

Audio Teaching Sermon

Message #29

God Alone Sets the Rules

[**A** Intro – Pastor Jefferson 0:00 thru 1:34]

Hello fellow disciples in Christ! I hope that listening to the word of God today brings to your heart the unbridled joy that only Jesus can deliver. ¹ *“And there is salvation in no one else; ² for there is not another name under heaven ³ having been given among men ⁴ by which it absolutely is necessary ⁵ for us to be saved.”* [Acts 4:12] There is only one name which can bring eternal salvation to us, and that is Jesus of Nazareth. And He is the most incredible and loving person you could ever imagine. But, in order to realize that—you must first get to know Him. Personally & intimately. Serving Jesus has and remains the greatest privilege of my life. Hello, I am Pastor Jefferson, and this is **Message #29** of the audio teaching sermon series. Today we will continue our discussion as to how Jesus delivers His word to us via the Bible. A large part of knowing and understanding how His message of love and forgiveness is brought into our minds, involves being also made fully aware that there are nefarious methods in use today, having nothing to do with Him, which attempts to circumvent the path to holiness that Jesus created.

[**B** What is a Pharisee? 1:34 thru 3:05]

At the conclusion of the last lesson, I mentioned how Jesus condemned the work of the **Pharisees** over in **Luke** chapter **11**. So, just who were these religious Jews that Scripture makes such frequent mention of? Well, the **Pharisees** were *‘members of a Jewish sect that flourished in both the 1st century BC and in the 1st century AD.’* They were essentially a Jewish social movement and school of thought that existed during the time of what is called **“The 2nd Temple Judaism.”** The 2nd temple is also known as **Herod’s** temple. Their numbers rapidly swelled in the time between the Old & New Testaments, known as the time of **God’s silence**. Their popularity reached its peak during the time of Jesus. Their creed demanded strict obedience to the Word of God, meticulous observance of religious ceremonies and practices, and tight adherence to oral laws and traditions. And, just like Christians of today, they believed in the afterlife which centered around the coming of Messiah. The root Hebrew word for **Pharisee** is *pair-rue-SHIM* which means *‘to be separate or to be detached.’* They saw themselves as the true guardians of God’s word, which they felt must be protected at all costs.

[**C** Followers Who were Pharisees 3:05 thru 4:30]

There were many converts over to Jesus who were Pharisees. For example, there was **Nicodemus**, who was one that discussed the topic of being born again with Jesus. And there was **Joseph of Arimathea**, a rich man who assumed responsibility for the burial of Jesus within his own tomb. And the renowned Jewish historian **Josephus**, whose writings we still study today. They were all known to be Pharisees. Even the Apostle Paul began his teaching as a Pharisee. But they each saw the light of Jesus and converted over to become disciples and followers of Him. Perhaps the best way to understand the Pharisees is to examine some of their behaviors. One of the things that the Pharisees were quite diligent about was hand washing. Open your Bibles now to **Luke**, chapter **11**. We read in **verse 37** where Jesus had just finished speaking and was invited to have lunch with a Pharisee. Jesus agreed and went into the house and reclined at the table. **Verse 38** tells us that the Pharisee was surprised after witnessing Jesus had not first ceremonially washed his hands before the meal. He then called Jesus out over it.

[**D** Touch No Unclean Thing 4:30 thru 5:44]

Now open your Bibles to the book of **Isaiah**. The Pharisees, as guardians of the word of God—used the OT, as support for their behavior. **Isaiah 52:11** is one such verse. And it reads in the Hebrew, **1** “Depart, depart. **2** Go out from there. **3** Touch no unclean thing.

4 Go out from their midst. **5** Purify yourselves. **6** You who bear the articles of Yahweh.”

The Hebrew word we see repeated in **thought 1** for **depart** is **su-RUE** and means, **‘to turn aside, to remove or to take away.’** It is often used in the context of departing from a course of action, like with here, where it is advocating turning away from sin. **Thought 2** is saying **“Leave the location or presence of sin.”** Here is where the Pharisees feel they are commanded to be separate from others. **Thought 3** says, **“Touch no unclean thing.”**

The word we see for **touch** is **[4] tig-ah-YOU** and means **‘to lay a hand upon or to fasten oneself to.’**

[**E** Be Separate via Selection 5:44 thru 7:21]

