



- Skit – Venti Jesus Please
 - The vendor in the skit was badly missing the point.
 - The patron wanted Jesus exactly as He is without any additions, subtractions, or alterations. The vendor didn't like that idea at all.
 - In our passage this morning, we find a similar situation. Jesus came to reveal the fullness God's will and glory, and like the vendor in the skit, the Pharisees completely missed the point. In fact, they missed the point so badly that they hated the glory that Jesus had come to proclaim.
- Read Luke 6:1-11
- Pray

This message will be our second look at these eleven verses in which we examine how and why the Pharisees were missing the point so that we can avoid making the same dreadful spiritual errors. In part one we saw that...

1.) We miss the point whenever we give primary importance to secondary things.

For the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, the secondary things in question were their severe, self-imposed Sabbath regulations. As we discussed in depth three weeks ago, the Jews were dead serious about the Sabbath, and in these verses, Jesus is showing them that they were dead wrong. We discussed the strident manner in which Jesus was attempting to show them how badly they were missing God's will for their lives by giving primary importance to secondary things. Just as He communicated to the Pharisees, so Jesus tells us still today: Our Lord is calling us to stop majoring on the minors. The Pharisees had egregiously missed the point of true life. Let us avoid the same miserable fate—that is, the fate

of those who give primary importance to secondary things. Rather, let us always remember that in any and every situation our most important calling is to love God with all we are, in all that we say, and in all that we do.

That was the gist of part one, and today, we will focus on a second way in which we miss the point of life in Christ, which is this:

2.) We miss the point whenever Scripture is in our minds but not in our hearts.

As I hope most of you know by now, we have defined our mission as a church in four components, which are these: reaching out, welcoming in, building up, and sending forth. Our message this morning falls squarely within the third of those three components—building up. By building up, we mean that God has saved us and assembled us together so that, with His help, we will work together to become the people He created us to be. That is, we aim to become like Christ, and Scripture teaches us that if we are going to be successful in this mission, then God’s Word cannot exist in our minds alone; it must take root in and completely transform our hearts.

Of course, the Bible makes clear that the degree to which the Scripture we have in our heads has been planted in our hearts is seen in our submission to it. Thus, obedience is the key.

-- Clip – Bill Cosby Himself – “I don’t know!”

Can you relate to Cosby’s comedy? As parents, we are frequently in positions in which we find ourselves giving commands to our kids, and, as Cosby illustrated our kids usually hear us quite well, and very often they can even repeat the orders we give. However, at times, they just seem to miss the point, don’t they? Sometimes, they seem to think we are giving them orders simply because we like the sound of our own voices, and they miss the point by forgetting that the main reason why we give orders is so that those orders will be obeyed! However, Cosby gets one thing wrong, and it probably explains why he seems so frustrated. It’s not because of brain damage; most of the time it is has to do with old-fashioned, stubborn disobedience.

Well, that which is true about the orders we give our children is true about the commands God gives to His. God has given us His Word so that we will obey it. This concept is really extremely simple, but it can be dreadfully amusing how much of a mess we can make out of so simple a premise. But the overall point

remains the same, and that is this: We cannot claim to know a particular aspect of God's Word until we are prepared to do our best to obey it. Otherwise, we make ourselves hypocrites who proclaim Scripture with our lips but not with our lifestyles.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. Most of us have probably read Ephesians 4:29, which commands, "*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*" However, from God's perspective, we should not allege that we really understand this verse until we are prepared to submit all of our speech to the Holy Spirit at work within us. Consequently, we cannot claim to comprehend it until we are ready to do our very best to quit gossiping and squelch angry and divisive words. As James 1:22 commands, "*[Let us] not merely listen to the word, and so deceive [ourselves]. [Let us] do what it says.*" Therefore, any true understanding of God's Word will be far more evident in our speech and our behavior than it will ever be in our knowledge alone.

Given this understanding of what it really means to know God's Word, we are better able to see how badly the Pharisees are missing the point of Scripture in our passage this morning. We can see that, for them, Scripture wasn't really a measuring stick for their own words and actions. Rather, it was far more often used as a tool to propagate their personal purposes and preferences. Indeed, there is a tremendously troubling irony in the fact that, although these men were widely regarded as the teachers of the Law, they were not, by and large, doers of it. You see, the very thing that would have authenticated their understanding of God's word—obedience from the heart—is the chief thing that they were lacking.

Listen to the manner in which Jesus characterizes the Pharisee's understanding of Scripture in Matthew 23:23, where He says, "*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.*" Here, Jesus exposes the fact that the Scriptures in their heads had not found a place in their hearts. He condemns the fact that, although they may have become masters of the outward appearances of religion, they were rejecting its essence. They loved rules but ignored righteousness.

Listen again to Christ's characterization of the religion of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:25-28: "*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. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. “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. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.” Can there be any doubt that we badly miss the point whenever we have Scripture in our minds that does not take root in our hearts? Can there be any question that God is far more interested in the submission of our hearts than the knowledge in our minds? Without obedience to Scripture, knowledge of it is meaningless.

