

Lessons Learned From the Pharisees
"How to Overcome our Love for Judging Others"
Luke 18:9-14

Introduction:

1. The Pharisees were a religious group in Jesus' day that were known for their religious zeal. They believed in keeping the Old Testament law as the scribes interpreted it. They were very reclusive and if you weren't a Pharisee, they wanted nothing to do with you.
 - We see the Pharisees constantly antagonizing Jesus, trying to catch Him in a slipup. They tried to discredit Him and make Him look foolish.
2. The problem was that most of the Pharisees talked a good talk, but their hearts were wicked and far away from God. **Matthew 15:8**
3. They were very judgmental of other people, looking down their noses at others who weren't in their group - "sinners." **Example: Luke 18:9-14**
4. I think we all are capable of acting like the Pharisees, don't you? So many times, there are few activities in life that rival the thrill of passing judgment on another human being.
5. For many, judgment and condemnation have become a way of life (nobody else can drive, we pick apart our family members, waitress is inept, the cashier is an airhead, the politicians are crooked, the L.I.F.E. Group teacher is boring, the choir is too loud, etc.)
6. Have you ever noticed how everything that is wrong with the world is always someone else's fault? We like it that way. Our flesh takes great pleasure in scrutinizing the minutest details of someone else's compromise, but somehow overlooks large chunks of our own self-contradiction.
7. Judging others can come so easy. It is that Pharisee in us. How can we overcome this? Let's look into the Bible and see how we can overcome our love for judging others.

First, by refusing to compare yourself with others

1. Notice verse 11, "*or even as this publican.*" He is praying with his eyes on the publican and thinking, "Compared to him, I'm in great shape."
2. The act of judging gives us a subjective means of affirming ourselves. No matter what I've done or how bad I am, I can always comfort myself by finding someone who is "worse" than I am.
 - What if someone appears to be better than me? No problem. I'll just manufacture some flaw in his character that allows me to be better than he is in my mind.
 - What happens is, I try to find value in myself by repeatedly finding someone further down the moral and spiritual ladder.
3. Notice in our text, he says, "I'm not like other men." Notice the comparison. His feeling is "I'm different, I'm better." It is the creed of the Pharisees to be better than everyone else and to invent a self-devised measuring stick whereby they can always come out on top and be better!

- Nobody else knows what your measuring stick is or even cares, but that is the fun of passing judgment. We call the shots. We make the rules. We draw the line in the sand and step over it, leaving everyone else on the other side. It is a fullproof way to feel good about ourselves.
4. Here is the fallacy of all of this (**Romans 14:10-13**). We aren't fooling anyone but ourselves. When you stand before God, nobody else will be there. The measuring stick will be God's Word.

Second, by striving for true spirituality

1. The Pharisees were masters at setting up a self-prescribed list of "dos" and "don'ts." Of course, since **they** set them up, **they** are usually the only ones who can keep them. So they assume that they are spiritual and everyone else is somewhere beneath.
 - So often spirituality is reduced to a nitpicky list that some can't keep and other people don't care about.
2. In our text, notice how the Pharisee had his list. He had it all figured out. "I'm spiritual and you're not and here is the list of rules to prove it."
3. Here is the problem - spirituality isn't manifested by the keeping of a list of rules. It has been tried and it has been proven that it doesn't work. God tried it.
 - The Ten Commandments - a simple list, but the problem is that nobody in human history could ever keep it (except Christ). The list was given to show us how sinful and guilty we are and that we need a Savior.
 - It was given to show that our problem goes much deeper than our actions. The problem is our sinful hearts that are naturally bent toward sin.
4. True spirituality does not begin with the outward, it deals with the inward. This is why God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. **Galatians 4:6**
5. To be spiritual means that you are yielded to and walking in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is guiding your thoughts, attitudes, and actions through God's Word.
6. There are two works that the Holy Spirit does in our lives:
 - He roots out the negative. **Galatians 5:16-21**
 - He instills the positive. **Galatians 5:22-23**
7. Most Pharisees don't have on their list, "Love everybody," "Say only kind things about people," "Be gentle and meek with others," "Maintain a joyful attitude and countenance," "Be patient and long-suffering with others."
8. **Galatians 5:25** is the test of spirituality - not a self-prescribed list. Are you walking in the Spirit?

