

Plain Path

Weekly newsletter of the Fry Road church of Christ

Sunday, October 19, 2014

Volume 19, Number 42

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path... Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart” (Psalm 27:11-14)

WILL THE REAL PHARISEE PLEASE STAND UP?...

by Bob Pulliam

IT ISN'T UNCOMMON for the term Pharisee to be used as a derogatory term today. And why not, when you see what the Pharisees were like in the first century? They were called blind guides and hypocrites by Jesus, and were constantly testing and contradicting Him. False teachers commonly use the term Pharisee as a label for those who love truth, and demand a thus saith the Lord from scripture. If they can get you to believe the label, then you will not listen to truth. Satan truly has wily schemes.

Many people do not understand what the error of the Pharisees actually was. It has been associated with a zeal for keeping the law. And so people think they are justified in calling anyone who appeals to the law of God (truth) a Pharisee. It is this perverted view

of the Pharisees which has sparked people to call you and me Pharisees. After all, if Jesus would condemn the Pharisees for their zeal for the law, then He would condemn you and me as well. Although the Pharisees were zealous for the law of Moses, and we for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:2), there is a negative view of law in the minds of these people. They have a tendency to think that no law should be strictly bound.

The Real Pharisees...

Were Pharisees keepers of the law?... *“For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men; the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”* (Mk 7:8) These people were *laying aside the*

commandment of God. They weren't keeping the law, they were violating it by placing silly loopholes in it's ordinances! They also were *holding the tradition of men.* This is not always bad, but it is here because they were laying aside the commandment of God. Jesus said they sat in Moses' seat, and commanded from the law, but did not do as they said (Mt 23:2f). He said, they say and do not do. In other words, they were hypocrites. They also loved to dress in religious garb, occupy positions of praise, and be called terms of great respect by men (Mt 23:-10), elevating them above others.

Then there was the big problem of straining at gnats. You'll often hear people use this phrase when you go to scriptures to show them the truth. The Bible proves them wrong, so what can they do? They reduce the entire topic down to the level of straining at gnats. Everyone knows that straining at gnats is wrong, right?... Wrong! Jesus
(Pharisee, continued on pg 2...)

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(Pharisee, continued from pg 1...)

never condemned straining the gnat out of the soup. Such would have been an absurd picture, telling his hearers that one is being too picky when he strains a gnat out of his soup. So what is wrong in the passage? Straining the gnat and then swallowing the camel. They left weighty matters of the law undone, and picked around at the lighter: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" (Mt 23:23f) It was not that paying the tithe of mint and anise and cummin were not important. The problem was

that justice, mercy and faith were left off! So it is not wrong to strain the gnat. It would actually be wrong to eat either the gnat or the camel!

The Pharisees also shut up the kingdom of God against men (Mt 23:13). They made the law so difficult that no one could keep it. Not even themselves!

Are We Pharisees?...

What commandments of God do we lay aside to keep traditions? What do we say and not do? Oh, I know there are hypocrites among most any group, but as a whole, where is the hypocrisy? Are we seeking notoriety? In what way? Are we eating camels while straining at gnats? When? Where? Do we hold back the saving power of the gospel to sinners? We fit none of these criteria for branding one as a modern day Pharisee!

Modern Day Pharisees...

Most interesting is the fact that those who call us Pharisees actually fit that mold in some very close ways. Here is the proverbial pot calling the kettle black. Note these ways that one can be a modern day Pharisee:

Redefining God's Word

The law of Moses lacked the definitive razor sharp edge that the Pharisees wanted. This was corrected by the traditions of the elders which built an hedge about the law to clearly delineate it. Many religious people will not be satisfied with the New Testament as God revealed it. They would tell us that it is not clear enough to understand, and proceed to violate it's clear specifications to follow the theology that seems best to

them. You'll hear TV evangelists doing this all the time. Sure, they'll quote scripture. But what do they do with it? It gets twisted, torn, and stretched to fit their personal theologies.

Seeking a Sign

On at least two occasions the Pharisees sought a sign from Jesus (Mt 12:28; 16:1). They sought these signs, even though He had already worked signs in their presence. It was not wrong to want a sign, but these were rejecting the signs already worked to see more proof than was necessary. Then we come to people today. They constantly seek a sign. I'm satisfied with the signs provided in God's word (Jn 20:30f). But folks who continually look for the miraculous in everyday occurrences are looking for more. They are seeking signs. Who looks more like the Pharisee to you?