With this point in mind, let us look at how this concept is revealed in our text this morning. Please look with me at verses 1-2, where we see the Pharisees making their accusation against Jesus and His disciples. We read, *“One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. Some of the Pharisees asked, ‘Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?’”*

As we discussed in Part 1 of this message, in the eyes of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, Judaism had become about the Sabbath more than anything else. In fact, for them, your salvation was primarily a matter of how well you performed all of their man-made rules and ridiculous regulations regarding the Sabbath. Thus, in these two incidents from chapter six, we witness the opposition to Jesus rapidly coming out into the open, and we begin to realize that the Pharisee's immediate charge against Him was that they believed Him to be a breaker of the Sabbath.

In the first instance, we encounter Jesus and his disciples as they are passing through a grainfield and plucking some grain. Now, the fact that the disciples picked the heads of grain was certainly no crime, for one of the merciful laws of the Old Testament, found in Deuteronomy 23:25, decreed that anyone passing through a grainfield was free to pick the grain so long as he did not put a sickle into it. On any other day, not even the Pharisees would have had a complaint with this behavior.

However, this was the Sabbath, and as we discussed three weeks ago, among the countless examples of “labor” that the rabbis had forbidden on the Sabbath were reaping, threshing, winnowing, and preparing food. And, according to their Sabbath code, the disciples had broken every one of these outlandish man-made restrictions. You see, in Pharisaical eyes, plucking the grain meant that the

disciples were guilty of reaping; by rubbing it in their hands they were guilty of threshing; by flinging away the husks of winnowing; and, of course, the very fact that they ate the grain demonstrated that they had sinfully prepared food on the Sabbath. This whole matter is, of course, outrageous. However, recall that to a strict Pharisee, these actions were deadly sins. The Sabbath rules and regulations, by which the Pharisees judged themselves and others, had been broken, and, to them, this was an urgent matter of life and death.

In response to their complaint, Jesus masterfully refers these Pharisees to an incident from the Old Testament. In particular, He directs their attention the events of 1 Samuel 21:1-6 when David and his companions were famished and fleeing for their lives from Saul, and they ate the consecrated bread of the Tabernacle. We will discuss the specific details of those events next week as we conclude this passage with a third observation. However, for our purposes this morning, I want to direct your attention to the manner in which Jesus initiates His response to the Pharisees in verse three. He begins His discussion with them by saying, “*Have you not read...?*”

And in this question, we learn a spiritual truth of the utmost importance. You see, when Jesus asked, “*Have you not read what David did?*” the answer, of course, was, “Absolutely.” Sure, they had read what David did, but here is the thing: they had never actually understood what it meant. The point that we must not miss this morning is that it is entirely possible to read the Bible meticulously, to possess the ability to quote it verbatim, to pass any academic examination about it... It is entirely possible to know the Bible inside and out and from cover to cover and yet completely miss its real meaning. In other words, it is all too easy, and disastrously so, to have God’s Word in our heads but not in our hearts.

Let me ask you, then: If Christ were standing in our midst today, don’t you think He would be posing the very same question to us? Would He not direct our attention to the myriads of Scriptures that we know in our heads but have yet not transferred into obedience from our hearts. Would He not be asking us, “*Have you not read?*”

- Would He not say to you, O Cheerless Christian, “Have you not read Philippians 4:4, which says, ‘*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*’?”
- Would He not say you, O Complaining Christian, “Have you not read Philippians 2:14, which demands that you ‘*Do everything without complaining or arguing?*’”

- Would He not say to you, O Critical Christian, “Have you not read Ephesians 4:29, which declares, *‘Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen?’*”
- Would He not say you, O Conceited Christian, “Have you not read 1 Peter 5:5, where you have been told to *‘Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble?”*”
- Would He not say to you, O Coldhearted Christian, “Have you not read Luke 6:36, in which I have commanded you to *‘Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful?’*”
- Would He not say to you, O Cowardly Christian, “Have you not read Matthew 28:19-20, which commands you to *‘Go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you?’*”
- And finally, would He not say to you, O Unconverted Sinner, “Have you not read John 3:36, where I have given you the very words of life, saying, *‘Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.’*”
- “Have we not read?! Do we not hear?! Are we not listening?!”

And, for most of us, the answer would have to be, “Yes, Lord, of course, we have heard these messages from Your Word.” We are forced to say, “Yes, Lord, these Scriptures occupy a place in my mind.” Then comes the dreaded follow-up question—that crucial question that we were hoping would not be asked, but, yet, the question we know that we cannot avoid. The Lord’s inquiry resounds, “Then why aren’t you doing your best to obey them?” And there can ultimately be only answer to this convicting question. There exists but one response. In every situation in which we know what God’s Word is telling us to do but, yet, we are not submitting to its message, the lone reply must be, “Because the Word of God in our heads has not yet become the Word of God in our hearts.”

That is where we find the Pharisees in our passage this morning. Such was their lamentable condition. They had often read the Scripture about which Jesus spoke, but they had utterly missed its meaning. They knew God’s Word in their heads, but they were not submitting to it in their hearts. And in missing the point of Scripture, they tragically missed the glorious point of the life that Christ came to give.

Are we making the same mistake today? Are there messages from Scripture that we know in our minds to be God’s truth, and yet we are still not doing our absolute best, by the Spirit’s power, to obey them from our hearts? Let us not miss

the point of Scripture and thereby miss the perfect peace and powerful purpose of Christ. Thus, let us not merely be hearers of Scripture, let us be sure we are doers of it as well.