Third, by loving people where they are

1. Isn't it interesting that this Pharisee is looking down his nose at this publican and condemning him? As a "spiritual leader," you would think he would be trying to help him and love him. Instead he stands and condemns him.
2. When you examine the life of Jesus, one of the things you can't miss is the fact that He just loved people where they were (whether they were demonically possessed, crippled, confused, blinded, violent, etc).
3. Christ taught Israel to love people, just as He loved people. **Luke 6:35-37**

- Isn't it interesting that we don't want God to judge **us**, but we want justice for everybody else? We like the idea of God having mercy on us, but **we** aren't that bad, we're good people. We deserve mercy. But those scoundrels out there who lie, cheat, and commit terrible sin - it's justice for them.
4. But we can't have it both ways. If everyone else gets justice, then I must get justice too. On the other hand, if God is going to offer mercy to me, then everybody gets an offer of mercy. It's the law of impartiality.
 - If I want mercy for me, then I have to allow it for everyone else, even those who, in my estimation, are "worse" sinners than me.
 - This is the big picture we need to see: justice for all; condemnation for all. A cross and an empty tomb for all; mercy for all! **Romans 11:32**
 5. This is why Paul taught the church to forgive and love people - because of the mercy and forgiveness that **we** have been shown. **Ephesians 4:32**
 6. If we are to overcome that fleshly love for judging others we must remind ourselves of our Savior and His mercy for us. This will cause us to love people right where they are.

In Conclusion:

1. What is the end of this story? Read verse 14.
2. Can you imagine the joy this Pharisee could have had if he would have put away his smug, judgmental attitude, admit his hypocrisy and join the publican with both of them on their knees before a merciful God?
3. Both of them crying out, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" Imagine the Pharisee in his long robe and ornate turban down on his knees next to the tax collector in tears of repentance and joy. Imagine the two embracing, both overwhelmed at the mercy of God in hearing and answering the same prayer.
4. It would be hard to imagine the Pharisee standing up after such an experience and judging anyone.

Lessons Learned from the Pharisees
"How to Overcome a Contentious Spirit" – Part 1
Mark 7:1-23

Introduction:

1. Many people in life go from job to job, church to church, marriage to marriage, friendship to friendship, etc. Do you know why? They have a contentious spirit. Some people seem to never be happy. Why? They have a contentious spirit.
2. I love Webster's definition of contentious - "exhibiting an often perverse and wearisome tendency to quarrels and disputes."
3. Let's turn and look at **Proverbs 26:21-22. Contentious people:**
 - **Stir up strife** - they always have an issue, an axe to grind, a problem. Somebody didn't do it right, etc. They are always getting people stirred up.
 - **Hurt people** - as they hop from job to job, church to church, relationship to relationship, they leave a trail of blood, and it's not their own; it is everybody else that was **wrong**. Contentious people seldom resolve anything - they run.
4. You must be honest with yourself and ask, "Do I tend to have a contentious spirit?" You will never overcome it until you first get honest with yourself about it.
5. The Pharisees had a problem with this in Jesus' day. They were always stirring something up and in the middle of contention.
 - **Example: Mark 7:1-5**
 - What was the big issue here? Jesus' disciples eating without washing their hands.
6. The Pharisees gave a facade of being very religious, but they never experienced the blessing and joy of true spirituality. They were a miserable lot, and one of the main reasons was that they possessed a contentious spirit.
7. Let's look into this Bible text and draw out three facts that a person must come to accept if they are to ever overcome a contentious spirit.

First fact: My preferences are not Bible.

1. In verses 3-5 the Pharisees are all worked up over this thing. Think about it - washing hands, cups, tables, pots, etc. Who cares? Only the Pharisees. Only their exclusive group. It was one of their petty little preferences.
2. It was tradition, not Bible. Look what Jesus said in verses 6-9.
3. This same thing happens in churches today all the time. People will get all up in the air over an issue that is not even a Bible issue. It is strictly a preference.
 - Have you ever heard this, "But we have always done it that way." It's tradition! Tradition was very important to the Pharisees (we've always washed our hands before we've eaten).
 - Likewise it is typically very important to people with a contentious spirit.
 - Tradition in and of itself is not wrong or wicked. Many traditions are pleasant and effective. We have traditions that we hold to as a family and they are great. Church families have traditions that are great.
4. But remember, traditions are preferences, not Bible. It is wrong when we hold to our preferences like they are cherished Bible truth, such as the blood atonement, or

the deity of Christ, or salvation by grace through faith. When we hold to traditions and preferences this way, we can become very contentious and unhappy people.

