

THROUGH THE EYES OF A PHARISEE

TEXT:	Matthew 12:1- 8, Mark 2: 23- 28,2 Timothy 2: 15
KEY VERSE:	Matthew 12: 2

No one knew and understood God's law like the Scribes and the Pharisees. Now think about that. When it came to the law and the prophets - their Bible - they were the experts! Zeal was their trademark. (Oh! Hear me!) THEY WERE DEVOTED TO THE TRUTH OF THE WORD OF GOD! (at least, the **facts** of the word of God.)

And they were dead wrong!

They studied God's word - **God's word!** - constantly at the finest Bible universities in Israel. They were the authorities on God's law. They were diligent in interpreting the law from its original texts.

And they were dead wrong!

The law had to be re copied by hand as the temple scrolls wore out. There were no printing presses, or even paper. (Some wealthy folks had books on parchment. They were valuable.¹) The law was written on sheepskin scrolls that occasionally had to be replaced. This was the domain of the Scribes. The law had to be copied **perfectly**, and these men saw to it with dedication. By virtue of constantly writing the law, they became deeply familiar and knowledgeable. They too knew "this book of the law."

and they were dead wrong!

What went wrong?

Indeed, the question **we** want to answer is:

- How can someone have **thorough** knowledge of God's word, and not really **know** the truth?

And...

- How do I know the truth as I read and study God's word?

SONGS OF

READ

Matthew 12:1-8

DELIVERANCE

To answer, let us look through the eyes of a Pharisee. More accurately, let us look at what Jesus said about their perspective, how they **view** God's word. How did **he** see the law?

On the Sabbath day, Jesus and his disciples walked through a field and picked some corn to eat.² They were not stealing here.

¹ 2 Timothy 4: 13

² Deuteronomy 23: 24- 25

SONGS OF

How can someone know
the Bible, and **not** know
the truth?

DELIVERANCE

*But when the Pharisees **saw** it, they said unto him, **Behold**, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.*

Matthew 12:2.

Now think about this...

1. Were the Pharisees *correct*?
2. Could they back it with scripture?

Yes! And yes!

And they were *still* dead wrong!

* Notice here, how the Pharisees “see”.

“When the Pharisees **saw** it... They said... **Behold** (see!) ...”

They watched what Jesus and his disciples did, trying to find anything that was against God's law. That almost sounds noble. They were trying to get folks to obey God and his word, but they were completely opposed to what God was doing RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEIR FACES! In their “rightness”, they were accusing God's own son, their Messiah, and those who **did** believe on him.

Pharisees see life through a list of rules – John 5: 39, 40.

“If you comply with the rules, you are good. If you fail to comply with the rules, you are bad.”

Now, hang on to your religious britches!

That is **NOT** how God sees!

Righteousness (right standing) before God is not determined by **deeds**. It is determined by faith from the heart.

- Pharisees of Jesus time and ours focused their attention on behavior.

“Yes, but if you don't **DO**...”

“No one who does... will go to heaven!”

- Pharisees of Jesus time and ours **SAY** the same thing.

“You just think you can **DO** whatever you want, and still go to heaven!”

-Notice how close that sounds to this:

“Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.”³

Religious condemnation **sounds** very godly, but it is only a mask for human pride. “**My** way is right, ‘cuz look at all the stuff I **don't do!**”⁴ “... And it says right here in the **Bible**...” (oh... Look who else quoted the Bible. Matthew 4: 6)

And they were *still* dead wrong!

Lists of rules do not change hearts. It is the heart that is God's concern.

³ Matthew 12: 2, mark 2: 24, Luke 6: 2

⁴ Luke 18: 11

Religious condemnation
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God told Samuel not to consider the regal stature of Eliab, because “I have refused him.” God saw Eliab’s heart⁵; that he would cower before God’s enemies⁶, that he was jealous, insecure, and prideful⁷. “God looks on the heart.”⁸ What he looks for is faith.

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:6 [KJV]

Whoever comes to God “must believe”, NOT DO!

