

Intro

~ Define Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes and Lawyers

- Pharisees – The term “Pharisee” means “separated ones.” Perhaps it means that they separated themselves from the masses or that they separated themselves to the study and interpretation of the law.
- Sadducees - The Sadducees were aristocrats. They were the party of the wealthy and of the high priestly families. They were in charge of the temple, its services, and concessions. They claimed to be descendants of Zadok, high priest of Solomon.
- Scribes – to “write,” “order,” and “count.” Ezra's glory, even above his priesthood, was that “he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses which the Lord God of Israel had given,” and “had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezr_7:6; Ezr_7:10; Ezr_7:12). to write, (b) to set in order, (c) to count. The explanation of the word has been referred to each of these. The sopherim were so called because they wrote out the law, or because they classified and arranged its precepts, or because they counted with scrupulous minuteness, every elapse and letter it contained.
- Lawyer - The title “lawyer” is generally supposed to be equivalent to the title “scribe.” The scribe expounded the law in the synagogues and schools.
- Zealots - The Zealots are mentioned rarely in the NT. The Zealots were the extreme wing of the Pharisees. In contrast with other Pharisees they believed only God had the right to rule over the Jews. They were willing to fight and die for that belief. For them nationalistic patriotism and religion were inseparable.

~ Every time Jesus was asked a question it gave rise for Jesus to teach us something new

~ Jesus silences the Sadducees concerning the resurrection. This then prompted the Pharisees to ask Jesus this question. One of them is a lawyer and asks this question, “which is the greatest commandment?”

~ When it comes to obeying God we can't pick and choose what command we'll obey. All God's commands are equally vital

~ The OT has 613 Mosaic commands but they can be summarized into two commands (love God and others)

~ We have in these two commands the answers for society (love God and others)

~ Read Exodus 20

~ Exodus 20 helps us understand the context of what Jesus is teaching us here

~ Context is important. Have you ever joined in a conversation and there was a private joke exchanged and because you don't know the context of the joke it doesn't make any sense. Context is important

Text**The Two Commands****1 Love God**

~ This command summarizes the first 4 commandments (Ex 20:1-11)

1 (v3) You shall have no other gods before me – he should be first and foremost

2 (v4) You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below – the reason is man will worship the image and not God who the image is supposed to reflect

3 (v7) don't take the name of the Lord in vain - We can break the third commandment through profanity (using the name of God in blasphemy and cursing), frivolity (using the name of God in a superficial, stupid way), and hypocrisy (claiming the name of God but acting in a way that disgraces Him).

4 (v8) Remember the Sabbath by keeping it holy – a set appointed time to fellowship with the creator

~ Our utmost loyalty, praise, adoration and respect belongs to God

~ Our responsibility, duty and priority belongs to God

~ If we get these things wrong it will throw everything else off

~ We'll be unbalanced in our priorities

~ Our nation is unbalanced because we've stopped loving God

~ Our love for God also has some boundaries. Our love God is to be with all our:

1. Heart = Affections
2. Soul = Being
3. Mind = Thoughts

- ~ This important because we need to keep the main thing the main thing
- ~ This is important because we must maintain our love for God firsts and foremost lest we lose our love for him
- ~ The church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7 did all the right things yet God because – they left their first love

Bridge - If we love God first we'll have the right kind and amount of love for others in our life

2 Love Others

- ~ This command summarized the last 6 commandments (Ex 20:12-17)
 - 5 (v12) Honor your father and mother – this perpetuates love, respect and order in the home.
 - 6 v13) You shall not murder - This reminds us that God is the Lord and the giver of life. He forbids the taking of innocent life because he is a life-giving God. Furthermore, this commandment preserves his sovereignty over life's end. He is Lord over death as well as over life.
 - 7 (v14) You shall not commit adultery - What does this tell us about God? It tells us that he is a God of purity and faithfulness, a God who expects covenants to be kept. It also tells us that he is a God of joy because this command preserves sex for the fellowship of marriage.
 - 8 (v15) You shall not steal - The God who gave this commandment is our Creator and Provider. To keep it is to recognize that ultimately everything belongs to him, and that therefore we do not have the right to take what he has given to someone else.
 - 9 (v16) You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor - This commandment comes from the God of truth, who is true in all he is, says, and does. As the Scripture says, "He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie" (1 Sam. 15:29a).
 - 10 (v17) You shall not covet – This teaches us to be content. Covetousness comes from a desire to possess what God has not given us. Like the eighth commandment, keeping this commandment requires faith in God's providence. God commands us not to covet because he can be trusted to give us everything we truly need. He is our provider.

- ~ Why do men hate, kill, hurt, riot, slander, malign, think evil of others? Because people don't love others
- ~ People love their own way, will, wisdom and way but not others
- ~ We don't have to look far to see other men not loving others. Pick up the paper, listen to people talk on their cell phones in the store
- ~ But this shouldn't come as a shock because Paul told us this would be a characteristic of the last days
- ~ 2 Tim 3:1-5 men will be lovers of self more than being lovers of God
- ~ Context picture of this is in the next chapter when Jesus describes the Pharisees in Matthew 23:1-15
- ~ The Pharisees loved to be seen (v5), noticed (v6), the title of Rabbi (v7,8), title of father (v9), title of master (v10), to be served (v11), to be exalted (v12)
- ~ The Pharisees loved their tradition, power and recognition than the people they were supposed to be serving
- ~ The answer to our society is to love God and love others more than self
- ~ Rom 12:9,10 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

- The rest of the chapters speaks of blessing your enemies and not cursing, not seeking revenge

- ~ Rom 13:8-10 *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*
- ~ Jn 15:9-14 *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

- ~ We can help our neighbor by praying for them, sharing Christ with them, doing kind things for them

Conclusion

- ~ These two commands give balance and show us our priorities
- ~ These commandments preserve the dignity of man
- ~ They preserve the right balance in society
- ~ We can't pick and choose what commands were going to obey
- ~ If we need things dumbed down and simplified here it is – love God first and then your neighbor
- ~ Remember black and yellow "dummies" books. Their simplified and Jesus summarizes and simplifies it