

I don't want to be a Pharisee

(Matthew 5:20)

Introduction:

- 1- The Pharisees: [The name *Pharisee* in its Hebrew form means *separatists*, or *the separated ones*. They were also known as *chasedim*, which means *loyal to God*, yet its ironic that they made themselves the most bitter and deadly, opponents of Jesus Christ and His message.]
 - a- "He answered them, "And why do you transgress the Commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? (Matthew 15:3-6)
 - b- "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in." (Matthew 23:13 RSV).
- 2- There's a children's song that says, "***I don't want to be a goat, nope—always livin without hope...I don't wanna be a Sadducee—cause they're always so sad you see....***" Then it says, "***I don't wanna be a Pharisee—cause they're livin in a heresy.***"
- 3- Don't you appreciate the sentiments of that song? Anything that would cause me to lose my most valuable possession (my soul),I want no part in. **Modern day Pharisaim will do just that.**
 - a- Actually Jesus condemned this sect more than any other in his entire earthly ministry.
 - b- On one occasion, Jesus asked these hypocrites a very pointed question when he said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Mt. 23:33).

Transition:

[Here's a question for you: How do you know when you're dangerously approaching the attitude of a modern day Pharisee? Here are listed some six things that serve as a litmus test of whether or not I'm one of the one's whom the Lord spoke against].

Discussion:

I- ***I'm a Pharisee if . . .***

A- I Criticize Jesus.

You say, "Well I would never criticize Jesus." Yet you may

disobey or criticize the teaching of Jesus—just like the Pharisees did. Do you criticize what Jesus taught about the church? Jesus says he built one church (Mt. 16:18).

- 1- Have you ever disobeyed the teaching of Jesus with respect to worship?
- 2- What about attendance, **(Heb 19:25)**.
- 3- What about giving in worship? Are you giving liberally as God has prospered you **(Acts 9; 1 Cor. 16)**? If not, it's as if you are openly criticizing the Lord by disobeying his inspired book.

B- I Care Not about the Souls of the World.

- 1- When was the last time you told someone the story of Jesus? The Pharisees could not believe that Jesus would speak to sinners. I wonder how often we demonstrate that same contempt for the lost. **Jesus said "...come unto me..." (Mt. 11:28-30)**. What is the message that we are sending out?
- 2- Paul wrote, "...who will have all men to be saved..." (1 Tm. 2:4). Do you want all men to be saved?

C- I Choose Not to Forgive those who Trespass Against Me.

- 1- We all fall short of the glory of God—we all sin **(Rm. 3:23; 6:23)**. All men are equal with respect to their need for forgiveness.
- 2- In the parable of the prodigal son, the younger brother left home early in life demanding of his father for an early inheritance. He wasted his life and sinned against his father. Yet he came to himself, repented, asking his father for forgiveness.
 - a- The elder brother, instead of forgiving his penitent sibling, was angry, then murmured and complained. He saw his brother's failures, but could not see his own need for forgiveness.
 - b- He was a Pharisee at heart.

D- If I Consciously Play the Role of a Hypocrite.

- 1- Jesus warned, ***"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation" (Mt. 23:14)***.

- 2- One old preacher put it this way, “Do you pray for unity, and yet cause division and strife? Do you pray for widows and orphans and let them starve to death? Do you go to worship, and then walk by on the other side when something needs to be done (Lk. 10)? Do you attend worship and then close your eyes to opportunities?
 - 3- **If so, then you’re a Pharisee.”**
- E- If I Concern Myself Only with Appearances.**
- 1- The Pharisees did a lot of great works. Why? Jesus said, *“But all their works they do for to be seen of men...”* (Mt. 23:5).
 - 2- Why do you serve God? Is it for recognition? You say, “Of course not. I don’t serve the Lord for a pat on the back.”
 - 1- However, do you find yourself feeling insulted if you’re not recognized for what you do?
 - 2- Or, are you ready to quit and throw in the towel if appreciation is not expressed for what you do?
 - 3- If so, the attitude is dangerously close to that of the Pharisees.
- F- If I Constantly Find Fault in Others.**
- 1- The Pharisees were well known for being overly critical.
 - 2- Some people are just waiting and hoping that you’ll mess up, so they can condemn you for it.
 - a- On one occasion Luke wrote, *“And the scribes and Pharisees watched him [Jesus], whether he would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him”* (Lk. 6:7).
 - b- Some people are just born in the “vindictive case and the kickative mood.” Jesus described them this way, “Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel” (Mt. 23:24).

Conclusion:

The pharisaic spirit is alive today. Jesus warns, **“...That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”** (Mt. 5:20).

May God help us to empty our hearts of such attitudes and be filled with the spirit of Christ-likeness and may we continue to be more fully conformed to the image of the Christ.(Rom 8:29).

Allan Fowell

Thanks to Neil Richey for this outline.