1. “God is” He is who he claims to be.
2. “He is a rewarder” He will respond to my search for him.⁹

Both are faith; attitudes of the heart. Faith is causal. It is the faith in your heart that produces good works. But the moment you remove your focus from **believing** to **doing**, you become a pharisee, living by the rules instead of by faith.

Look at Psalm 1. Just plant yourself by the river of life from the Holy Spirit, and you will bear fruit.¹⁰ but your focus is faith! Look at the keywords: “delight”, and “meditate.” **That's heart stuff** - faith, not works.¹¹ the man after God's own heart - David **or you** - loves the word and keeps it in his heart. That **causes** him to do what pleases God.¹²

This book is, as no other, **living**. That is **NOT** a poetic metaphor! You cannot approach God's word as **any** other book and “get it.” It is life.¹³

The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

John 6:63 [ESV]

He said, “It is the spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing.” (V. 63) When it comes to receiving life from God, it is all about what his spirit does. What your flesh does is of no consequence; it does not benefit you at all.

Pharisees are committed to obeying the laws, not loving the lawgiver – Isaiah 29: 13, Mark 7: 1- 23.

So, on this day, the disciples were eating again...hmm. You know, if you hang around Jesus, you eat good - a wedding feast, 12 baskets of filet-o-fish sandwiches, “children have you any meat?” Think about that.

- Side note: Jesus does not want you to be hungry!¹⁴

this time, the Pharisees **SAW** the disciples eating “with unwashed hands.” That does not necessarily mean that their hands were dirty. They may have washed, but they did not perform the religion-mandated, ceremonial washing. Remember that

⁵ 1 Samuel 16: 7

⁶ 1 Samuel 17: 11, 24

⁷ cp 1 Samuel 17: 15& 20, and verse 28

⁸ 1 Samuel 16: 7

⁹ Jeremiah 29: 13

¹⁰ Ezekiel 47: 1- 12, 22: 1

¹¹ Romans 4: 5

¹² Psalm 119: 11, Ezekiel 36: 25- 27

¹³ 1 Corinthians 2: 9- 16

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 9: 6- 15

wedding at Cana in John 2? Six, 30 gallon, pots of water were kept for these ceremonial washings that the Pharisees decided were necessary.

- Side note #2: Notice, Jesus took the water of legalism, and turned it into the wine of joy.¹⁵

How long will **you** let religion hold you hostage?

This people honors Me with their lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

Mark 7:6-7

Jesus was quoting Isaiah:

"Their fear toward me is taught by the commandment of men."¹⁶

The Pharisees know the word well enough to find a verse and misconstrue the scripture to support **their** laws. Jesus was buried in the tomb of a man who was a secret disciple "for fear of the Jews."¹⁷ "the Jews¹⁷ had agreed already that if anyone confessed that he was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue."¹⁸ oh boy! Look! "The Jews had agreed already..." Before they ever heard him teach, they had their minds made up. The man born blind was betrayed by his own parents "because they feared the Jews¹⁷." These Pharisees deal was not about faith or love for God, it was about controlling the people.

It still is.

It **still** is!

IT STILL IS!

SONGS OF

Pharisees know the word
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laws!

DELIVERANCE

These particular Pharisees had a nice arrangement with Rome. They lived good! Rome let them keep their wealth and status and worship system. In exchange, they used that system to keep the people subject. That is what Rome wanted - **no uprisings!** Rome was conquering **everybody** so fast that they did not have time to establish Roman government in these territories. So they paid some Patsy – ie: King Herod - to keep order.

Basic rule: Don't make us stop conquering the world to solve your problem!

So, Herod and the Jewish religious leaders had a good, peaceful deal going, until it was disrupted by a single question:

"Where is he who is BORN king of the Jews?"

SONGS OF

READ
Matthew 2

DELIVERANCE

These same Pharisees had searched the scriptures to discover that **this** Jesus **was** the king of the Jews; in the very bloodline of David – **TWICE!** Both Mary and Joseph were from the tribe of Judah!