5. We must learn to humble ourselves by laying aside our preferences. When we are able to do this without griping (and letting everybody know that we are unhappy), then we know we are on our way to maturing as Christians.
6. But those that think that their preferences are Bible can't deal with change.
 - But guess what? If something is alive, it grows and changes. It is the law of life. Living things don't stay the same. The day you physically stop changing; you're dead!
 - The day you stop changing as a Christian, you are spiritually dead and will be relegated to the life of the Pharisee (just a contentious, self-consumed, miserable person).
7. One of our mottos around here is "grow and change." What are you doing to grow and change? It may mean that you will have to leave your comfort zone and lay aside some preferences.
8. What is our church doing to change and try to be more effective at reaching people? It may include laying aside some preferences or traditions that we like.
 - But remember, the church is not about our traditions, preferences, and little things that we love and cherish. It is about reaching people with the life-changing message of Christ.
 - I am not talking about compromising or becoming a ministry that utilizes fleshly appeal to try to reach people. I am talking about the willingness to lay aside our personal comfort and preferences, if it helps reach people.
9. When Christ came to call Israel to repentance and to prepare them for their coming kingdom, Christ brought many changes.
10. The Pharisees couldn't deal with the changes Jesus brought. Why? Because they clung to their preferences and traditions more than to Christ. What was the result? They were contentious and miserable people.

Lessons Learned from the Pharisees
"How to Overcome a Contentious Spirit" – Part 2
Mark 7:1-23

Introduction:

1. Many people in life go from job to job, church to church, marriage to marriage, friendship to friendship, etc. Do you know why? They have a contentious spirit. Some people seem to never be happy. Why? They have a contentious spirit.
2. I love Webster's definition of contentious - "exhibiting an often perverse and wearisome tendency to quarrels and disputes."
3. Let's turn and look at **Proverbs 26:21-22. Contentious people:**
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 - **Hurt people** - as they hop from job to job, church to church, relationship to relationship, they leave a trail of blood, and it's not their own; it is everybody else that was **wrong**. Contentious people seldom resolve anything - they run.
4. You must be honest with yourself and ask, "Do I tend to have a contentious spirit?" You will never overcome it until you first get honest with yourself about it.
5. The Pharisees had a problem with this in Jesus' day. They were always stirring something up and in the middle of contention.
 - **Example: Mark 7:1-5**
 - What was the big issue here? Jesus' disciples eating without washing their hands.
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4. But remember, traditions are preferences, not Bible. It is wrong when we hold to our preferences like they are cherished Bible truth, such as the blood atonement, or

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 8. What is our church doing to change and try to be more effective at reaching people? It may include laying aside some preferences or traditions that we like.
 - But remember, the church is not about our traditions, preferences, and little things that we love and cherish. It is about reaching people with the life-changing message of Christ.
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 9. When Christ came to call Israel to repentance and to prepare them for their coming kingdom, Christ brought many changes.
 10. The Pharisees couldn't deal with the changes Jesus brought. Why? Because they clung to their preferences and traditions more than to Christ. What was the result? They were contentious and miserable people.

Second fact: Constantly finding fault with others is killing me.

1. Notice the phrase in verse 2, "...*they found fault.*" The Pharisees did this all the time. They were experts at finding fault in everybody else.
 - When Jesus healed people on the Sabbath, they found fault.
 - When Jesus healed a man and forgave him of his sins, they found fault.
 - When Jesus' disciples praised Him, they found fault.
 - When the prodigal son returned home and the father rejoiced, his brother (a type of the Pharisee), found fault.
 - When Jesus' disciples plucked corn on the Sabbath, they found fault.
 - When Jesus cast out devils, they found fault; and on, and on we could go.
2. Here is the sad part. They failed to realize that their critical, contentious spirits were killing **them**. **Matthew 15:12-14, 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 26**
 - They were the blind leading the blind and both shall fall into the ditch.
3. Here is the problem when you are always finding fault in others. You typically have one huge blind spot - your own faults! By finding fault in others, it leads to an overinflated opinion of yourself, and is not based on reality.

