

Sermon Series: Spurred on to Holiness (and Power) by Immersing Ourselves into the Life of Christ Through the Eyes of the Apostles – A Harmony of All Four Gospels

June 28, 2020

Sermon Title: “The 10 Cent Religion of Pharisees vs. the Infinite Blood of Christ.”

Today’s Scripture: See insert

Prayer

Introduction: Pre-sermon information. The recent Bostock decision of the SCOTUS making sex discrimination wider to include transgenders, homosexuals, etc. and illegal for churches and religious organizations to discriminate based on one’s gender choice.

Main point: God hates hypocrisy and delights in heart worship.

Context: John 7:1 “Even after these things Jesus kept going about in Galilee; for he was unwilling to go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him”. So Jesus prudently tried to avoid conflict with the religious leaders of the day, but they were having none of it. If he wouldn’t come to them, they would go to him.

1. There are two religious worldviews at war with one another. Each must destroy the other for there is no compromise between the two. *Then there assembled about him the Pharisees, and some of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem; and when they saw some of his disciples eating with defiled (that is, unpurified) hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, unless they scrub their hands with the fist, do not eat, thus continuing their forbears’ tradition; and on coming from the marketplace, unless they purify themselves, they do not eat. And there are many other things which they received to observe, like the purifying of cups and pots, bronze utensils, (and dining couches). The Pharisees and the scribes accordingly asked him, “Why do your disciples disregard the tradition of the elders? For they do not purify their hands before eating.”*
 - The first worldview is represented by the Pharisees. You know some of them by name. You know Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night and did so in the dark for fear of discovery. Yet, by coming he was admitting to himself that the worldview he was taught was empty. You know another by the name of Joseph of Arimathea. Another one who discovered that his worldview was empty and taking him straight to hell.
 - But, as far as we can tell, these were the only two who switched to the other worldview that would take them to heaven. We find in the book of Acts that some priests decided to come over and join the church or what was called “the Way” at that time. What a great name. Jesus Christ is the WAY.
 - What should we call the Pharisees worldview? We can call it Satanic, and we would be right. We can call it deceived and we would be right. But the best description would be “Legalism”. This is the worldview that says the way to heaven is to work, work, work at keeping every law in the Bible and then the added ones people added just to be safe.
 - I’m an equal opportunity offender so bear with me. Ask a Catholic how many times does he have to recite the rosary to get to heaven? DO they know? How often do they

have to go to confession in order to get past the pearly gates? What if they were married in the Catholic Church and then got divorced without nullification? Are they going to hell? According to them they are. What if they accidentally got buried in the wrong cemetery? Oh, no!

- Ask a Mormon or a Jehovah's Witness how many homes and doors do they need to knock on and how many converts do they need to make before they get to go to heaven.
 - Ask a fundamentalist independent Baptist how many G-rated movies he can see at the theater before he is on the slippery slope to a fiery eternity. One R-rated movie seals his fate. Dances? Unthinkable. I got a signed slip from my parents excusing me from learning how to dance at school. I wonder what they were so afraid of? Did they think I was going to get a girl pregnant between third and fourth hour if a teacher taught me and the classmates how to do the foxtrot?
 - The worldview of the Pharisees was no different. No wonder they were hated by the general population. If a Pharisee walked down your street and saw a fiancé and his betrothed holding hands he could bring them before the synagogue on charges of immorality. Today's version of the Pharisees would be the black robed Orthodox Jews and rabbis. They live and die by their traditions.
 - This is the same mentality that interprets the Song of Solomon as a love story between Christ and the Church. It can't talk about intimacy in marriage otherwise known as sexual relations, oh no, no, no! And to think that I use the Song of Songs to instruct couples in their pre-marital counseling how to have joyous relations in the bedroom would get me fired from most fundamentalist independent hard-liner type churches. May their number dwindle. For they may preach the gospel but they deny it by adding to it, just like the Pharisees. As Paul would say to the Galatians, let them be accursed!
 - No wonder Jesus hated what they believed. And I am sure the Father in Heaven hated it with equal passion because it would deny the efficacy of the cross. In other words Jesus' death on the cross was not good enough. More needed to be done than what happened on that worst of all days we call Good Friday.
2. The Gospel is about having a heart relationship with the Father and desiring to walk with Him in love. *But he answering said to them, "You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you, when he said, as it is written, 'With their mouth do this people draw near to me, and with their lips are they honoring me, but their heart is far from me; and in vain are they worshiping me, teaching as doctrines commandments of men.' For, disregarding the commandment of God you hold to the tradition of men, like the purifying of pots and cups; and many other such things you are doing."*
- Can anyone but Jesus say this to somebody? We may feel it, and have good evidence that it is valid, but to different degrees we are all hypocrites. Only Christ can say it with the right amount of indignation, the right amount of accuracy knowing their hearts as he did.
 - What is God saying through Isaiah in this passage? I think he is saying that God sees right through their lies. They think they are deceiving God by observing his holy days