- That is why Herod killed all the boy babies, two years and under. **Take no chances!**¹⁹
- That is why Pilate put that sign on Jesus' cross, "the king of the Jews!" In three languages!

¹⁵ Psalm 104: 15

¹⁶ Isaiah 29: 13

¹⁷ scribes and Pharisees

¹⁸ John 9: 22

¹⁹ Matthew 2: 18, Jeremiah 31: 17

"I GOT YOUR KING!"

And when the Jews protested, he said, "I wrote what I wrote!" He **knew** this Jesus was their promised king. He was saying, "No prophesied king is going to upset my perfect arrangement with Rome!"

Oops.

Religion still uses fear to control people. So, religion worships the law that holds people in fear...

That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who ***through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.***

Hebrews 2:14-15 [NKJV emphasis added]

... not the true Messiah, who died to free you from the fear of death that keeps you in bondage. and he says not to allow **anyone** to **return** you too that bondage.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.
Galatians 5:1 [KJV]

Religion binds!

Christ frees!

Religion tries to solve the problem that was caused by fear with more fear. It tries to solve the curse of bondage with more bondage. **You cannot fight spiritual fire with fire!** You cannot know freedom by good works! You know freedom by faith in Christ. **You remain free** by faith in Christ! You **live** by faith in Christ!²⁰ It is faith in Christ that brings grace, God's favor.²¹ Grace brings salvaging (salvation) of your life.²¹ All of that is a gift²² that allows **God** to perform good works **through** you.²³

My dear friend, wake up and smell the freedom!

How **did** Jesus respond to Pharisees?

- Matthew 12: 3, 4 David and his men were hungry, so they ate temple showbread. The temple was a picture of men, indwelt by God. It was **made** for man! God even said, "You think you can contain **me** in there? I'll stick my **feet** in there." **You** are God's dwelling!²⁴
- John 14:1-6 If your **cow** falls in a hole, you will pull it out on the Sabbath, but you condemn the healing of a **man** on the Sabbath. Hypocrites! The Sabbath was made for man, not the man for the Sabbath.²⁵
- Luke 13: 10- 17 Every one of you looses your **ox** on the Sabbath so it can go get water, but this covenant daughter of Abraham, to whom God promised health, you condemn for seeking healing and the water of life on the Sabbath. Religious hypocrites!

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Here what?

²⁰ Romans 1: 17

²¹ Ephesians 2: 8

²² Ephesians 2: 9

²³ Ephesians 2: 10

²⁴ Revelation 21: 3

²⁵ Hebrews 4: 9, 10

Revelation 2 answers that²⁶, "...What the spirit says." It is the teaching of the Holy Spirit²⁷ that will reveal to you the truth of the word. Notice²⁸: the One who was sent to guide you into all truth is called "the Comforter", not the condemner. When the truth²⁹ is **really** revealed to you, you will walk free. You will have no desire³⁰ for the slavery of bondage to religion of deeds. In that deliverance³¹, you will find the liberty to walk freely with your God and his son³². In that relationship is power (grace) that enables you to do works that please God - works that he can accept. He can accept³³ those works because they are produced by his Spirit that flows through you.

SONG OF

READ

Colossians 2:14-17

DELIVERANCE

The ordinances – laws - were against us, and contrary to us. Rules did not make us righteous; they brought the knowledge of sin³⁴. So, Jesus took them out of our way, nailing them to his cross.

Now, notice the next verse: It was with that freedom from the law that God disarmed and humiliated Satan. (v. 15) Conclusion?

Do not let **anyone** condemn you with their religion.

To know the truth, you must see the law through Jesus eyes.

- Side note #3: Take your Bible and lay it facedown next to you. Now, as you look at the old covenant, you must look "through" the new covenant. Study the word that way. Look at what Jesus, Paul, Peter, John, and whoever penned the book of Hebrews say about the old covenant law. (I have a Bible that puts Old Testament quotes in italics and indented. I recommend.)