4. You begin to think that you are better than others, which is exactly opposite of what God's Word teaches that you should be thinking. God's Word says that we should esteem others better than ourselves. **Philippians 2:3**
 - This isn't some kind of false humility. You can't fake it. You can't act as if it were true while all along you suspect that it is not.
5. But how do you do it? How do you make some scoundrel better than you?
 - You review your own sinful condition and then you become an expert at spotting your **own** sin, but not very good at seeing anyone else's.
 - Their sin is not your business. You can't see someone else's heart anyway. You don't know what is really going on.
 - You only know what is going on with you and where God is rooting out your latest compromise. You're too busy with your own sin to worry about anyone else's.
 - What is the result? Because you are so well acquainted with your own sin and not at all with the other guys, it is now quite natural to esteem others better than yourself.
 - Another way to do this is to see people not as they are, but as what they capable of being in Christ.
 - This gives us a means of appreciating someone even when it is hard to find something to appreciate.
 - See others as what they could be in Christ, while seeing yourself as what you would be without Him. On this basis, we will always see others as better than ourselves.
6. If you are going to overcome a contentious spirit, you must come to accept the fact that finding fault in others is killing you.

Third fact: Truth does not begin and end with me.

1. Let's read **John 7:44-49**. The Pharisees viewed themselves as the great guardians of truth. If the Pharisees had not believed on Christ, then He must not be for real. After all, the Pharisees couldn't be wrong!
2. Truth doesn't begin and end with me, so where does it begin and end? The Word of God. **John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17**
3. We say this and know this, but the problem is living it.
4. Our critical and contentious spirits reveal an attitude that we think truth begins and ends with us. There are two ways to combat this:
 - First, admit that you are not always right.
 - It is a liberating day when you finally realize, "I don't have to always be right." It is okay to say, "I messed up. I made a mistake. I mishandled that. I misjudged that person. That was a dumb decision."
 - You know why some people are contentious and move from job to job, church to church, relationship to relationship, etc.? They can't admit they are wrong. They can't say they are sorry. **Example: John 8:1-9** (they just walked away and still couldn't bring themselves to say they were wrong and, "Let's help this lady.")

- Second, admit that you don't know it all.
 - There is no greater obstacle to truth and revelation than to think you already know what you need to know. But when you finally come to realize, "I don't know it all. I'm not omniscient" - now you are ready to listen and learn.
 - I don't know everything. I don't know that person's heart. I don't know his motives. I don't know the best way to do everything, etc.
 - But when you think you know it all, instead of listening and learning, you get mad and run. "I don't want to hear that. I already know that."
 - **Proverbs 9:8-9** - Many times this is the difference between being a success or a failure. It is the ability to admit when we are wrong, admit that we don't know it all, and to listen.

In Conclusion:

1. Do you struggle with a contentious spirit?
2. We have learned three facts from the Pharisees that you must accept if you are to overcome it.
 - My preferences are not the Bible.
 - Finding fault with others is killing me.
 - Truth does not begin and end with me.
3. You know what Pharisees do when they hear a message like this? They laugh it off and it is like water off a duck's back. They scoff or they say, "I sure hope so and so was here to hear this. He needs it!"
4. But those who truly love the Lord, and want to grow and change, take this message and make personal application to their hearts and lives and don't apply it to anybody but themselves.

Lessons Learned from the Pharisees
"A Heart That Delights in Mercy"
John 8:1-11

Introduction:

