

Pharisees: Finding Fault, Missing the Harvest

Matthew 9

Introduction:

1. As I read and reread this chapter of God's Word, there were two prevailing thoughts that really stood out to me:
 - Jesus was real busy ministering to and helping people.
 - The scribes and Pharisees were real busy griping, complaining, and finding fault.
2. Let's see this evidenced all throughout this chapter:
 - Jesus healed a crippled man physically and spiritually. vs. 1-8
 - The Scribes found fault with Jesus. vs. 3
 - Jesus called Matthew (a tax collector) to follow Him (vs. 9), and then reached out to Matthew's friends and co-workers by eating supper with them. vs. 9-10
 - The Pharisees found fault with Jesus. vs. 11 (Notice Jesus' answer in verses 12-13.)
 - Jesus raised a girl from the dead. vs. 23, 25-26
 - Those that were watching laughed Jesus to scorn. vs. 24
 - Jesus healed a demon-possessed man. vs. 32-33
 - The Pharisees found fault with Jesus. vs. 34
3. As we come to the end of the chapter, Jesus is still busy ministering, teaching, preaching, meeting needs, and changing lives. vs. 35
4. But then He looked at the multitudes that still had needs, still stood in need spiritually, and He looked at His disciples and uttered those classic words, "*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.*" vs. 37-38
 - The harvest is large and abundant. People everywhere need Christ and the message of the gospel of Christ. But Jesus said that the laborers were few. This word "few" is defined as "puny."
5. The harvest is too great to allow ourselves to become faultfinding Pharisees or to allow them to derail us on our mission to change lives through the gospel.
6. I want to share with you two key principles from our text.

Faultfinding Pharisees always miss the harvest.

1. All throughout this chapter, Jesus is ministering to people and meeting needs, yet he keeps getting criticized and ripped apart by the Pharisees and scorners sitting on the sidelines.
2. As I read this chapter, I saw these faultfinders keep popping up and I thought, "I don't want to be like them! I don't want to be in that group."
3. How much talent and ability does it take to do this? Who are they helping? Whose lives are they changing? The answer is, "Nobody!" Yet they are experts at telling Jesus everything He is doing wrong.
4. These faultfinders are very smug and arrogant. They think they know it all, but as you read this chapter, it's clear that they are quite ignorant.
 - Verse 3 - They didn't have a clue that Jesus spoke the words of life and truth. They didn't know blasphemy from a hole in the wall.
 - Verse 11 - They didn't have a clue about reaching those in need.
 - Verse 24 - They didn't have a clue about what Christ would do.

- Verse 34 - They didn't have a clue as to how Jesus cast out the demon.
 - These faultfinders were clueless, yet they thought they knew everything. They missed the harvest while Jesus reaped it.
5. Here is what I have found:
 - A person who is habitually finding fault with others is usually quite ignorant.
 - How do you know? Because if they were really experts at knowing the right way to do things, they'd be **doing it** and the results would show. They miss the harvest.
 6. Did you know it takes mental and emotional energy to criticize and rip apart others? Think about if a person used that energy to love and reach people.
 - It's all about people, and Pharisees don't get this. They think it is all about their position, their rules, and their power.
 7. Life is too short to become a cynical, faultfinding Pharisee. I don't want to be in that group. The work is too great that Christ has given us to do. The harvest is too plentiful and the laborers are too few to sit around and pick other people apart.
 8. I don't want to miss the harvest of needy souls by becoming a faultfinding Pharisee.

Faultfinding Pharisees will seek to discourage the true laborers.

1. One of the truths that stood out to me in this chapter is that Jesus refused to allow these faultfinders to derail him.
2. Let's notice how Jesus kept ministering and moving forward.
 - They said, "You are blaspheming." Jesus basically responds, "Oh, I am? Okay - arise, take up your bed and walk." vs. 6-7
 - They said, "You are eating with publicans and sinners." Jesus responded they that are whole don't need a doctor, but they that are sick. "Now think on that - pass the mashed potatoes please."
 - In verse 24, Jesus exits the room with this girl and says, "I hate to interrupt your laughter session, but you may want to say hello to this girl."
 - In verse 34, they basically accuse Jesus of being demon-possessed, but in verse 35 Christ is right back to ministering and helping people.
3. Here is the point. If you are busy serving the Lord and helping people, Satan will attempt to sidetrack you or discourage you or derail you. He will use a person (maybe another Christian) to nitpick you or talk behind your back or criticize you.
 - Remember when Nehemiah was busy trying to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem? His enemies (Sanballat and Tobiah) said, "Come on down and meet with us, let us tell you all the reasons it can't be done."
 - Nehemiah responded, "*I am doing a great work so that I cannot come down (to you.) Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?*"
4. I have had Sanballats in my life and you will too if you are busy ministering for Christ.
 - People falsely accuse me, misjudge me, get angry and upset, talk behind my back.
 - If I sat around thinking about it and dwelling on it, sure I would get discouraged and depressed. I may even throw up my hands and quit and say, "What's the use?"
 - But you cannot allow faultfinding Pharisees to derail you and get you off track. You have to keep moving forward.

5. If Jesus had critics (and He was sinless and perfect), if you are trying to serve Him and impact people for Him, you will have your share of critics, too.
6. But the harvest is too great to miss it by allowing Pharisees to stop us.

In Conclusion:

1. It is interesting in this chapter that the Pharisees saw faults in others, but Jesus saw needs in others.
2. What is the answer for faultfinding Pharisees? How can they overcome their love for faultfinding and not miss the harvest?
3. Jesus ended this chapter by saying, "*Pray ye therefore...*"
4. We must get on our knees, see the harvest that is ripe, and truly desire to be a part of the harvest of impacted lives.
5. As we do this, instead of seeing faults in others, we begin to see needs! This is when true ministry can begin to take place.