There is an old adage: "You can't see the forest for the trees." Pharisees are so busy nitpicking every little rule, and law, and procedure, and ceremony that they completely **miss** the big picture:

1. Man **never could** keep God's law.³⁵
2. God's law **never was** the path to righteousness. In fact, it was the path to hell, **ILLUMINATED!**³⁶
3. God's program of redemption has **always been** the free gift of grace, through the substitutionary blood of the innocent Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.³⁷ That, once-for-all, sacrifice forever freed us from the penalty³⁸, condemnation³⁹, and dominion of sin⁴⁰.

It is not adherence to law, but grace that brings power over sin. Power over sin comes, not in the fact that you never commit another sin, but that sin is rendered powerless to kill or condemn or hold you as its slave.

Jesus told his disciples, "You have been made clean now, through my word. You just need to abide in me." In other words, "stop focusing on your human sinfulness and weakness, and focus on Jesus." When you do, sin will become insignificant, unimportant, and much less tempting. The songwriter put it:

²⁶ Revelation 2: 7, 11, 17, 29, 3: 6, 13, 22

²⁷ John 16: 12- 14

²⁸ John 14: 26, 15: 26

²⁹ John 8: 31, 32, 36

³⁰ Romans 8: 2, Galatians 5: 18

³¹ Romans 5: 1,1 John 1: 3, 4, revelation 21: 3

³² Galatians 5: 22- 25, Hebrews 11: 6

³³ Galatians 5: 22-25, Philippians 2: 13, Psalm 1: 3, John 4: 10- 14, 15: 3- 5

³⁴ Romans 4: 15, 3: 20

³⁵ Isaiah 64: 6, Romans 3: 10, 23

³⁶ Romans 3: 19, 20, 7: 5- 12

³⁷ John 1: 29,1 Peter 2: 22- 25, Hebrews 10: 12- 14

³⁸ Romans 8: 28

³⁹ Romans 5: 1

⁴⁰ Romans 6: 1- 23

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in his wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace.”

Then, if you do sin, you are walking with Jesus right there. Confess it and go on⁴¹. There is a wonderful day coming. For those who, now accept God's forgiveness by faith, a perfect body awaits in heaven. It will be incapable of committing sin. It will be incapable of dying.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:53 [NKJV]

SONGS OF

READ

Colossians 2:14-17

DELIVERANCE

* Notice this: “The sting of death is sin, **and the strength of sin is the law**.”⁴² in other words, sin is made **stronger** by a bunch of religious regulations... even ones from the Bible! That is why God put them there; to make sin too strong for us. Then, we will live by faith in Jesus, instead.

That incorruptible body will walk with God as Adam and Eve did - without the “knowledge of good and evil.” Evil (corruption) will be left on this earth and destroyed. The source of evil will be condemned to the lake of fire, and eternally destroyed. Those who reject salvation by free

grace will join him.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:57 [NKJV]

“Lord”: the supreme ruler over all other authorities⁴³.

“Jesus”: savior from sin⁴⁴

“Christ”: the anointed one, and his anointing

Victory comes through the One God anointed to be the supreme authority over completely redeeming our lives from sin and its devastation. **It's all him!** Just believe in, rely on, and hold fast to him and his “unspeakable gift.”

... And let no man condemn you.⁴⁵

“Holy Spirit,

I ask you to please reveal to us, your people, the perfect law of liberty. Open our eyes to the freedom we have in Jesus. The yoke of bondage to a law of rights, rituals, and ordinances that we cannot keep is broken. We need only do as you told Peter, “Follow me.” So, our eyes are on you, and our ears are ready to hear. Please, guide us into all truth. Cause us to recognize and reject the teaching of the Pharisees of our day.

We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus,

Amen”

⁴¹ 1 John 1: 9, 2: 1

⁴² 1 Corinthians 15: 56

⁴³ Romans 10: 12

⁴⁴ Matthew 1: 20, 21

⁴⁵ Colossians 2: 13- 17