1. Do you know who in the Bible is given the title of "*the accuser of our brethren?*" It is none other than Satan himself (**Revelation 12:10**). He is said to accuse them "*before our God day and night.*"
 - Satan is all about accusing and condemning. He delights in these two things.
2. Jesus told the Pharisees in **John 8:44**, "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.*" Therefore it is no great surprise that we see the Pharisees constantly in the "accuse and condemn" mode. **Mark 3:1-6; Luke 11:53-54, 23:2, 14**
3. **John 8:1-11** is another example of this. The Pharisees bring a woman to Christ who supposedly has been taken in adultery. They are not only eager to accuse and condemn her, but are hopeful that they can use the occasion to accuse and condemn Christ also.
4. The Pharisees were a miserable bunch. They were the religious gestapo of Israel during the time of Christ. Their lives were consumed with accusing and condemning people.
5. Unfortunately, many Christians live this way today. They are ever watchful to find a flaw in others, a crack in their armor, some sin or inconsistency. And then they are eager to pounce on it, and condemn them, being the judge and jury all in one.
6. Many Christians are very caustic towards the lost. They seem to have the attitude, "I hope they get what is coming to them." They seem eager to have them judged and condemned by God. This is the Pharisee coming out.
7. There is another way to live life. Instead of delighting in accusation and condemnation (like Satan and the Pharisees), we delight in mercy (like God). **Micah 7:18**
8. There is a valuable lesson we can learn from the Pharisees here in this text. We must learn to delight in mercy. Why is this so crucial?

First, because it delivers us from hypocrisy

1. It is interesting that the Pharisees bring this woman to Jesus and act as if it is because they are very zealous to keep Moses' law. vs. 1-5
 - What did Moses' law say about this issue? **Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22**
 - What was missing here? - The guilty man.
 - Could it be that it was a set up? Could it be that they let the man go because he might have had some dirty laundry on them?
2. Jesus brings to the surface their hypocrisy as the story continues. vs. 7-9
 - They were all guilty of breaking Moses' law. They were all guilty of death. Not a one of them was innocent. All they did was hang their heads and leave the room.
3. Paul hit the nail on the head in **Romans 2:17-23**. We love mercy when it comes to our sin, but judgment and condemnation for others. This is sheer hypocrisy.

4. If **you** want mercy, you must allow it for all. We can't accept mercy and forgiveness for our sins and then desire condemnation for other people's sins. This is very inconsistent and hypocritical.
5. To me, one of the greatest examples in the Bible of a man who delighted in mercy was Barnabas. He exhibited this attitude with Paul (**Acts 9:26-27**), with the Gentile converts in Antioch (**Acts 11:23**), and with John Mark (**Acts 15:36-39**).

Second, because it reflects the character of our Father

1. Earlier in **Micah 7:18** we read that God "*delighteth in mercy.*"
 - The word "delighteth" means that God is inclined towards it and is pleased with it.
 - What picture do you have of God? He is in heaven, angry and mad, with a frown all the time. He loves hurling darts at bad people. When somebody does turn in faith to Him, He reluctantly and begrudgingly forgives them.
2. This is so wrong. The Bible pictures God as a God who is grieved by sin, but absolutely delights in being able to show mercy and give forgiveness to people. He is eager and ready and pleased to show mercy. **Exodus 34:6; Psalm 103:8; Luke 6:36; Romans 11:32**
3. Paul pictures God as rich in mercy towards those who are lost in sin. **Ephesians 2:2-5**
4. Did you know that we are to reflect the character of our Father? **Ephesians 4:32**
5. How do I learn to delight in mercy towards others? **Titus 3:1-5** has the answer. I remember the mercy God has shown me. God didn't save me based on any merit on my part. There was nothing good or noble in me to set me apart. It was sheer mercy.
6. What a shame when believers give the image of being angry people that desire God's judgment on the wicked and lost. They want God to bring judgment **now**. They want to see justice done and see God get even.
 - This isn't the Day of Judgment; this is the day of salvation and grace. This isn't the Day of Judgment for sinners; this is the day of grace offered to sinners.
7. Christians can get very cynical and forget where we came from. We can sit around loathing the fact that the world is wicked and evil. What we should be doing is marveling at the mercy of God who allows it to continue.
 - Every day that judgment is delayed is another opportunity for a sinner to turn to Christ and be saved.
8. Remember Jonah? He didn't want to go to Nineveh - the bunch of pagan, wicked reprobates. Even after they turned in faith to God, he still wasn't happy. In fact, he reveals that this was precisely the reason he didn't want to go. **Jonah 4:2**
9. Jonah was not reflecting the character of his God in heaven. I'm afraid many times we are like Jonah. We forget the heart and passion of our Father. **2 Peter 3:9**
 - Pharisees don't mind "good people" getting saved, but the thought of murderers, rapists, child molesters, prostitutes, terrorists getting saved doesn't sit well with the Pharisee.
 - But God will have all men to be saved. **1 Timothy 2:4**

