

Jesus Mic Drops the Pharisees (more than once)

**First off, you read a lot in the bible of two types of people that kept attacking Jesus. The Pharisees and the Sadducees:**

1. **Similarities:** Together, the Pharisees and Sadducees were the ruling class of the Jews in Israel. They both were religious and both honored the Moses and the Law (The torah). They both had a measure of political power with the Romans that held governmental rule over Jerusalem.
2. **The Sanhedrin:** The Sanhedrin was a 70 member Supreme Court of ancient Israel that had both Pharisees and Sadducees in it.
3. The Sadducees believed in a literal interpretation of the scripture. The scripture was the final authority in deciding matters.
4. The Pharisees gave oral tradition equal authority to scripture. If the Pharisees couldn't find something in their oral tradition, they discounted it even though the bible said it.

**Differences:**

1. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead, in the afterlife, and an unseen spiritual world. The Sadducees did not believe in those things.
2. This caused a lot of friction between the two, but they could agree on one thing; They did not like Jesus and the things he taught. WHY?

**Has anyone here ever been jealous of another person?** That someone else who gets all the attention, who everyone likes and listens closely to.... First off, the Pharisees were jealous of Jesus. Everywhere Jesus went, he attracted great multitudes of people. They pressed around Him, listening to every word He said, watching His every move. He was profoundly popular among the people.

The rulers of Jerusalem laid heavy burdens on the people and approached the people with a sense of disdain and scorn (as if they were so much better). Jesus associated with the people the rulers considered poor or lowly (the have-nots).

The people loved Jesus and Jesus loved them. The Pharisees were only interested in judgement and looking at people's sins. The Pharisees and Sadducees couldn't stand it and were envious of Jesus and suspicious of his popularity.

**Has anyone here ever been "put in there place"? What I mean is, have you ever been in the wrong and someone called you out on it? How did you respond? How do people usually respond?** People usually are offended, they get angry, they lash out.... All even though they are the ones that are in the wrong. No one likes being called out. It hurts their ego, their pride, when really they should be thankful that someone cares enough to approach them about it and try to help them correct the think they are doing that is hurtful to themselves or other people.

The second reason they hated Jesus is because he exposed them. Before Jesus, they set the moral standard and they didn't do it by the Bible. They sat in the highest places in the synagogue, they were the ones most honored and celebrated for their QUOTE "virtue", but their virtue was a pretense, it was a cover, a fake. Jesus said, in my own words, "Your like graves that have been painted up all nice and new but inside are filled with dead man's bones". Jesus also said, "You clean the outside of the platter,

but the other side, the inner side, is filthy". You pretend to be the perfect example of righteousness and you play on the people with it.

Nothing exposes a counterfeit more than the presence of the genuine. Jesus walked this earth and true righteousness and holiness oozed out of Him. It was contagious and it didn't take an intellectual person to quickly see the difference between the real thing (Jesus) and the fake (the Pharisees). The Pharisees and Sadducees hated Jesus and couldn't wait to get rid of Him.

**Have you guys ever took a test that was graded on a curve?** If everyone does bad on a test, but that one person makes a perfect grade, then no one gets their grade bumped up. Curve-breakers make the rest of us look bad.

The bad news is, God does not grade on a curve. There is no sliding scale. Everyone will be judged by His perfect standard of righteousness. The good news is that Jesus broke that curve. He achieved a perfect record of righteousness and He offers that perfect record, that perfect grade, to us, for free. We only have to accept the gift and let Him take over.

The last reason they hated Jesus is because of what would happen if they let Him in. They were afraid of a revolt. The Pharisees and Sadducees were all buddy-buddy up with the pagan Romans and feared losing their power and authority if the people did revolt against Rome. They wanted to remove Jesus before He caused them any trouble.

#### **Controversy over Sabbath-Labor – Matthew 12:1-8**

**What are the Pharisees in an uproar about? Why did they say it was not lawful to "pluck corn to eat" on Sabbath?** The Pharisees were accusing Jesus of "breaking the Sabbath". According to the law, you were not supposed to labor or do any form of work on the Sabbath, period, no exceptions. Note the OT law does state it is OK to pick some corn from a neighbors field if you hunger, but you just cannot farm it and take it all. The Pharisees considered this "plucking of corn" a form of work. It's not like the Disciples were picking it off and throwing it on the ground, or grabbed a combine to just take it all. To break the Sabbath was very profane and in despicable to them. **Did you know that the NUMBER ONE issue of contention between the Pharisees and Jesus recorded in the gospel was this "Keeping of the Sabbath" deal?**

**We need to stop here and define what Bureaucracy is and means. Can anyone tell me anything about bureaucracy?** Bureaucracy is a form of organizational structure that still is in operation today. It consists of rules, procedures, and hierarchies of authority. It does have its strengths, but can also have many weaknesses. **Can anyone think of any bad things that can come out of a bureaucracy? How can having very strict rules be a bad thing?** It has problems adapting to change and it can keep people from doing what is right and kind in the name of "following the rules, often man-made". There is nothing wrong with rules, but what about when it contradicts who God is and what He stands for and finds MOST important?

**Let me give you a real-world example of just how Bureaucratic the Pharisees were.** Imagine there is a little old lady crossings the road. She can't get across the road fast enough and the "walk" sign turns back to "stop". Oncoming traffic begins to come and the lady is going to be ran over. You ignore the sign to "stop" and run out into the road to help the lady. The Pharisees come along and accuse you of breaking the law and throw you in jail.

