

# Don't Make the Same Mistakes the Pharisees Made

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## Introduction:

- 1) In a recent lesson we considered the accusation that anyone who contends for strict obedience to the word of God is like the Pharisees. We saw that they were not “obedient to a fault.” **Matt. 23:3, 23-25**
- 2) To insist upon strict obedience is not Pharisaism, but discipleship. **Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 5:8f**
- 3) Don't be moved away from a commitment to doing God's will by the accusation that you are a Pharisee (**Mt. 7:21**), but it is also important that we be challenged not to repeat their mistakes.
- 4) These were a people who had a noble origin, but fell far from that—it could happen to us.

## I. DID THINGS TO BE SEEN OF MEN. Matt. 6:1-6; 23:5-12

1. As a people charged with letting our lights shine (**Matt. 5:14-16**), it is easy to move from allowing our light to shine for God's glory to hoping people notice us.
2. And the point is not that we can't have public prayers or be called a teacher as a descriptive term, but where is our focus?
3. This can begin so innocently when many are compromising their faith and afraid of taking a stand, but we must honestly search our hearts to keep our motives pure.
4. Don't be afraid to be seen doing right, but don't do things to be seen.

## II. EMPHASIZED THE EXTERNALS. Matt. 23:23-28

1. With the Pharisees this logically followed their prideful concern for how they looked to others.
2. While there may be some today who follow this exact pattern, I see a little different problem.
3. Some seem to define soundness more by what is not done than what they really are.
4. We may emphasize attendance, no instrumental music, “sound” preaching, a “dress code,” etc., but put little stress on worship from the heart, humility, kindness, compassion, true modesty, etc. Some churches/individuals stress church discipline, but not seeking the restoration of sinners.
5. As with the mint and mercy, it is not an either/or, but let's make certain we emphasize both. **Matt. 23:23; Jn. 13:34f; 1 Jn. 3:10-14**

## III. TRUSTED THEIR DESCENT FROM ABRAHAM. Mt. 3:7-10; cf. Jn. 8:31-33.

1. Though this was not an absolute trust that being Abraham's descendant covered everything (for they looked down on some Jews), it seems their lineage kept them from the kind of self-examination they needed.

2. Obviously, none of us are going to claim “seed of Abraham,” but a couple of issues.
  - a. Are we committed “children of God” or His grandchildren?
    - 1) Is our faith really ours or that of our parents? **Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17**
    - 2) When push comes to shove do we choose our lineage over our Lord? **Matt. 10:34-38**
  - b. Are we “church of Christ” or Christians?
    - 1) Membership in Christ’s body and in a local church is essential, but am I ready to be judged for my individual Christianity or hoping to slide in with the group? **2 Cor. 5:9f**

#### IV. LOVERS OF MONEY. Luke 16:13f

1. When someone uses Pharisee as a pejorative they rarely have this in mind, but it was another of their problems.
2. Money is not an evil thing in and of itself, but it easily becomes a competitor. **Col. 3:5**
3. If we become like the Pharisees in seeking the praise of men we are even more susceptible to the love of money and/or desire to be rich.
  - a. Though you don’t have to be focused on the praise of men to have this problem.
4. Though we would not deride or ridicule Jesus, do His teaching on money and material things ever make us a little uncomfortable?
  - a. If they don’t then we either have an unusually good perspective on things or we are not listening.
5. Let’s not repeat the mistake of the Pharisees. **Mark 4:18f; 1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19**

#### V. DESPISED THE COMMON PEOPLE.

1. Note of what happened when the Pharisees and chief priests wanted Jesus arrested. **John 7:32, 45-49**
2. Though they probably did know the Law much better than the common people, yet the Pharisees had missed its true significance.
  - a. Love God and love your neighbor.
3. Because they trusted in themselves as righteous they looked down on others. **Luke 18:9**
4. Where are we today? I would hope that we know more and live better than most people around us, but does that allow us to look down on others?
5. We must not lose sight of the grace of God that saved us (**Eph. 2:8f**), nor forget that God loved us when we weren’t this good. **Rom. 5:6-10**
6. Instead of looking down on the vile and ignorant sinners, we must love our neighbors as ourselves and seek to lead them to same grace and word that has transformed us.

#### IV. LACKED COMPASSION FOR SINNERS. Luke 15:1f; 18:9-11

1. This point and the previous one are closely related, in fact they overlap.
2. If we begin to lose sight of or forget God's grace (**Luke 17:10**), then it becomes easy to look down on others.
3. Our sinless Lord talked with, ate with and loved sinners, for He had come to save them. **Luke 19:10**
4. As we look upon the sinful masses around us:
  - a. Remember that it was God's grace and love that saved us from that state.
  - b. The God whom we claim to serve loves these people and wants them to be saved. **2 Pet. 3:9**
  - c. Know that the vilest of sinners can change. **1 Cor. 6:9-11**
5. Instead of repeating the mistakes of the Pharisees, let's be like our Lord who could be compassionate without being a compromiser or coddler of sin.

#### **Conclusion:**

- 1) The Pharisees had a noble beginning, but a lousy ending and we need to learn from their mistakes.
- 2) Let's keep our focus on pleasing God as we serve Him from the heart and tell His story to others.
- 3) As we conclude, let's think again of the grace that saves. Have you turned to that grace for your salvation?