

What Is the Path to Freedom From Pharisaism?

What a scary concept, that religious leaders are not going to make it to heaven! Here is what Jesus said: " For I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will in no way enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

Two things come to mind: 1) I don't want to be a Pharisee; 2) I don't want to be shepherded by a Pharisee.

Paul Contrasts Between When He Was a Pharisee and When He Became a True Christ-Follower

The false circumcision: (dogs, evil workers) put confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:1-22):

- Did all the right religious ceremonies: circumcised.
- Had the right heritage: trained by the best religious leaders.
- Righteous behavior: kept the laws of God perfectly.
- Zeal for God: a persecutor of those he thought were heretics.

The true circumcision: (worship in the Spirit of God, glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh):

- Suffer the loss of all things to gain Christ.
- Know Christ intimately—found in Christ.
- Righteous through faith in Christ's work on my behalf,
- Experience Christ's power flowing out through me.

I have made the same transition Paul made in my own life, from

a Pharisee to a true believer in Jesus Christ, and I pray that if you need to make this transition, this article will illumine your path.

Jesus Speaks About Corrupt Religious Leaders

- They don't practice what they preach (Matt. 23:3).
- They make the path to God hard. "You shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:4, 13).
- You make your followers twice as much a son of hell as yourselves (Matt. 23:15).
- They love titles, being noticed and honored, and they are *not* servant leaders (Matt. 23:5-12).
- Their hearts are full of robbery and self-indulgence (Matt. 23:25).
- They have a twisted focus on legalism rather than seeing truth (Matt. 23:16-24).
- For a pretense they make long prayers; they will receive greater condemnation (Matt. 23:14).
- They kill the prophets; they are of their father the devil (Matt. 23:29-38, John 8:44).
- They reject sinners (Luke 7:36-50).
- They attribute the miracles of the Holy Spirit to Satan (Luke 11:14-23).

More discussion by Jesus about false religious leaders is found in Luke 11 and 18 and John 8.

Choosing to Be Free From Pharisaism

These people are not saved and not going to heaven. That means

I do *not* want to have the traits of Pharisaism, nor do I want to be mentored, pastored or shepherded by a pharisee, as it will lead me on the path of eternal destruction. I need to find fellowship with true believers who are pursuing the path of the Spirit and the righteousness which comes by faith in the finished work of Christ.

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Graciously, God saw that Paul's heart was fervent for Him, so God dramatically intercepted Paul's life on the Damascus road with a blinding vision and a direct spoken word from heaven: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4b)

This got Paul's attention, so he got alone with God, spending time in the wilderness (Gal. 1:15-18), allowing the Holy Spirit to teach him and reveal truth to him. He came back from the wilderness having put away his bad theology, which was created by the traditions of man and which invalidated the Word of God. This is something Jesus specifically addressed.

"And in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' He was also saying to them, 'You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition'" (Mark 7:7-9, NASB).

My Personal Story of Freedom From Phariseeism

Since I was taught by my religious leaders that God no longer speaks today, I did what I believed to be the next best thing. I lived out of the Bible. However, the Bible says to live and walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). From Genesis to Revelation, we see that people heard God's voice and honored it. Jesus' guarantee is: "My sheep hear My voice" (John 10:27a, MEV).

My passionate search for the voice of God was rewarded in 1979 as I took a year to simply focus on learning how to identify God's voice within me. As with Paul, God honored my passionate heart, and woke me up with a booming bass voice, saying, "Get

up, I am going to teach you to hear My voice.”

I went to my pastoral study and God showed me Habakkuk 2:1,2 and the four keys the prophet used to hear God’s voice. He taught me to do as Habakkuk did: quiet myself down, fix my eyes on the Lord, recognize His voice as spontaneous flowing thoughts and then journal out this flow within me.

On this day, I was transformed. Now I could actually live and walk by the Spirit because I could hear God’s voice and see His visions. I stepped from living out of religious laws into a relationship with Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. I write about it in *4 Keys to Hearing God’s Voice*. I estimate that by now well over a million believers have learned how to use these four keys and enter into communion with God through two-way journaling and returned to God’s original intent, walking and talking with Him in the garden in the cool of the day.

The *true church* offers the *only* answer to the pain the world is in today

At this point, most people feel they are not getting the truth from the newscasters, the government, the CDC, the health care profession or the educational system. I agree. These are all failing, and it is probably because the church has itself failed to provide truth and power. The church in which I was saved told me that God was not speaking and there were no more miracles today. They lied. They did not offer me truth or power. The church and the world need truth and power. These are both available through the Holy Spirit.

Truth: “But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

Power: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (Acts 1:8).

Action Steps

- Learn to hear God's voice and move in the power of the Spirit.
- Do not follow a religious leader who has the characteristics Jesus describes as being present in dangerous religious leaders who are not going to heaven.

Register for our free worldwide video event, 49 LIES – 49 Religious Lies Jesus Told Me to Stop Believing beginning April 8, 2022. {eoa}

For the original article, visit .

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