

Hiding behind the Pharisees
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Introduction: Every generation must struggle to find the truth of God.

A. If we have truly found the Christ it is the result of struggle!

1. We must constantly discern between truth and deceit, God's word human traditions. **(Col. 2:4-8)**
2. Our goal is to equip and prepare every Christian to be grounded in the word of God. **(Eph. 4:14; 5:17)**
 - a. Far too many in the church are overconfident and naive!
 - b. Do we really check things out? Can we really reason upon the scriptures?
3. Failure to achieve that goal often leads to destruction for the Christian. **(Heb. 5:11-14)**
 - a. Bible study is like exercise. You use it or you lose it.
 - b. There are no short cuts! Where do you stand?

B. An old problem in new clothes has arisen among us.

1. Out of desire to *make the struggle easier* and to "eliminate division" among brethren, some have made a serious error.
2. What is the proper response to different applications of scripture?
3. Some have sought to resolve these questions through a study of the Pharisees.
4. I believe the solution that some have offered is worse than the problem. I will review a book called *Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees* by David W. Chadwell. (quotes are from this book)
5. Have you ever been called a Pharisee?

I. Hiding Behind the Pharisees

A. No one wants to be a Pharisee.

1. They opposed and crucified our Lord.
2. Jesus rebuked them severely. **(Matt. 23:13-36)**

B. Our danger comes in not knowing what a Pharisee is.

1. For years men have used "Pharisee!" as a label of intimidation.
 - a. Often it is a result of brethren who wish avoid an examination of their beliefs with an open Bible. They in fact are "hiding behind the Pharisees".
 - b. What are the errors of the Pharisees? **(1 Peter 3:15)**
2. Those who don't want to be a Pharisee, but because of ignorance do not know why are a setup!

C. The "Trojan Horse" approach of a false teacher. **(2 Pet. 2:19)**

1. While false teachers may accurately identify church problems, do they offer a Biblical solution?
2. Who really is a Pharisee?

II. Errors of the Pharisees

A. Pride. (Matt. 23:5-7; John 5:44; 7:47)

1. Their basic error was one of the heart! Pride exalts the one who holds it. Pride cannot stand rebuke. Jesus knew their hearts.
2. They could not stand for their positions to be questioned. They attacked those who did, including Jesus whom they put to death!
3. Their interest was in maintaining a human movement and not in pleasing God.
4. Brother Chadwell correctly points this out: *"There is no longer room for differing perspectives. Differing perspectives threaten to rupture fellowship. Searching questions, questions which seek honest answers to legitimate whys", are regarded as a sign of heresy or of faithlessness... The group feels threatened by a studying, inquiring mind who continues to search for understanding."* **pp. 65-66**
5. Are you afraid for someone to ask you a question about "why"?

B. Blindness. (Matt. 15:14; 23:23-26)

1. Blindness is a product of pride. (**Gal. 6:3**)
 - a. They could crucify Jesus but not want to be "unclean".
 - b. They could lie, cheat and gossip and claim to be doing right.
 - c. They could ignore their sins because they want only praise. They cannot see themselves.
2. Those who have a loyalty to men and human movements hide behind labels and "great" men, appealing to "what we have always done" and refuse to apply the "whole counsel of God".
3. Again Brother Chadwell correctly points this out: *"When New Testament Christians stop asking and understanding 'why', the church will not remain long as the Lord's church."* **p. 74**

C. Hypocrisy. (Matt 23:23)

1. A hypocrite wears a mask. They think they have fooled God, but they in fact have left Him out of their lives.
2. They focused on external things to the neglect of the heart. (**Matt. 23:23**)
3. They despised others and lived for man's praise. (**Lk. 18:9; 2 Cor. 10:12, 18**)
 - a. Satan lays a terrible trap for those who study to be seen of men.
 - b. If we cannot change then what hope do we have?

D. Their traditions voided God's Word. (Matt. 15:5-6)

1. If your goal is to blindly defend a movement, you will end up here.
2. *"Their reasoning expressed through traditional authority disregarded specific revelation. It literally voided God's word."* **p. 93**
3. What do you do when the Bible appears to contradict your beliefs?

III. Wrong Conclusions from the Pharisees

A. We do not need Bible authority.

1. *"The basic premise of the movement has been that all doctrines and spiritual practices bound on believers must be based on scriptural authority. For many years it was said that scripture expresses its authority in three forms: a*

commandment, an example, or a necessary inference. With deeper study, it became apparent that those perceptions of scriptural authority were flawed."
p. 99

2. "Since there is no New Testament reference to the use of the invitation songs, how can that practice be one of scriptural authority?" **p. 101**
 - a. This is a jump in reasoning. Just because we do not have specific authority does not mean we have no authority!
 - b. Sadly this book is used by liberal brethren and widely circulated among brethren. Can you see the false reasoning?
3. Command, example and inference is fundamental to all language!
4. The scriptures being complete furnish us to "every good work". What are the implications of this? (**II Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:17**)
 - a. If asking for Bible authority makes me a Pharisee then I am one!
 - b. The truth is the Pharisee ignored Bible authority even though they were strict.
5. Jesus expected His followers to make necessary conclusions. (**Mk. 12:24-27**)
 - a. A former elder once told me "I no longer believe in examples and inferences." He is now in liberalism.
 - b. We are drifting from these fundamentals. This is the true cause of division.

