This is the thing that's challenged me constantly in my own life. Am I really presenting Christ correctly? Lord, there's a tendency in me to drift towards the Pharisee.

Please give me light on it. That I shall always see Jesus very clearly before my eyes. See, the Bible speaks about the Old Testament ministry in 2 Corinthians 3 like this.

It contrasts the Old Testament ministry with the New Testament ministry. And calls the Old Testament ministry a ministry, 2 Corinthians 3.9, of condemnation. What is a ministry of condemnation? In the New Testament ministry, it's called in verse 8, a ministry of the Spirit.

Here is a ministry of the Spirit and a ministry of condemnation. A lot of preaching in holiness churches is a ministry of condemnation. People come there and feel condemned.

I'm not good enough. I'm not good enough. Everything they hear makes them feel, I'm not good enough.

God's angry with me. It's not true. It's a lie.

God's not angry with us. He gave His Son to die for us. And He who spared not His own Son, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? When we were His enemies, He gave His Son for us.

How much more now that we have come to Him? But that's not the feeling a lot of people who sit in churches get. They feel condemned. They feel they're not good enough.

And the ministry is designed to produce guilt in people. And this is a psychological technique by which you can hold people. Make them feel guilty.

Make them feel guilty in every meeting. They'll always feel miserable and stick with you. Jesus never did that.

That's the spirit of the accuser. Accusing people. Accusing people.

And we must never have it in our churches. The ministry of the Spirit is always a ministry that gives us hope. One of the most common questions that young believers have asked me is this.

How can I know, Brother Zach, whether it's the devil speaking to me or the Holy Spirit speaking to me? Well, I said there are a number of ways in which we can find that out. And one thing I'd say is the devil always makes you feel condemned. Whereas the Spirit doesn't.

The devil makes you say, you're good for nothing. You'll amount to nothing. That's the thousandth time you've failed.

You've failed again and again and again and again. You're hopeless. It's no use.

Give up. Whereas the Holy Spirit never condemns. He convicts.

And there's a lot of difference between the two. When the Holy Spirit convicts, He's specific. He says, son, daughter, the way you spoke to that person, that wasn't Christ-like.

The way you spoke to your wife or your husband, that wasn't Christ-like. Just go and apologize. You said it right.

See, there's hope for a person. Yeah, I can get up. I can get up from that pit.

Whereas the devil comes with, you've done that again. There you've gone and done it again. And you've ruined that situation and you've messed up that.

You won't amount to anything. That's the devil. The parents will speak like that to their children sometimes.

It's terrible. That's the voice of the devil. You're good for nothing.

How many times have I told you not to do it like that? You know, one of the most encouraging words to me in Scripture has been this in James, in chapter 1. It's always blessed my heart because I made so many mistakes in my life. I blundered so many times. And God's had to speak to me, not just once or twice, a hundred times on the same issue.

And He's always been patient. And that's taught me something about how to deal with other people. If I am to reflect Christ, I must be patient.

In James, chapter 1, it says, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives to all men generously and without scolding them. That's such an encouraging word that God never scolds us. He never scolds us.

He corrects us, but He never scolds us. And I think of the times in my own life, my earlier days in my ministry, where I preached and it's been scolding people. Why are you fellows so lazy? Why aren't you so wholehearted for God? It sounds so spiritual.

But it's not from God. And I remember the Lord once spoke to me from Luke, chapter 12. He said to me, He said, you're not feeding the people.

You're beating them. Luke, chapter 12, verse 45. If that slave says in his heart, my master will be a long time in coming and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, instead of giving them like it says in verse 42, their rations at the proper time.

That's our calling, those who minister the word, to give people the food they need at the proper time. And instead of that, if I beat them, and it's very easy to beat people with God's word from the pulpit. It's very easy to, it's the easiest thing in the world.

It's much easier than feeding them. Feeding them is, you've got to have the heart of a father and a mother. You've got to be patient and long-suffering to feed people.

But to beat them, you can be a teacher. You're like a teacher and beat people and say, you're not like this and you're not like that. And look down on people and make people feel uncomfortable if they don't conform exactly to the way I feel holy people should behave or dress or speak or anything.

Yeah, then we're beating them. I remember hearing, reading a message of David Wilkerson, where he said how in his younger days, once he went to speak to a group of converted hippies in California who were called the Jesus people. Many years ago, it was in the 60s.

And how he had dressed up properly in a suit and tie and all that. And he saw all these people sitting there in front of him with beads and without shoes and long hair and all these things. And he told them to get dressed properly and come to the meetings in future.