Notoriety

The Pharisees loved the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues (Mt 23:6). They also longed to be called father (Mt 23:9). I don't seek religious titles. And you won't find me presiding over any swanky dinners either. But there are plenty who do. And guess what!... They would be the first to call me a Pharisee! Who looks more like a Pharisee to you?

False Accusations

On many occasions, the Pharisees leveled false accusations against Jesus (e.g. Mt 12:24). They had to. Jesus had the truth, and they could not answer the truth with their error. So what are they to do? Discredit Him before the multitudes so that they will not listen to the truth to begin with! In debating religious matters, there

(Pharisee, continued on pg 3...)

THIS WEEK'S DAILY BIBLE READINGS

NEW TESTAMENT READING

I JOHN 1 - 5; II JOHN;
III JOHN

October 19 - 21

OLD TESTAMENT READING

I SAMUEL 23 - 31

October 22 - 25

I TIMOTHY 4:13

FAMILY NEWS & NOTES

News and Notes of Interest
to Fry Road Members

Because of the large number of visitors to our services, we would ask those wishing to identify with the congregation to do so by expressing this interest directly to the elders.

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

Gospel Meeting (Dee Bowman)
January 11 - 14, 2015

Gospel Meeting (Carl McMurray)
April 12 - 15, 2015

V.B.S.
June 21 - 25, 2015

Annual Singing
September 12, 2015

Gospel Meeting (Jim Deason)
September 13 - 16, 2015

Sick and Shut-Ins

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

Sermons:

Next Sunday:

The Lord
Opened Lydia's Heart

Tonight:

The Virgin Mary

Grief Stricken

(Pharisee, continued from pg 2...)

are three classes of men: 1) those who won't; 2) those who do so with the truth; and 3) those who throw out false accusations to poison the minds of hearers. The Pharisees were in the third class of men. If they could get to you first, they would prevent you from even wanting to hear what Jesus had to say. And such Pharisees exist today. They are not interested in a forthright exchange to determine truth and error. They wish to use the age old propaganda tactic. As for me, let's open the Bible together, and determine what the word of God says. Who's the Pharisee here?

Conclusion...

If I'm a modern day Pharisee, I've yet to be shown from Scripture how it is true. I can read enough about the Pharisees of Jesus' day to see that they had a particular character. It is a character very much like what is seen in the ecumenical circles of today's religion.

Are you a Pharisee? When you feel compelled to call someone a Pharisee (or anything else), beware. You may be talking about yourself without even realizing it.

PP

Ladies Class...

Ladies, don't forget the **Fall Ladies Bible Classes**. The morning class will run until 11/18/14, meeting every week at the Fry Road Building at 10:00 a.m. The evening class will run until 11/11/14, meeting every other Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m. at Cinco Ranch Library. On 11/18/14 there will be a Special Topics class for one evening.

FOR THE RECORD

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

MONTHLY ASSIGNMENTS

Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy

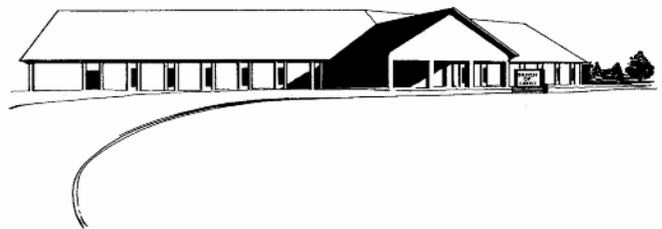
IN KEEPING WITH OUR LONG STANDING AGREEMENT, THOSE SERVING PUBLICLY ARE REMINDED TO PLEASE DRESS IN A MANNER RESPECTFUL OF THE GOD WHOM WE SERVE.

ELDERS:

Ruben Amador
Matthew Heaton
Donnie Mangrum
Steven Martin
Steve Voss

DEACONS:

John Coleman	Ken Dunsmore
David Ellison	Ray Farrell
Aubrey Garner	Steve Geraci
Steve LaGrasta	John Light
Steven Martin	Mike McMurray
Jason Mock	David Stevenson
Glenn Tomblin	



TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Classes	9:30 AM
Sunday Morning Assembly	10:30 AM
Sunday Evening Assembly	6:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes	7:30 PM

EVANGELIST & EDITOR:

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