

Unmasking Olderbrotherishness

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[0:00] All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is what?

! Profitable. It's profitable. If you haven't learned that passage of Scripture, you ought to. Profitable. It's profitable. If you haven't learned that passage of Scripture, you ought to. All Scripture given by inspiration of God is breathed out by God.

And it's profitable. Profitable for a lot of things. Doctrine and reproof and correction and instruction, Paul said. And for what purpose?

That the man of God, and the women of God too also, ladies, would be complete. We'd be complete. We need to be complete. We need to be mature and thoroughly equipped to every good work.

This is what Paul said to Timothy. Now, I would say to you that that certainly applies or applies to all Scripture, of course, but it certainly applies to the Scripture text that we're going to be looking at this morning, even though I would say that it pertains really to a group of people that we would not like to identify with.

[1:18] In fact, we don't like to think that we do identify in any shape or form with the people here that Jesus is speaking to.

And, of course, I'm talking about the Pharisees, the notorious Pharisees. And so if you found that passage, Luke chapter 16, let me read verses 14 through 18.

Now, the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided him. And he said to them, You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

The law and the prophets were until John, since that time, the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.

[2:15] And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.

Now, we're going to stop right there, and that's all we're going to look at this morning, four verses. And we're going to discover, I think, some very helpful, very instructive, very challenging things from these few verses.

Now, before we delve, really delve into the passage itself this morning, really a need to connect it, see the connection with what comes before it.

And what I mean is, really all the way back to the beginning of chapter 15. Because, you see, we're somewhere kind of in the middle of what really has been a rather long session of Jesus' teaching and instruction, and which, by the way, continues on until the 10th verse of chapter 17.

So it's quite a large block of Scripture that deals with one particular event, one occasion, all in one location. Now, the audience, of course, his disciples were there.

[3:38] And you would expect that, though they're mentioned just a few times. And also we know from chapter 15, verse 1, that there were tax collectors and sinners also present there in the audience.

And we also know from the second verse of chapter 15, and they're mentioned a number of times too, we know that the Pharisees and the scribes were also there.

Now, the disciples, really everybody was doing what you would expect them to do. The disciples were following Jesus. The sinners were believing on Jesus.

And the Pharisees were mocking Jesus, like they always did. Now, the question is, why were the Pharisees mocking Jesus?

They did that all the time. They were doing that all throughout this particular passage. Remember back there in chapter 15, verse 1, we studied that a number of weeks ago. The Pharisees, the Bible says the Pharisees and the scribes complained.

[4:40] That is, they were murmuring, and they were criticizing, and they were grumbling. And then right here in our passage that we read a moment ago in chapter 16, verse 14, the Pharisees are doing what?

They are deriding Jesus. And that just simply means they were scoffing at Him and ridiculing Him, and they were sneering at Him. And why? I mean, really, why?

Because with every parable that Jesus told in this passage, and He told a number of them, with every parable Jesus told, He was exposing the Pharisees for the hypocrites that they really were. Now, that wouldn't make you very happy, would it? If you were a hypocrite and Jesus is exposing you. That's what He was doing, and He did it over and over again. And He unmasked them for who they really were in their very hearts.

And so the Pharisees, you see, they had cloaked their sin and their unbelief in robes of righteousness or religionism, we really should say.

[5:48] The Pharisees and the scribes had disguised their corruption, the very corruption of their hearts, had been disguised and masked by their own self-righteousness.

And this is what the Pharisees were doing, and they were very good at it. In fact, so good that they had everybody fooled by that. Until, of course, Jesus came.

And Jesus came along, and He exposed them. Jesus came along, and He unmasked their sin and their hypocrisy, and it made them angry. I mean, really angry.

In fact, so angry that eventually, what are they going to do? They're going to have Jesus put to death. They're going to have Him crucified. Now, I would say to you that never were they so exposed than when Jesus told the parable of the prodigal son.

I know we studied that a couple of weeks ago, several weeks ago. But that really, really unmasked them so openly and so blatantly.