The Pharisees originally intended to make the Law relevant in all situations of daily life, but became completely obsessed with it. So obsessed, they put their rules and regulations over the Spirit of God, over the right thing to do, and over the care and love of God's people. Even worse, they were completely convinced they were "holy" and "righteous" and followed all the laws perfectly while everyone else failed.

**Do you think any churches or Christian groups do that even today; put their rules, regulations, and traditions above and over doing what is right and what the Spirit says to do? What do you think Jesus thinks about this kind of bureaucracy?** Jesus took it on! He reinterpreted the scripture that the Pharisees distorted and clarified the true nature of sacredness!!! In Matthew 15:1-7, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for distorting God's word for the sake of their tradition. He referred to them as fools (Matt 23:17), hypocrites (Matt 23:23, 25, 27, 29), and "blind guides" (Matt 23:16) who led people astray.

Methodist Churches have a lot of traditions, but I truly feel this church we are in does not let rules and regulations stifle its witness and service. We openly fellowship with other churches and denominations and honor the Universal Church, we honor baptisms that have already occurred for new members, this very youth group has had and has now youth from other denominations, just to name a few.

**Why do we call the old testament the "OLD" testament and the new testament the "NEW" testament? What divides the two? What changed?** JESUS! Jesus came to institute a new way of living and a way of spirituality that would carry Israel and us beyond the church. **What if there were no church buildings or committees or church leaders or teachers? What if there were no rules or regulations or even Bibles to reference? How would we know what God wants us to do?** The Holy Spirit! On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came into the disciples and when you accepted Christ as your savior, the Holy Spirit also came inside you. Christ sent the Holy Spirit after his death on the cross, and the Holy Spirit is the final authority now (not rules or regulations).

Let's move into the story....

**Jesus gave two reasons the Sabbath could be broken. What was the first?**

- 1) **David ate bread meant only for the Priest:** Jesus goes straight to the scripture! The Pharisees were distorting the scripture. He assumes since the Pharisees were "experts" in the Bible, he did not have to give them exact scripture. He also didn't really give them an exact explanation. He asked it in question format as if He was saying "You need to go back and read the scripture again and properly interpret it." He challenged them to properly understand a given text of scripture.
  - a. **Jesus references 1 Sam 21:1-6: What point was Jesus making here?** That the need to alleviate hunger superseded form and tradition. King David and his men hungered and the priest gave them the bread in the temple that only the priests were to eat from.
  - b. **It seems obvious, but why is feeding the hungry more important than following tradition and rules?** The Torah was meant to reflect God's character of LOVE, MERCY, and GENEROSITY". The Pharisees did not see this. To let someone go hungry is against God's characteristics.
  - c. **Is Jesus disregarding the Torah? That's a hard questions!** Jesus is not disregarding the Torah, rather, he is CORRECTLY redefining or reinterpreting the Torah for the Pharisees.

The correct interpretation was that “**HUMAN NEED was to be placed ABOVE religious observance**”.

- d. **Do you think God is more interested in mercy or religious observance?** Mercy of course. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they had forsaken the truths of God. The truths of justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

**2) The priests officiated at the sacrifices done on the Sabbath and they also perform**

**circumcisions on the Sabbath:** Jesus does not refer to a specific scripture here, but does remind the Pharisees of some of the priestly duties that were performed on the Sabbath.

- a. **What point was Jesus making here?** Jesus’ argument was this, If the priests were allowed to break the Sabbath because of their duties of service in the temple, then His disciples were allowed to break the Sabbath since their service to the kingdom was of greater importance than the temple.
- b. **What do you think? What’s more important? Answering God’s calling for something He wants you to do or making sure to follow some rules?** Jesus was on a mission to change people’s distorted mindsets.
- c. **Let’s not be blind. All denominations have some rules and regulations in them, and that doesn’t mean they are bad, but just be aware some things were created by the church and not explicitly stated in the bible.**

**Jesus then continued to make His final point:**

**What did Jesus say in 12:6-8? In your own words, what is He trying to get across to the Pharisees?**

**Who was Jesus indirectly telling them who He was? Do you think the Pharisees were understanding who they were trying to tell what can or cannot be done?** This was God in the form of man! The Pharisees were still blind to this fact.

**Was Jesus controlled by the Law, or does He control the Law?** Jesus is Lord over all, including the Sabbath.

**Why was Jesus seen as such a threat to the Pharisees?** Jesus was instituting a new way of living and spirituality intended to carry Israel beyond the destruction of the temple. The Pharisees claimed authority over the people and Jesus was taking that claim away and replacing it with the correct authority; not rules, not laws, but Himself powered by the Holy Spirit in one’s soul.

### **APPLICATION**

You will face much of the same opposition that Jesus faced in this event.

- 1) Some people will not like the idea of Jesus because they do not see a need for Him
- 2) Some people will be offended by Jesus. **Why?** Because truly following Jesus and letting the Holy Spirit in will bring change.
  - a. Many do not feel they need any changes. Even some that say “I go to church, I tithe...”
  - b. Many are offended in Christian saying Jesus is the only way.
  - c. Many are afraid of change. Maybe later they say I’ll accept Christ.
- 3) Some will desperately hang on to rules and regulations which can smother the Holy Spirit really getting to work in a life. Some will think THIS is the way to God, to Heaven....following the rules.

**Did Jesus come to DO AWAY with the Law, or FULFILL IT?** Jesus was and will be the only one that could successfully follow the 10 commandments and the Law, and do it perfectly. Jesus fulfilled the Law.

**What should be the authority in our lives as Christians, a list of rules or the Holy Spirit?** We are on this side of the Cross now, the side that is after Christ's death. The Holy Spirit is given to you, use it as your guide!!