Third, because it changes the lives of others

1. Jesus talks to this woman personally after everybody else leaves. He takes a personal interest in her. He could have just gotten up and left also. But He frees her. He sets her free from bondage and she left a different person. vs. 9-11
2. Jesus said, "*For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*" **John 3:17**
3. As you examine the life of Christ, one thing stands out clearly. He was so merciful. He was merciful to people that nobody else cared about. As a result, Christ saw so many lives touched and changed.
4. Think about Paul. He was Saul of Tarsus - a blaspheming, violent, abusive man that imprisoned, beat, and killed believers. But Paul said, "*I obtained mercy.*" His life was forever changed.
5. As we demonstrate the mercy of our Father and Savior, God can use us in mighty ways to impact souls and lives. But when our lives are like the Pharisee and we delight in accusation and condemnation, we alienate everybody around us.
6. May we decide tonight that we, by God's grace, will delight in mercy!

A Sure Mark of Pharisees: An Unteachable Spirit – Part 1 John 9

Introduction:

1. John chapter 9 gives us some very deep insight into the heart and mind of the Pharisee. What is it that made the Pharisee so arrogant, so obnoxious, so callous, and so haughty?
2. It was the Pharisees' conviction that they knew everything. As an upstanding Pharisee, you can't afford to let down your guard for one second. You must constantly demonstrate that in you resides complete and full spiritual wisdom.
3. **Romans 2:17-20** describes to perfection the attitude of the Pharisee. Notice verse 19, "*And art confident...*" Confidence is a key for a Pharisee. You must be confident in yourself that you always know the answer for everything. You are an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, you hold the key to knowledge and truth.
 - But in verse 21, Paul asks the question to the Pharisee, "*Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*"
4. Herein lies the problem. A Pharisee always has an unteachable spirit. Jesus used the word "disciple" a lot. The word "disciple" simply means "a learner." Pharisees aren't candidates to be disciples of Christ because they aren't learners.
5. In John 9, the story centers on a man that was born blind (vs. 1). Jesus' disciples have some preconceived ideas about how the man got into this condition, and Jesus quickly straightens out their thinking. vs. 2-5
6. Jesus then heals the man (vs. 6-7), and his neighbors immediately begin to question the man (vs. 8-12). Then they take the man to the Pharisees and the fun really begins. vs. 13
7. In this chapter, one thing is clear - the Pharisees have everything figured out (so they think). They absolutely, positively know:
 - That Jesus is not of God. vs. 16
 - The man was not really born blind. vs. 18
 - That Jesus is a sinner. vs. 24
 - That the man born blind was blind because of sin. vs. 34
8. Little did they know that they were the biggest fools in town. They were wrong about everything that they **thought** they knew.
9. You read this chapter and they are so sure that they are right about everything, and they couldn't be more wrong. How does a person get this way? Verse 34 is the key - the Pharisees asked in sarcasm, "*...dost thou teach us?*" They were unteachable.
10. There were several character traits that made them unteachable. Let's learn from the Pharisees negative example and decide that we will possess a teachable spirit.

First, Pharisees explain away truth by seeking to discredit the teacher.

1. Jesus had done this miracle and healed this man on the Sabbath day (vs. 14). There was nothing scripturally wrong with this, but it violated the Pharisees' **tradition**.
2. So, after they questioned the man about what had happened, immediately many of the Pharisees explained away the truth of what Christ did by saying, "*This man if not of God.*" Why? "*...because he keepeth not the Sabbath day.*"

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6. Christians do this all the time, too. They don't attend a L.I.F.E. Group because no teacher is qualified to teach them. When the pastor is gone, they don't come to church because the other staff doesn't measure up.
7. Husband, your wife points out some truth about you that isn't flattering. You respond, "But you are...." Rather than deal with the truth of her statement, we attack her character.
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Second, Pharisees are not good listeners.