B. We cannot press our conclusions.

1. What doctrine in the Bible is not based on a conclusion? (**Jn 5:39; 7:17**)
2. "Yet human reasoning sanctions divisions among New Testament Christians. That reasoning declares (1) congregational autonomy is sacred and must be preserved. (2) Leadership must be confined to a single congregation. (3) A congregation is a group of Christians meeting in the same building. (4) The autonomy of that group must be preserved regardless of the cost. The conclusion: if division results from preserving autonomy, then division is right in the will of God." **p. 104**
3. Standing upon the word of God will produce division from those who will not listen to God. (**1 Cor. 11:19; 1 Jn. 2:19, 4:6**)
 - a. "That which destroys unity in a congregation or among congregations violates the Lord's priority concerns for His people" **p. 103-104**
 - b. What does this mean? Do we close our Bibles in the name of "unity"?
4. (**Matt. 23:23**) - What did Jesus say? Many miss the point.
5. (**2 Cor. 11:1-4; 2 Jn. 9**) A false teacher's dream!
 - a. In the name of "open-mindedness" we refuse sound doctrine.
 - b. True Christians work out their problems. (**1 Cor 1:10**)
6. "Do you have perfect knowledge?"
Answer: "No, but I do know some things!"

C. Human needs come before the law of God.

1. (**Matt. 12:1-7**) - David was blameless.

2. **(Matt. 12:11-12)** - There is a time to take care of the "ox in the ditch".
 - a. These verses do not meet the issue. Brethren wish **to push the Ox in the ditch and keep it there!**
 - b. Far too many think an "exception" eliminates the rule!
3. *"To build religious practices which ignore revealed divine priorities is to participate in the Pharisee's hypocrisy." p. 104*
4. **(Rom. 3:8; Jas. 4:11-12)** - Man's situation ethics are no substitute for God's law.
5. The pride of these men are seen here. They view themselves as being so spiritual that they just know what God wants without testing it by the word of God. (Example: How to justify "Homosexuality")

IV. Fruits of This Position

A. To the individual Christian.

1. **Pride** - They consider themselves as being above certain issues. They will not allow their positions to be questioned. And any studies of externals are considered "unspiritual". They look down upon the "patternist".
2. **Blindness** - Moral issues, such as social drinking, immodesty and adultery, become major problems. They attack the "legalist" while drifting further away from God.
3. **Hypocrisy** - While showing a very pious front and speaking swelling words of praise to those who agree, they are quick however to attack and use deceit to discredit those who may question them. Failures of brethren are often magnified while praising false teachers and denominational movements.
4. They, in fact, become a Pharisee!

B. Among institutional churches.

1. See article "What Will Be Next?"
2. This is a road many have traveled before.

C. Among conservative churches.

1. This self-righteous spirit has a devastating effect upon our young.
2. A lack of teaching concerning bible authority and its application.
3. **(Acts 17:11)** - We **MUST** apply and stand on God's word.

Conclusion: (John 3:19-21)

What Will Be Next?

Virgil L. Hale

It is most disheartening to hear of things that are being done among brethren --- things that would have been unheard of just a few years ago. A case in point is the recent much publicized "JUBILEE" that took place in Nashville, Tennessee. As I understand, many congregations in the Nashville area cooperated in this endeavor. However, reports of the events that transpired are most discouraging. Let me give you some quotes from a letter that I have a copy of, where one brother wrote: "Not

only was Truth compromised in most of the messages at the Jubilee meeting, some of the practices were so unscriptural as to be almost blasphemous. I will mention only those things I know personally to be factual." He began his list. "(1) Though there were several women teachers there were no women's classes as such; all classes were open to both men and women regardless of the gender of the teacher." He then pointed out that his wife, who was one of the invited teachers; refused to speak with men present, and saw to it that only women were present in her class. As a result, he said, "Most of the women thought it "quaint" and "old fashioned" but many publicly called it "legalism," "lack of love," "enforcing the letter of the law instead of the spirit," etc. One young woman did everything but curse her in a bitter display of uncontrolled temper. When other women teachers were asked how they felt about men in their classes such replies as "it's an honor to have them" or "it's about time" or even "I'm so used to it I didn't even give it any thought." He went on to say that "When asked to explain 1 Timothy 2:11,12 there was always a refusal to discuss scripture and the remark, "The freedom Christ gives us looses us from the letter of the N. T. and lets us walk only by its spirit." The phrase "old traditions" was often heard. He goes on with point number "(2) The women who taught classes had full control over the classes. Since classes taught by other women had many men present almost without exception the woman teacher called on a woman to lead a song and a woman to lead a prayer. (3) One of the male speakers did not show up for a major lecture and one of the women teachers was asked to speak in his place. (4) Jack Evans, one of the keynote speakers before the entire assembly, asked his wife to sing a solo before the congregation. After the first verse he asked the assembly to join her in singing the rest of the song. She was then the song leader. (5) The Truth was compromised in practically every speech made. The sentiment was often expressed that every baptized believer was saved regardless of how little he understood or believed, where he went to church or how he worshiped. Landon Saunders said environmental organizations were as necessary as the church and that "saving the whales" was "as necessary for one to go to heaven as was baptism or the Lord's Supper." Unquote.

Now I ask you, as the title of the article suggest ---WHAT IS NEXT? With this kind of disregard for Bible authority, what will some dream up next? Will it not soon bring about women preachers in the church; women elders and deaconesses (as some have advocated for years); women song leaders, and on and on we could go? Where will they find a stopping place? You can mark it down ---when people start disregarding God's word - there is no stopping place! This has been seen in the Christian Church for years. Disregard for Bible authority for the instrument, has led them further and further away from the truth. It seems that "It is later than you might think" in the Lord 's church today. The only way to stem the tide is to stand up and speak out for the truth.