and bringing sacrifices to the temple at appropriate times of the year. But they are not there to worship God. They are thinking about how they can get out of their current marriage or how they can cheat the seller on the bull they are trying to sell. They may be hearing and even mouthing the songs and hearing prayers being offered by a professional pray-er, but they are not listening or thinking about the words they are mouthing.

- You and I have been guilty of this many times haven't we? You can't say that your minds are always 100% totally engaged in worshipful thoughts and intimate communion with God while you are here to worship. Sometimes your mind can be a thousand miles away.
- But, the Pharisees were guilty of this hypocrisy to a far greater extent than we are today. They thrived on getting noticed and dressed so that they would be seen. They connived and maneuvered to get the best seats at the feasts as invited guests. Pretending to be ultra-spiritual was their life-blood. But it was all external. They did not love God. You know how we know? Jesus tells us. They refused to obey the greater commandments of God. If you love God it will show by obeying God.

3. Hypocrites will twist and disobey the plain teaching of Scripture to rationalize their own evil behavior. *And he said to them, "Is it right for you to set aside the commandment of God, that you may observe your tradition? For Moses said – 1 for God commanded – 2 'Honor your father and your mother.' And, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death;' but you say that, if a man tells his father or mother, 'That by which you might be helped from me is a gift to God,' 1 even if in no way he will honor his father or mother, 2 you no longer will let him do anything for his father or mother. 1 Thus have you set aside the commandment of God, 2 making void God's Word by your tradition which you have handed on. And many such things you are doing."*

- Here's the deal. The fifth commandment says "Honor your father and mother". It is a big deal to God that we respect and care for our elderly parent when they have a need. To let them starve or be cold or lonely is an affront to God. It's hard enough to grow old with the loving care of your children. Losing that loving care is beyond evil. It smacks of the demonic.
- The Pharisees were doing exactly that. They knew what God's word said in the fifth commandment but they found it burdensome. They created a work-around. In their man-made traditions they came up with a concept called Corbon which in Aramaic means a gift dedicated to a purpose or in this case God. So, if they vowed to give God their entire estate once they died they couldn't go back on their vow, that's against the law, but they could live on their land and eat off their produce but God forbid they give a tiny portion of it to their ailing parents who are eating leftovers from the pot-luck meals at the synagogue.
- So, they could live off a \$100,000 a year and leave their million dollar estates to the temple for the High Priest to live on, but they couldn't spare a few McDonald's meals for mom and dad! What utter hypocrisy. Jesus nailed them and rightly so, and they knew they were nailed.

Application

1. **The Gospel demands that we relinquish all prideful attitudes about our spirituality.**

Do not think that God is impressed with 90% church attendance, 30 minute prayers, and costly acts of kindness. We have nothing to offer him. When Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor" he wasn't thinking of those on welfare. He was thinking of those who admit they are spiritually bankrupt. Here's the real gospel. It's when a man or a woman comes to God and says I have made an enormous mess of my life. I have ruined people's reputations, I have stolen time from my wife with my hobbies, I have loved my pornography more than my wife and she knows it and I am a despicable rebellious person who has spit in God's face day after day by living my own life as I pleased and not as he wanted. Now I know a tiny bit more about just how much I have hurt God and others by my selfishness and brutishness and know that I will go straight to hell unless God forgives me of all my sins.

Final thought of the morning: "Live like God sees and knows your secret thoughts and love Him more for giving you grace to bring those thoughts to His throne."