And he says after the meeting, one of the elders of that group came to David Wilkerson with tears and said, David, we love you. But we didn't see Christ in you today. Your dress got in the way.

We couldn't see Jesus. And he says he learned something there. That he didn't love these people like Jesus loved them.

When we think of Jesus saying to us that we're to love others as Christ loved us. I see that Jesus had the right to point out sin in people. Because he was willing to die for those sins.

That's something that's constantly challenging. Before you rebuke sin, the Lord says, ask yourself, what price are you willing to pay to free them from that sin? Do you see worldliness there in that brother, in that congregation? What price are you willing to pay to deliver them from that worldliness? Just preach to them. Any teacher can do that.

But Jesus, he was willing to die to pay the ultimate price in order to save people from worldliness and from sin. This is the one we are to present in the church. And this is what brings me down on my face before God in repentance constantly.

And I know that I'll be down on my face tonight after preaching to you as well. It's easy to preach. But what, how much am I willing to pay in order to deliver people from that sin and the worldliness? There's a

song we sing in our church in Bangalore which goes like this, I should have been crucified.

I should have suffered and died. I should have hung in the cross and disgraced. But he hung there in my place.

They came to take me. But he said, let him go. Take me instead.

That's how Jesus saved me. He showed himself as a friend of sinners. Before he became their savior.

He didn't preach to them. He saved them. Pharisees wouldn't be willing to die for the sins of people.

They just condemned people for their sins. And there's a lot of Pharisee preaching and among a lot of Christian churches today. Which brings people into bondage.

Does not give them hope. Makes them feel that there's no hope for them. I've thought of this other parable that Jesus spoke in Matthew 20 of these people who were laborers in the vineyard.

There's some people who came at 6 o'clock in the morning and worked for 12 hours. And then it goes down to that last group of people who worked only for one hour. Who are these people who work for one hour? One hour out of 12 hours in a working day is less than 10%.

They are the people who wasted 90% of their life. And they had 10% left. They gave it to God.

And the interesting thing is they got their reward first. And then these people who had spent 12 hours serving God like the elder son. They came and said and this is the thing.

How can you make, Matthew 20 verse 12. How can you make these people equal to us? That's the question. Equal to me? Equal to me who served you for 40 years? Equal to me who has preached high standards of holiness for so long? Are you going to make this fellow equal to me? Then we haven't seen the corruption of our own heart.

Then we haven't seen the rottenness of sin. We haven't seen that in our flesh there dwells nothing good. I believe there is a great need, brothers and sisters, for us to see ourselves as God sees us.

And perhaps He may not have such a high opinion of our holiness as we have. He may not think we are such a remnant as we think we are. It's becoming for us to put our face in the dust and say, Lord let me see myself as you see me.

Make me more like Jesus. Make me more willing to pay the ultimate price to deliver people from their sin instead of just pointing out their sin. Instead of showing them their worldliness, to love them and draw them into the kingdom.

Instead of showing them how much superior to them I am. May God have mercy on us. Let's bow our heads before God.

He did not come to judge the world. He did not come to blame. He did not only come to seek.

It was to save He came. And when we call Him Saviour we call Him by His name. We do not have the right to judge.

We are not called to blame. We are only here to bless and help and love in Jesus name. And when we love each other we glorify His name.

Heavenly Father, we see so much of unlikeness to Christ in our own lives and so much of the Pharisees forgive us help us Lord to be true to you in a in the midst of an adulterous and sinful generation in the midst of a compromising Christendom to stand true to the principles of your word without compromise and yet to stand for your principles in a Christ like way. Give us grace Lord we ask to walk in humility and brokenness so that you can give us grace. We ask in Jesus name.

Amen. Thank you Brother Zach. That is that's right.

Sometimes when I hear you speak I want you to start over again to make sure I got it right. I appreciate that it's recorded that we are able to do that but oh may we not be like the Pharisees but rather be genuine and real. Take our facades off and just be real real people.

I also appreciate it so much for the illustration there of the explanation on some of Jesus's parables. Yeah I think I would have probably wanted to raise Lazarus from the dead too first instead of making wine. I thank God for it.

I just want to get that vision for myself all of my life to be real and to do those things which really matter. I don't think I'll give an invitation tonight however if you feel that you need some help please go to your prayer group leader feel free to go out into the barns or the tent trailer rooms or down in the basement or wherever. You need to get alone with God tonight afterwards or if you just want to go by yourself and get lost and deal with whatever God has laid in your heart we certainly always want to give you freedom and opportunity to do that.

I don't think we'll give an invitation tonight we'll just let that sink deep in our hearts this first evening and we'll have a song while the chairs are put away in the back there.

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