

An enemy of Christ

The destructive power of a
Pharisee spirit

Ephesians 6:12

"For we do not wrestle against
flesh and blood,
but against principalities,
against powers,
against the rulers of the darkness of this age,
against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness
in the heavenly *places*..."

Historical look at Pharisees

One of several "sects" of Jews
Interpreted Biblical law
Created Jewish law
Jewish sect which survives

Parable of the praying Pharisee

"Jesus also told this parable to some
who trusted in themselves that they were righteous,
and treated others with contempt:
"Two men went up into the temple to pray,
one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus:
'God, I thank you that I am not like other men,
extortioners, unjust, adulterers,
or even like this tax collector.
I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'

Parable of the praying Pharisee

"But the tax collector, standing far off,
would not even lift up his eyes to heaven,
but beat his breast, saying,
'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'
I tell you, this man went down to his house
justified, rather than the other.
For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled,
but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."
Luke 18:9-14

Parable of the praying Pharisee

Jesus' motivation is to demonstrate
a spiritual principle to those
who are trusting in themselves
for righteousness and
those treating others with contempt.

Jesus is confronting spiritual pride
and superiority.

Pharisees and the adulterous woman

"Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in
the morning He came again to the temple.
All the people came to Him, and He sat down
and taught them. The scribes and the
Pharisees brought a woman who had been
caught in adultery, and placing her in the
midst they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman
has been caught in the act of adultery. Now
in the Law Moses commanded us to stone
such women. So what do you say?"

Pharisees and the adulterous woman

This they said to test Him, that they might
have some charge to bring against Him.

Pharisees and the adulterous woman

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger
on the ground. And as they continued to
ask him, He stood up and said to them,

"Let him who is without sin among you be
the first to throw a stone at her."

And once more He bent down and wrote
on the ground. But when they heard it, they
went away one by one, beginning with the
older ones, and Jesus was left alone with
the woman standing before Him.

Pharisees and the adulterous woman

Jesus stood up and said to her,

"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

She said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said,
"Neither do I condemn you;
go, and from now on sin no more."

John 8: 1-11

Pharisees and the adulterous woman

Pharisees demonstrate total disregard for the spiritual hunger and needs of others.

Pharisees demonstrate no spiritual hunger of their own.

Pharisees use this woman to feed their need for spiritual judgment and condemnation of others.

Jesus confronts the Pharisees

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,

"I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not
walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life."

Jesus confronts the Pharisees

"Jesus said to them,
"If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but He sent me. Why do you not understand what I say?"

Jesus confronts the Pharisees

"It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Jesus confronts the Pharisees

"But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

John 8: 32-47

Jesus' conflict with Pharisees

- Documented in all four gospels
- Pharisees challenge His authority because they follow another authority
- Jesus condemns their practices
- Jesus calls them demonic

Other conflict with Pharisees

- Saul was a Pharisee (Acts 26:5)
- Pharisee converts sought to force Mosaic law on Gentile converts (Acts 15:5)
- Pharisee fought truth of Resurrection (Acts 23)

Assumptions of the Pharisees

- Spiritually superior
- Right to judge
- Right to condemn
- Right to challenge spiritual authority
- Outward appearances are more important than inward transformation
- Spiritual standing is secured by obedience to laws rather than their relationship with God

Why be concerned about the Pharisees?

Sandwiched in between the story of the adulterous woman and Jesus declaring that the Pharisees are the devil's children is the promise that if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed.

Why be concerned about the Pharisees?

There is a connection between true freedom in Christ and understanding that Pharisees impact and impede spiritual freedom.

Why be concerned about the Pharisees?

Pharisee spirits attack spiritual freedom and growth.

Consequently, they are one of the enemies we must be prepared to wrestle.

Ask God to reveal...

Any aspect of your life or personality which reflects a Pharisee spirit.

Any Pharisee attitude or speech which is used by the enemy to place judgment or condemnation on people in your life - including yourself.

Then...

Repent of any ties to this spirit.

Ask God to break any hold it has over you.

Ask God to tear down any strongholds or footholds established in your life through it.

Ask God to help you live in freedom from the impact of Pharisee spirits.

Believe He will - and receive the freedom that brings.

For us to live in freedom...

We must be free from the influence of this spirit.

Remember, it is much easier to help someone find a place where you live than it is to help them find somewhere you've never been...