1. The Pharisees were on a seek and destroy mission. They interrogated the man's parents (vs. 18-23), then they went to the man again and asked him what Jesus had done to him. vs. 24-26
2. I love the man's answer in verse 27. The key is the phrase, "...ye did not hear." He basically tells them, "I've been talking, but you haven't been listening."
3. Pharisees are good talkers but they are not good listeners. Yet, the only we can truly learn is by listening.
4. Pharisees are above learning, so they aren't good listeners. But a godly person has learned the biblical art of listening. **Proverbs 15:31-32, 17:27-28, 18:13, 19:20**
 - A wise man loves instruction and loves those who give him instruction. **Proverbs 9:8-9, 12:1, 1:7-8**
 - Parents, it is your job to insure that your children grow up to be good listeners and take instruction well. **Proverbs 15:5, 10:17**
5. A Pharisee is an expert on everything. An expert has ceased the process of learning and has turned from a disciple into a critic. It can happen to any Christian. This is why a little knowledge can be a very dangerous thing. The Pharisee knows just enough to think he knows it all. **Illustration:** homiletics class in college
 - We can easily take on the role of the Pharisee and become hard-headed, stubborn, set in our ways, cynical, and sarcastic. We are experts at everything and quick to give our opinion.
6. But, oh, how exciting to be a learner – ever-growing, ever-changing. Do you remember when you first got saved? You lapped up everything you could get. You knew you had a long way to go, but you were just glad to be on the right road.

7. What freedom when we realize that we don't have to know everything and we can take our seat with the learners! We can simply say, "God, use others to teach me."
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A Sure Mark of Pharisees: An Unteachable Spirit – Part 2

John 9

Introduction:

1. John chapter 9 gives us some very deep insight into the heart and mind of the Pharisee. What is it that made the Pharisee so arrogant, so obnoxious, so callous, and so haughty?
2. It was the Pharisees' conviction that they knew everything. As an upstanding Pharisee, you can't afford to let down your guard for one second. You must constantly demonstrate that in you resides complete and full spiritual wisdom.
3. **Romans 2:17-20** describes to perfection the attitude of the Pharisee. Notice verse 19, "*And art confident...*" Confidence is a key for a Pharisee. You must be confident in yourself that you always know the answer for everything. You are an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, you hold the key to knowledge and truth.
 - But in verse 21, Paul asks the question to the Pharisee, "*Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*"
4. Herein lies the problem. A Pharisee always has an unteachable spirit. Jesus used the word "disciple" a lot. The word "disciple" simply means "a learner." Pharisees aren't candidates to be disciples of Christ because they aren't learners.
5. In John 9, the story centers on a man that was born blind (vs. 1). Jesus' disciples have some preconceived ideas about how the man got into this condition, and Jesus quickly straightens out their thinking. vs. 2-5
6. Jesus then heals the man (vs. 6-7), and his neighbors immediately begin to question the man (vs. 8-12). Then they take the man to the Pharisees and the fun really begins. vs. 13
7. In this chapter, one thing is clear - the Pharisees have everything figured out (so they think). They absolutely, positively know:
 - That Jesus is not of God. vs. 16
 - The man was not really born blind. vs. 18
 - That Jesus is a sinner. vs. 24
 - That the man born blind was blind because of sin. vs. 34
8. Little did they know that they were the biggest fools in town. They were wrong about everything that they **thought** they knew.
9. You read this chapter and they are so sure that they are right about everything, and they couldn't be more wrong. How does a person get this way? Verse 34 is the key - the Pharisees asked in sarcasm, "*...dost thou teach us?*" They were unteachable.
10. There were several character traits that made them unteachable. Let's learn from the Pharisees negative example and decide that we will possess a teachable spirit.

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Third, Pharisees love to label and divide people up into camps.