[6:50] And especially when Jesus got to the end of that parable, and He included the part about the older brother. Do you remember? And we're all very familiar with the parable, even if you weren't here when I preached on it.

And Jesus ends with the older brother, you know. And they're reacting to how Jesus presented that older brother. And they reacted negatively because the older brother was a perfect picture of the Pharisees.

And they knew that. They knew exactly what Jesus was getting at. He had unmasked the Pharisees for who they really were. And so they could identify with that older brother. Remember, the older brother stayed home.

The younger brother took his inheritance and he left the home. In fact, he left the country and he spent it in riotous living, the Bible says, or prodigal living.

But the older brother, what did he do? He stayed home. He stayed right there with the Father. And he made every effort to serve the Father or to appear so.

[7:51] And he made sure to honor the Father in every way possible. And then he thought somehow that he deserved the favor of the Father because of all he had done for him.

Remember the story? But his reaction, the older brother's reaction to the Father's grace that had been lavished upon the younger sinning son, that exposed his heart for what his heart really was, what was really there.

Because there was no room for grace in the older brother's heart. And that is the way it is with all self-righteous Pharisees. In Jesus' day as well as in our day today.

Because they think that just because they're being religious and moral, that somehow that increases their favor with God. That somehow they have an in with God. Pharisees think that if you can just fill your life with religious activity, that somehow that guarantees salvation with God.

That somehow that gets you to heaven someday. But the problem, of course, with all of that, as we discussed a number of weeks ago, all of that makes you your own Savior.

[9:04] Now that's what the Pharisees were. And Jesus is really teaching them that the hottest hell is reserved for people who reject the gospel of grace and trust in their own self-made way to heaven.

All right, but now let's make sure that we don't make a mistake here at this point. Let's make sure that we don't get trapped into somehow excluding ourselves from this discussion.

Because now, in the truest sense, of course, we're not older brothers like the brothers in that parable. The older brother was just as lost as the younger brother, remember? It's not really the parable of the lost son.

It's the parable of the two lost sons. And so, you know, true believers and the redeemed followers of Christ are not older brothers in the sense of the parable, but we can be and may be older brother-ish, right?

And so this morning, though Jesus is clearly addressing the Pharisees here, we should apply his teaching to our own lives. That's what we should do. And we should let this passage, and what Jesus teaches us in this passage, we should let that unmask our own older brotherishness.

[10 : 25] Now, I know that's not a real word, but you get the idea. Let this passage not just to separate it and have it apply to someone else, the Pharisees in Jesus' day or some other kind of Pharisaical person that you and I may know.

Let's not just project that to someone else. Let's allow these things that Jesus is going to identify about the Pharisees. Let that also look at our own hearts and our own lives.

And so this morning, I want us to learn something from how Jesus unmasks these Pharisees, how he exposes them for who they really are.

And here's the first thing that he exposes. They were God makers. The Pharisees were God makers, and we learn that right here in verse 14.

Now, the Pharisees, look at it again. The Pharisees were what? They were lovers of money. They were lovers of money. And they also heard all these things.

[11 : 29] And they derided him, verse 14. All right, so it says the Pharisees heard all these things. What things? Well, the parable of the dishonest stewards that we studied last week.

And Jesus, you know, concluded that whole block of teaching in verse 13 by saying, you cannot serve God and mammon.

That is, you cannot serve God, worship God, be loyal to God, and have him supreme in your life, and at the same time serve and be loyal to and desire more than anything else earthly wealth or money.

All right, so the inference here is clearly what? It's idolatry. Idolatry. And the Pharisees were clearly idolaters. They were what?

Lovers of money. And so you see, the Pharisees were God makers. Now, money was just one of their many gods. They had some gods, really, that were elevated even above their love for money.

[12 : 33] But they were idolaters. And that's what this particular passage in verse 14 is telling us about them. Verse 14 reveals, actually, two traits of idolatry.

Two traits of an idolater that are always present in all idolatry. And they were certainly, these two traits were present with the Pharisees.

And here they are, very simply, very logically. They, first of all, overvalued money, didn't they? They were lovers of it. And the implication being that they were lovers of money more than they were lovers of God.

