

Devotional Thoughts :: THE RELIGIOUS PHARISEE SPIRIT - PART 2

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Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" Matt 19:2-3 ESV

That is the religious mentality: "Forget about the fact that none of us have ever seen such a display of mercy and compassion in our lives. Forget about the crowds being healed. Instead, focus only on one thing only: what is Jesus doctrinal position on a controversial side issue? That's what we care about!"

Does it sound extreme? It is, but it is extremely common! The Spirit falls dramatically on an entire congregation, hundreds are touched and transformed, and the "religious" believers get offended. Why? Because their sacred traditions are violated. The preacher didn't use the King James Bible (or, in some circles his sin was that he did use the King James). People jumped, or fell over when prayed for, or laughed, or cried, or shook like a leaf, or were too loud, or too quiet. The service lasted for five hours, or the sermon lasted five minutes. The sick were prayed for before the message (or, maybe there wasn't even a message which offended others). "That's not how we do it in our church!"

You would think we would have more sense. In one group, men and women are judged for wearing suits and dresses to the meeting. In another group, they are judged for coming in jeans and sneakers. One group is judged for being very neat, clean shaven and straight laced. Another group is judged for wearing jeans and leather while having tattoos with piercings. If the Spirit of God happens to move in one of the groups that doesn't adhere to our dress code..."It can't be God," we say. "The pastor wasn't wearing a tie." Or, "the pastor was wearing a tie." We can make all these foolish judgements subconsciously, not realizing for a moment that is why we reject their ministries and very likely a deliverance for our lives