1. As this chapter goes on, you can see the Pharisees temperature rising. They are getting hotter and hotter, and more and more exasperated.
2. Finally, in verses 28 and 29, they retreat into the safety of their camp. They basically say, "We are Moses' guys. We are in the Moses camp. You're in the Jesus camp."
3. The Pharisees considered themselves staunch defenders of true doctrine. Jesus Christ came to give them additional divine information and revelation, but they wouldn't hear of it. "What would the other Pharisees in our camp think?"
4. Jesus was outside of the comfort zone of their camp, therefore truth lied outside the comfort zone of their camp. Many of the truths He shared were new, so they immediately recoiled. They thought, "We've never heard that."
5. Before we apply this, let me make one thing clear. God is not dispensing new revelation today. God's Word is complete and final. Paul said it was given to him to fulfil (complete) God's Word. **All** that we need is found in God's Word. It is able to thoroughly furnish us unto all good works. **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
6. But having said that, there are truths within God's Word that **I personally** haven't discovered yet. When they are revealed to me, they are new to me! **Illustration:** when you buy a car, it may be used and have been around for 5 years, but it is all new to you.
7. Pharisees pride themselves in following the old paths. They pride themselves in the fact that they don't change. They have it all figured out, so they don't appreciate somebody coming with a new idea that might mess up their system, their convictions, their rules.
 - They are so adamant about this, they begin to form their own exclusive camp or group. There is pressure within the group to make sure that nobody changes, but remains true to the ideology of the group.
 - Every once in a while, somebody will dare to go against the accepted ideas of the group. The other Pharisees see to it that they are kicked out of the camp, and then that person will many times form his own camp.
 - Where do Pharisees get the idea that new is always bad? In the Bible we see a **New** Testament, **new** heaven, **new** earth, **new** name, **new** Jerusalem, **new** commandment, a **new** and living way whereby we become **new** creatures in Christ!
 - In fact, Jesus said in **Revelation 21:5**, "I make all things **new**."
8. The most carnal church in the New Testament knew all about camps and labels. **1 Corinthians 3:3-9**
9. What a wonderful day when the Pharisee decides to forget all about the labels that he puts on people and the camps that he divides people up into and decides that he will love everybody and learn from everybody.

10. Here at Crossroads, not only are we not part of a camp, I don't even know what all the camps are. I don't care to know. We are Crossroads Campless Church!

Fourth, Pharisees resort to intimidation to win arguments.

1. Notice how these Pharisees play hardball when people didn't agree with them.
 - If you don't agree with us, we'll have you publicly humiliated and thrown out of the synagogue. vs. 22
 - If you don't agree with us, we will insult you and throw you out. vs. 34
 - If you don't agree with us, we will use our tongues to vilify (revile) you. vs. 28
2. This is a mark of Pharisees. Pharisees tend to be angry people. They will be nice to you as long as you don't cross them or disagree with them.
3. Pharisees aren't teachable because they are so defensive. If you try to discuss an issue with them, they go into the attack mode. Just like these Pharisees vilified this man in John 9, those with a Pharisical attitude do the same thing today.
 - Many husbands do this, many bosses at work do this; unfortunately many preachers do this, too.
 - Stay away from any ministry that seems to be motivated by fear and anger.

Proverbs 22:24-25
4. The Bible teaches that we are to speak the truth in love (**Ephesians 4:15**). Until we learn how to do this, we will never be able to engage in any deep, meaningful, edifying conversation with others. **Proverbs 14:29**
5. We will be quick to cut people off, talk over them, raise our voice, and resort to intimidation. What does this mean for us personally? We will never learn and grow past where we are right now.

Fifth, Pharisees have a very self-inflated opinion of themselves.

1. There is a word for this - pride! Those who are prideful are not teachable. They feel that they are above learning.
2. As you read this chapter, it is very clear that these Pharisees believe themselves to be God's gift to this community. They are the religious gestapo that kept everybody in line.
3. This once blind man gave the Pharisees a very logical, thought-out argument as to the character of Christ. vs. 30-33
4. How do they respond? Did they say, "You have a very good point. Maybe we need to learn more about this Jesus, too." Look at their response in verse 34. You can see the pride dripping from them.
5. On the other hand, the man born blind has a personal conversation with Christ and Christ revealed to him exactly who He was. vs. 35-38
6. Do you know the saddest part about people who are full of pride? They are so blind, but they don't get it. vs. 39-41
7. When you are full of yourself, you can't see clearly. You don't see things as they really are. You can't see your own faults, failures, shortcomings, and sins. We see clearly what others need, while huge blind spots prevent us from seeing our own weakness.
8. What is the key to humility? It is staying close to God's Word and continually growing and learning God's truth. As we do this, do you know what happens?

- The longer we are saved, the more we realize how little we know, how quickly we can fall, and how much we need Christ.
9. God's Word is the mirror that shows us who we truly are and where we need to change. Therefore, we are hungry for God's Word and possess a teachable spirit.

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 plenteous 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.