

Matthew 23:23-24

v.23- what is a Pharisee?

- from Hebrew word "parush" meaning separated

- formed during the Hellenistic Period of history (ca. 300-100 BC)

- how to remain separate and pure and different in a hostile culture?

WARNING #1: I can become a Pharisee out of a legitimate desire to be true to God and different from the world.

-by the time of Christ, the Pharisees were more of a religious/political movement seeking to use power to keep Jews "separate"

-they exerted power to keep people pure by claiming 2 sources of authority

1) the written Torah (5 books of Moses)

2) the oral Torah (Pharisees' interpretation of Moses)

WARNING #2: I can become a Pharisee when I make myself the standard for spiritual maturity.

Christ attacks 2 aspects of Pharisaism

- 1) hypocrisy
- 2) religiosity

## Matthew 23:23-24

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!"

1) Hypocrite= actor/mask wearer.

-they were acting as the standard for holiness, even above God's standard

\*Lev. 23 and Deut. 14

-they saw themselves as righteous; others saw them as religious; Christ saw them as repellant

2) Religiosity- "teachers of the law"

v. 24-

"strained a gnat"- unclean, but small

"swallowed a camel"- unclean, but very large

What was a gnat?

Tithing

What was a camel?

1) Justice

\*be careful about being arrogant about social justice

2) Mercy

\*be careful about loving the unloving

3) Faithfulness

\*be careful about loving God and not spiritual growth

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Pharisaism= Legalism and Gracism

What is gracism?

- \*despises law
- \*loses moral guidance
- \*soft on Scripture
- \*despises authority and authority figures



WARNING #3: I can become a Pharisee in my zeal to be free from legalism.

"How has a church that was once the happy possession of common fishermen and prostitutes and tax collectors become the home of the spiritually elite?" –John Fischer

Have I slipped into the extremes of Pharisaism (legalism or gracism), judging others and myself by the wrong standard?

- \*the Gospel isn't about judging and critiquing others
- \*the Gospel is all about the right judgement and critique of me

What would God say about my spiritual condition?

- \*Religious?
- \*Pharisee?
- \*Hypocrite?
- \*Disciple/follower?