And that's the idea here. So here's what idolatry is all about. They overvalued money. And then second, the second trait is they undervalued Jesus.

Do you see that? What did they do? They derided Him. They derided Him. And by the way, the word in the Greek language is really quite graphic.

[13 : 31] It means literally to turn up the nose. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine if Jesus were here today and He's preaching and teaching to us and many of us turn our nose up to Him?

Can you even imagine that? Can you even imagine doing that? To the Lord of glory. But that's what they did. And that is, of course, what makes idolatry so wicked in the eyes of God, before God.

And both of those things always exist in all forms of idolatry regardless of the object of your idolatry. No matter what it is.

Be it money or material possessions or personal pleasure. That can be an idol in one's life and often is. Or maybe it's the praise of man.

And that was, by the way, another one of the Pharisees' idols, as we shall see. Or popularity or physical fitness or beauty or, you know, whatever it is. You can just fill in the blank.

[14:28] Even just self can be your idol. And, by the way, even religious activity can be an idol. What you're doing here today. And maybe you even teach a Sunday school class.

And, listen, that can be an idol to you if you put that activity above your devotion to God and love for God. So no matter what the object of your idolatry is, it always includes an overvaluing of earthly things and an undervaluing of God.

That's what idolatry is. God makers. And the Pharisees were God makers. And Jesus exposed that here in this passage. Second, they were religion fakers.

They were God makers and they were religion fakers. Look at verse 15 again. And he said to them, You are those who justify yourselves before men.

But God knows your hearts. That is, God knows your fakes. Your frauds. Because, you see, the Pharisees, this is what identified them.

[15:37] They wanted always to appear religious. They wanted always to appear spiritual. And spiritual minded. And keepers of God's holy law.

They wanted everyone to think that they were righteous. And yet all of their religious activity was designed to make them look like they were spiritual giants.

To make them look like, in the eyes of the people, that they were godly people and great religious leaders. And they would do anything. Be it lying or cheating or deceiving.

They would do anything to maintain that reputation. That's what Jesus unmasked in these Pharisees. They were not justified before God. They justified themselves before man.

And thought they were justifying themselves even before God. But they were fakes. They were frauds. I read a story this past week entitled, The Emperor's Seeds.

[16:35] And it's really, really quite interesting. And it illustrates this, I think, in a very profound way. And I want to read it to you. Now, it's a little bit lengthy. But listen to it very carefully. Once there was an emperor in the Far East who was growing old and knew it was coming time to choose his successor.

Instead of choosing one of his own children, he decided to do something different. And so he called all of the young people in the kingdom together one day. And he said to them, It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor.

And I have decided to choose one of you. The kids were shocked. But the emperor continued. He said, I'm going to give each one of you just one seed.

One seed. It is a very special seed. And I want you to go home, plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed.

And I will then judge the plants that you bring to me. And the one I choose will be the next emperor of my kingdom. Well, there was one boy named Ling who was there that day.

[17:52] And he, like the others, received a seed. And he went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. And she helped him get a pot and some planting soil.

And he planted the seed and watered it very carefully. And every day he would water it and watch to see if it would grow and what would grow. And after about three weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and their plants that were beginning to grow.

But Ling kept going home and checking his seed. But nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by. And still nothing.

Nothing had grown from the seed. By now others were talking about their plants. But Ling didn't have a plant. And he felt like a failure. Six months went by.

Still nothing in Ling's pot. And he just knew he had killed his seed. And everyone else had trees and tall plants and beautiful flowers. But he had nothing.

[18:54] Ling didn't say anything to his friends. However, he just kept waiting for his seed to grow. A year finally went by.

And all of the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But she, rather, encouraged him to go and to take his pot.

And to be honest about what happened. And so Ling felt sick to his stomach. But he knew that his mother was right. And he took his empty pot to the palace. When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants growing by all the other youths.

They were beautiful. In all shapes. In all sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor. And many of the other kids began to laugh at him. When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room.

And he greeted the young people. And Ling just kind of tried to hide in the back. My, what great plants and trees and flowers you have grown, said the emperor.

