

The Seven Kinds of Pharisees

Matt 23:1-33 NIV

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. 5 "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.' 8 "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. 9 And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. 11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. 13 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. 15 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. 16 "Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' 17 You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? 18 You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' 19 You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21 And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. 22 And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. 23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. 24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. 25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. 27 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. 29 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. 30 And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' 31 So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! 33 "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?

The word *parable* means “basket handles” (parables highlighted what a rabbi taught with PRDS.) Parables drive home a point. They are like a live drama that draws us into the story. They were never designed to confuse the hearers. Seeing that they don't see; and hearing that they don't hear is a Jewish idiom. Jews believe that you hear and see at two levels - one in the head then hopefully in the heart. **The person who obeys Jesus has seen and seen; heard and heard.**

Understanding the phrase *Kingdom of God* is the key to understanding Jesus' parables (it means “the reign of God in the hearts of men” [shiloam]); it is internal and unstoppable; it exists for those who desire to live in harmony with God. **The root of the Kingdom is what God plants in the heart of a man - obedience then follows.** Jesus commissions us to be the *shiloam* of God to others.

Kavvanah (conscious devotion to God) - the condition of your heart (your attitude) Some rabbis taught that your attitude is the key; others taught that your actions are what count.

Pharisee or P'rushim - separated ones (descended from the Hasidim who had been the valiant freedom fighters at the time of the Macabees.) They were very serious about their faith but some became hypocritical and prideful. The Pharisees wrote of themselves and taught that there were 5 bad classes of Pharisees and 2 good ones. Jesus never criticizes the theology of the Pharisees but how they put their theology into practice. (Luke 18:9-14)

The 5 bad Pharisees

1. The shoulder Pharisees - they were worried about the outward show of their faith. (criticized for hypocrisy)
2. The stumbling Pharisees - they walk around to show his brokenness; they exaggerate their sacrifices for God. (criticized for hypocrisy)
3. The bleeding nose Pharisees - they were so afraid that they might lust that they would turn their heads when they saw a pretty girl and would run into something. (criticized for laying burdens on others)
4. The mortar and pestle Pharisees - they always announced what they were about to do for God. (criticized for pride)
5. The accountant Pharisees - they kept track of the things they do for God. (criticized for pride)

The 2 good Pharisees

1. The Pharisees of fear - they were so in awe of God that they strove for obedience.
2. The Pharisees of love - they were those who had such a deep relationship with God that their righteous behavior was a natural response to their love for Him.