In the Hebrew culture, touching carried significant implications, as with the transmission of impurity. The word for **unclean** is **taw-ME** and means **‘to be foul or defiled.’** It is used to describe a state of ritual impurity or uncleanness. Look now at

thought 4: “Go out from their midst.” There is but one word for **from** **their** **midst** and it is [4] *mit-TOW-kah* and means ‘**to sever or bisect from the middle.**’ The culture from that time reflected a communal and collective nature of their society. The Pharisees believed they were being called out to be separate from the rank-and-file Hebrew community, hence their given name. In **thought 5**, Isaiah is telling us to **purify yourselves**. There is just one word present in the phrase, and it is [1] *hib-bah-RU* and it means ‘**to clarify, to examine or to select.**’ Here is a prime example of folks interpreting Scripture apart from having the Holy Spirit to guide them. God is clearly giving us a metaphor here regarding spiritual purification. The original term was used for the process of refining metals, such as gold and silver, in the process of removing impurities. We are to do this with our own lives by examining, clarifying & then adjusting those behaviors as pointed out by Jesus.

[**F** **God Alone Sets All the Rules** **7:21 thru 8:47**]

God knows each of us personally and will thus communicate directly regarding those things we do which He does not want us to be involved or associated with. And the list is different for each person. For example, God ordained **John the Baptist** to forgo the consumption of wine & strong drink. **1** **Sampson** was commanded to never allow his hair to be cut. **2** We know from Scripture how it worked out when Sampson met Delila. God told **King David** to cease with taking of the census of the nation of Israel. **3** Clearly, God knew this was a weakness of David’s and told him to stop. When David didn’t obey the word of the LORD, he was sanctioned as a result. Same thing happened with Sampson. John the Baptist never stumbled. He remained obedient to the LORD right up until King Herod at the behest of his wife, Herodias had John first imprisoned and then later decapitated. Part of the reason you will hear me speak the phrase, “**Modern Day Pharisee**” is that there are people present today inside the walls of the church, who apply and paint their many supposed Christian rules indiscriminately across the whole of both Christian and secular society using the same brush as did the original Pharisees.

1 Luke 1:13 thru 17

2 Judges 13:5

3 2nd Samual, read the entire 24th chapter

[**G** What is Swearing? 8:47 thru 10:01]

Allow me to give a few examples of how modern-day Pharisees display similar behaviors today as did the Pharisees of old. For example, they might say something like, *“I don’t like to hear anyone swearing.”* Have you ever heard someone say that? The problem here isn’t with their preference to forgo hearing words which are not considered polite language. Nope, that’s not the issue. Parents and teachers will correct and even chastise kids at times over their inappropriate use of speech. The difference here is that we are training our children on how to become good citizens, and not how to become good Christians. We all needed to learn that there were many places and times where foul language was not appropriate. But the **M.D.P.** will use the **3rd commandment** as their crutch to prohibit “swearing.” Open your Bible now to **Exodus 20:7**. In the Hebrew it says,

1 “You shall take not the name of Yahweh your God **2** in vain, **3** for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless **4** who takes in vain His name.”

[**H** To Say We are Worthy of God’s Name 10:01 thru 11:17]

So, did I miss something here? I am just wondering, but did any of you hear anything mentioned in the text about any kind of swearing? The truth is the **3rd commandment** doesn’t have the word **swearing** anywhere in it. Let’s break the verse down. In **thought 1** we see the word for **you shall take** is **tis-SAW**. It’s a common word, used over 650 times in the OT. It appears twice in this verse alone. It means **‘to lift, to carry or to bear.’** In the ancient Hebrew culture, it referred to the physical act of carrying a load or transporting a burden. Spiritually, it extends to the idea of bearing responsibility, as in the act of the forgiveness of sin removes or lifts the associated guilt and penalty. The dictionary defines the phrase **to bear** as **‘to be fit for, or to be worthy of.’** So, **thoughts 1 and 2** are saying in essence that we are not permitted to state or imply in any way that we are fit to take on the name of our God Yahweh in vain.