[20:01] Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor of the kingdom. Then all of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front.

And Ling was terrified. The emperor knows I'm a failure, he thought to himself. And maybe he will kill me. Then Ling got to the front. The emperor asked his name. My name is Ling, he reluctantly replied.

All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. But the emperor asked everyone to quiet down. And then he looked at Ling and then announced to the crowd, Behold, your new emperor. His name is Ling. Well, Ling couldn't believe it. Ling couldn't even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor? Then the emperor said, One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds which would not grow.

[21:08] All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one that I gave you.

Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor.

Interesting story. And yet, apropos to the way the Pharisees were acting. The Pharisees were planting their own seeds. Trying to bring up a flowery life and a fruitful life that was really of their own making.

And it was bogus. It was fake. Fake. But our king, of course, knows that his people are genuine. They're the real thing. The genuine article. But the Pharisees were fakers.

They were God makers. And they were religion fakers. And then a third thing. They were praise takers.

[22:13] Praise takers. Look at the latter part of verse 15. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. Now, you know, there are a number of ways to interpret this.

Certainly, the love of money is an abomination to man. The praise and the adoration of money. But it seems clear to me in the context that these Pharisees.

You see, these Pharisees were not just simply content to have idols. But these Pharisees were and desired to be idols themselves.

And so they loved to be highly esteemed. They loved to be exalted among men. They were praise takers.

They took for themselves the praise of man. That praise that rightfully belonged to God. But, see, all praise and all glory belongs to God. But Jesus says, for what is highly esteemed among men, that is, these religious fakers, that was highly esteemed among men, he said, is an abomination in the sight of God.

[23:26] And, by the way, the word abomination means literally a foul thing to God. The word refers to something disgusting, something revolting.

In fact, in some context, it refers to something that stinks. That's what God thinks about all of this. And so here's the idea. Every time you receive man's applause for something God has done, something he did in you or for you or through you, every time you receive the praise of God or praise of man for that.

And you feel good about it. You feel exhilarated about it and kind of pumped up by it. Every time you do that, just remember this, it makes God sick.

It makes him sick. It is disgusting to him. God makers. See, this is what Jesus is unmasking among these Pharisees.

They were God makers. They were religion fakers. They were praise takers. And fourth, they were gospel forsakers. Gospel forsakers.

[24:41] Look at verse 16. The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time, the kingdom of God has been preached and everyone is pressing into it.

What does all that mean? Well, in the first place, the first part of it just simply means that up to the time that John the Baptist came on the scene, the Old Testament, that is the law and the prophets, the law and the prophets just signifies the Old Testament, The Old Testament was preached and taught, but it was incomplete.

It was not the full gospel. But John the Baptist, of course, came along, and he was the bridge between the Old Testament and the New.

And so with John, the kingdom had come. The Old Testament was pointing to the kingdom coming, and with John, he could announce that the kingdom has come.

And so he preached what? He preached repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. And so looking then at verse 16, since that time, the time of John coming, since that time, the kingdom of God has been preached.

[25 : 51] And that's exactly what has happened ever since. John began by preaching repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. Jesus began his preaching ministry by preaching, literally, repent, for the kingdom of God is near.

And the disciples also, at the beginning of their ministry, they began to preach. The Bible says, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. And we've been preaching that ever since. So with John on, the kingdom is being preached.

But this is the thing that I want you to see out of this passage. Jesus said, since that time, the kingdom of God has been preached. And notice this, and everyone is pressing into it.

Now, what in the world does that mean? There's only one other place in the New Testament where this word appears, the word that's translated pressing, and some versions have forcing.

Only one other place in the New Testament where the word appears. And it's in Matthew chapter 11 and verse 12, where there's a similar thing said here by Jesus, but in a different context, a different setting.

[26 : 51] But the word is used there, and there it is translated, suffers violence. Suffers violence. You say, well, it doesn't seem to be the same thing.

It doesn't compare. But it is the same. You say, the meaning is this. The way of salvation, folks, not easy. It's hard.

It's hard. Like pressing into it. It's the way of repentance. It is the way of self-denial. You remember when we studied Luke chapter 9 and verse 23, where Jesus said, if anyone desires to come after me, let him do what?

Deny himself. Take up his cross daily and follow me. You see, people are looking for an easy way. The salvation can forget it.

It's a hard way. It doesn't mean you work your way into it. It's not talking about forcing your way into the kingdom by your own determination and your own hard work. It's not talking about that.

[27 : 55] He's saying that those who respond to the gospel must know that it's a hard way. Jesus said, whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. Losing your life is not a pleasant thing.

In fact, many have literally lost their lives when they responded to the gospel and trusted Christ. Remember what we studied way back there, or not really all that far back, in Luke chapter 14, verse 26, where Jesus said, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Remember we studied that? And also Jesus said, whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

And also there's Matthew chapter 7 and verse 14, where Jesus said, narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life.

And there are few who find it. I don't need to quote any other passages, do I? There are many, many others. But now remember Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees here.

[29 : 06] And he essentially is saying to them, and I'll let J.C. Ryle say it in his way. Listen to this very carefully.

He said, Jesus is saying to the Pharisees, you make your boast of the law and the prophets, O ye Pharisees, and you do well to give them honor.

But you forget that the dispensation of the law and the prophets was only intended to pave the way for a better dispensation of the kingdom of God, which was to be ushered in by John the Baptist.

Well, that dispensation has come. It has come. The kingdom of God is now among you. And while you are ignorantly deriding and ridiculing me and my doctrine, my message, multitudes of publicans and sinners are pressing into it, into the kingdom of God.

They are forsaking all to follow me. But you're just sitting there. And you're criticizing and murmuring and deriding me.

[30:20] You are gospel forsakers. See, their problem is not their problem. That is the problem of sin, not really the problem.

Their problem is not admitting it, the problem. They would not forsake it, would not repent. And so while the kingdom is being preached and proclaimed, and many sinners are pressing into it through repentance and self-denial and following Christ, no matter what, forsaking all to follow Him, while they're doing that, you Pharisees, you're just doing nothing but criticizing.

See, the Pharisees were God makers. They were religion fakers. They were praise takers. And they were gospel forsakers. And one more, they were law breakers.

Law breakers. And it's ironic, really. We made this point a number of times, but it's ironic that for all of their meticulous rules and regulations designed to make one perfect law keepers, ironic that they themselves were the worst of law breakers.

Pitiful. Verse 17 says, And it's easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fall, to fail, which, by the way, of course, I think is a profound statement and proof concerning the nature and character of God's Word.

[31:57] It is inspired of God down to the smallest part of one single letter. The tittle, you see, would make the slightest difference in a Hebrew character in the alphabet to make it another letter.

Just a small little mark, a little dash, a little dot here. It's kind of like in our English language, you know, the difference between an E and an F. I mean, all you have is just one little mark, and it changes it from an F to an E.

One little mark makes all the difference in the letter. This is what Jesus is saying metaphorically. I found this out the first time I traveled to China. And I had been told and I had learned that everywhere you go, especially your own hotel, you make sure you pick up a business card.

Because then when you're out and you need to get back to the hotel or you need to get some other place where you've been, want to go, then you just show the taxi driver your business card, and it has the address on there in Chinese.

And it's the best way to go because the taxi driver can't speak English. And so I did that one day, but I had made a mistake earlier in the day of writing down a note.

[33:07] You know, sometimes, you know, you want to write down something, and somebody says something to you, we need to remember something, and so you're fumbling for a piece of paper.

And I found the business card for my hotel, and I wrote a little note on the back of the card.

Well, the problem is, you know, when you write in ink on paper, sometimes the ink bleeds through, and you have just little dots, a little something, it just kind of shows through on the other side. And so I hadn't realized that.

And so I'm in the taxi, and I need to get back to my hotel, and I hand the business card to the taxi driver, and he gave me such a look of utter dismay.