[**I** They Will Not Go Unpunished 11:17 thru 13:11]

The word we see for **in vain** is [11] **las-SHAV** and it means **‘emptiness, falsehood and worthlessness.’** This is another commonly used word which implies evil and idolatry. The Israelites were called to worship God in truth and sincerity, they were to avoid the pitfalls of insincere worship at all costs, such as idolatry and falsehood. In this context

idolatry is defined as '**blasphemous behavior.**' And this is defined as '**impious utterances or actions concerning God or sacred things.**' Ah hah! Some of you might be saying—*impious utterances!* Yes, but the utterances the verse is talking about is a person stating they are followers and adherents of Yahweh, when clearly they merely hypocrites. Actors in the role of imposters. Look now at **thoughts 3 & 4,** ³ *for Yahweh will not hold him* **guiltless** ⁴ *who takes in vain His name.*" The word for **will hold him guiltless** is [5] **yeh-naw-QEH** and means '**to be innocent, to be free or to be exempt.**' This word is used only **5 times** and each time it is talking about being justified, or to be declared as righteous before the LORD, our God. In the other 4 places where we see it, the word is translated as '**unpunished.**' The verse is clearly talking about making a false claim of salvation, by impersonating oneself as a true follower of Christ. The 3rd commandment concerns our honesty before God and not using foul language before men in our everyday speech.

[**J** **Example of Christian Mythology** **13:11 thru 14:37**]

Folks, here is yet another example of what I describe as **Christian mythology.** The 10 commandments are intentionally grouped, with the first 3 pertaining to our relationship to God, and the last 7 relating to how we are to treat each other. So, we can see that God does not favor those who make claim to being His, when clearly they are not. Once again, Scripture has been errantly interpreted, which is not at all surprising, as the Holy Spirit is missing in the lives of such people making this error. And when God says those persons will not go **unpunished,** He is merely speaking of all of those who have been exposed to the truth of His word, but instead have still rejected it. Look at it this way, when a woman takes a man's name in marriage, it's due to a bond of intimacy. However, if she never met the man, but still took his name solely for her own benefit, then the supposed relationship would be a fraud. That is what God is saying in the **3rd commandment.** When we take up His name, it implies we are either a disciple on the road to holiness or that we have already been saved. Otherwise, we are just a fraudster who will not go unpunished.

[**K** **Hypocrisy Rooted in the Church** **14:37 thru 16:10**]

Perhaps the real question today is why do folks do it? Well, regardless of where you attend services, you've likely seen plenty of examples of the way such hypocrisy is hurting members of the church. People are leaving churches in droves today because such sour

experiences have left them convinced that all Christians are nothing more than hypocrites. The real problem with such behavior is it creates a requirement for folks to act or look a certain way while they are in the church environment. These ridiculously high standards demand almost perfection. And when there's no room to be less than perfect, the only option left is to fake it. This kind of performing is what Jesus calls hypocrisy in the Bible. It's often the result of being held to an impossible, unsustainable standard. It's what the Pharisees did then—and continue to do now. Jesus was frustrated frequently by religious leaders and other people who claimed to love God but treated others poorly. The other issue which quickly rears its ugly head is when you view those hypocritical Christians in their environment away from the sanctuary. They are radically different people, frequently doing the very things which they just said not to.

[**Z** **Some Final Thoughts** **16:10 thru 18:04**]

It is unfortunate but you will hear from almost every pulpit that the **3rd commandment** means to never speak the words “**GD it**” or something similar. And they then go on to equate all forms of vulgar slang and profanity as being essentially in the same vein. And while a fully-fledged disciple of Christ should in most circumstances be at least aware of their speech, it is not a sin by itself to speak the four-letter words of the most colorful of foul language. After all, it is just communication when spoken as the common man. God knows the difference as He can read our thoughts and know intimately what is in our heart. Jesus spoke of such persons over in **Matthew 15:8**. He was quoting from **Isaiah 29:13**. In the Hebrew it reads, ¹ *“Inasmuch as this people draw near ² with their mouths ³ and with their lips they honor Me. ⁴ But their hearts far have been removed from Me, ⁵ and their reverence for Me ⁶ consists of commandments taught by men.”*

This verse is the sole reason why folks who occupy pews within the Christian sanctuaries spread all across the globe are actually living lost lives due to their continual breaking of the **3rd commandment**. They have indeed taken on the name of Yahweh, but have done so in vain. I will continue this topic in the next message. **So, until next time my beloved, this has been Pastor Jefferson, speaking in God's Holy name and for His glory alone. Amen!**