And he looked at that thing, and he couldn't figure it out. It didn't make any sense to him. He handed the card back to me. Luckily, I was traveling with somebody else, and they had a card that wasn't damaged. But I looked at the card, and there on the address, just the slightest little ink had bled through, a little dot had bled through into one of the characters, a couple of the characters on the address for the hotel.

And that little dot had made all the difference in what that address read, and he couldn't understand it. Now, that just illustrates that Jesus is talking about little bitty particles, little dots, little dashes.

[34:23] And he's saying that not one of those will fail in my word. It is inspired to the very dots in the written word.

Now, Jesus, of course, is speaking in hyperbole, and he means that even the smallest part of my word is important. And even the smallest part of my word is inspired of me, and it's my word, and therefore it is binding, even the smallest part of it.

And the entire universe will cease to exist before even one little particle of God's word will pass away or change. It stands even though all else fails.

God's word will be fulfilled even though all else comes to an end. And Jesus is saying to these Pharisees, you Pharisees, you know, you ought to remember this. When you go around, you go around praising your strict commitment to my word, and yet all the while, you are the most flagrant of manipulators and breakers of my law.

That's what he's saying to them. And then he just gives one example. There in verse 18, whoever, and he's quoting, or at least giving the gist of the Mosaic law concerning divorce and remarriage,

and he says whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced from his husband commits adultery.

[35 : 49] So he's giving an example to them. And it's a reference to Deuteronomy chapter 24, verses 1 through 4, but the implication is clearly this. The Pharisees had reinterpreted the law, that law to the point that it made it a joke.

But it was no joke. You see, among the Pharisees of Jesus' day, they could legally divorce their wives for just about any reason they desired.

That's what it had become. Now, Deuteronomy 24, you go back and study that passage, you find out that God permitted divorce in the case of uncleanness. That's the word that's used in the Hebrew text.

That uncleanness was the grounds for divorce, but the Pharisees, what had they done? They had interpreted or reinterpreted the word uncleanness any way that suited them.

And so literally, you know, if your wife was a poor cook, you could divorce her. Huh? Now, that's not for you guys, all right. That's how they reinterpreted it.

[36 : 55] If she burned your supper one too many times, you could divorce her. If she grew an unsightly mole inside of her face, you could divorce her. If you found someone prettier than your current wife, you could divorce her legally.

If she criticized your mother. I'm not making these up. I'm not speculating. These were actually written down by the Rabbi Hillel, who had interpreted the law here in Deuteronomy 24.

And he had given a way out, any way out for a man to divorce his wife. And so just whatever it was, you could go on and on with it. Didn't see whatever you wanted it to be.

And since none of these reasons, of course, were biblical grounds for divorce, that is biblical in God's sight, then the marriages, guess what?

They were still in force. And so then, as the word says, when the man remarried, he would be committing adultery. When the woman that was divorced, she would then naturally remarry, because it's a terrible thing for a woman to be alone in those days, and she would remarry and she would be committing adultery.

[38 : 03] So would the one who married her. You see, but do you see Jesus' point? I mean, we can go a long way with all of this, but here's the point. He's talking to the Pharisees. He said, you hypocrites.

You hypocrites. You parade yourselves around here as if you are the paragons of devotion to the word of God, and yet you are adulterers, and you are proliferating adultery in the society through your many divorces.

You're lawbreakers. Lawbreakers. And that was just simply one example. Now, I must say, though, at this point that today, we're pretty much living according to the same philosophy of marriage and divorce, wouldn't you say?

In our day. I mean, divorce is just about, you know, it's just, you know, divorces take place for any and all unbiblical reasons.

And somehow it just must stop. Do we agree on that? It must stop, especially in the Christian community. Let me close with this, as we kind of put all this together.

[39 : 16] Let's look at this. The Pharisees were, first of all, God-makers. They were idolaters. They were religion fakers, right?

They justified themselves. They were praise-takers. They loved the praise of man. They were gospel forsakers.

They would not repent. They were law-breakers. They made the law meaningless.

Really a mockery. And Jesus unmasked them, didn't he? Revealed them for who they really were.

And may Jesus be gracious.

I'll say that again. May Jesus be gracious to us. To unmask us, if any of these things exist in our lives.