Parables Confronting the Pharisees

Introduction: The parables of Jesus were often spoken in the midst of opposition and controversy.

A. The group that Jesus was most often in conflict with was the Pharisee’s.
   1. He warned His disciples about their deadly influence. (Mt 16:5-6, 12)
   2. Jesus did not shrink from the confrontation with the Pharisees but always tried to get them to see their hearts.
   3. This kind of love must be the goal of our teaching as well! (2 Tim 2:24-26)
   4. When you get someone to see their hearts, you have done all you can do. The “ball” now is in their court.

B. Jesus’ Parables were powerful in controversy. (Mt 13:10-13)
   1. In many cases they answered the applications of the parables correctly, only to see they had condemned themselves!
   2. Also the parables had the effect of hiding from those who were unwilling to think while revealing to those who would seek out the truth!

I. Parables Exposing Self-Righteousness
   A. What is self-righteousness? (Lk 18:9)
      1. The essence of self-righteousness is a man had stopped looking at God.
      2. In this state of mind these men could not find the true righteousness of God.
         (Rom 10:1-2; 4:1-4)
      3. How could a man actually think he could earn salvation?
      4. The Pharisees often associated “righteousness” with their man-made traditions and their party affiliations. (Jn 5:42-44)
   B. Jesus used a Tax collector as an example of righteousness! (Lk 18:10-14)
      1. The Pharisee could not imagine any Tax collector as being righteous. Why?
      2. Jesus contrasted a Pharisee specifically with a Tax collector!
      3. The Pharisee’s did not know how a man is righteous before God.
   C. Jesus used the parable of the two sons to reveal the kind of religion the Pharisee’s espoused.
      1. The Pharisees were enraged over Jesus cleansing the temple. (Mt 21:12-13)
      2. In a confrontation with Jesus, they showed they feared the people more than they loved God’s truth. (Mt 21:23,25)
      3. In response to this He told a parable. (Mt 21:28-32)
      4. The religion of God is more than a “talk religion.”
         a. Some of the hardest hearts can tell you what the Bible says.
         b. They sat in the audience while their hearts were not touched thinking: “I am righteousness”.
         c. Sadly people can be so satisfied in their own righteousness that they fail to see what is plain to God. Which son are you? (Mt 23:4)

II. Parables Exposing Hypocrisy
   A. What is a hypocrite? (Lk 11:44-47)
1. **Hupokrites** 1) one who answers, an interpreter 2) an actor, stage player 3) a dissembler, pretender, hypocrite.

2. You are in essence playing a part; your heart is somewhere else. *(Mt 15:8)*

B. The parable of the good Samaritan exposed one lawyer.
1. The lawyer wanted to “test” Jesus. Where is his heart? *(Lk 10:25)*
2. Jesus in turn tests the lawyer! *(Lk 10:28-29)*
3. This is a man who does not want to see! I know of some who think they are spiritual because they raise many questions and then do what they want.
4. Here is a picture so plain anyone could see. Notice who was the hero! *(Jn 8:48, Lk 10:30-35)*
5. Now for the question! *(Lk 10:36-37)*
6. You had better watch out when you expose one’s heart!

C. The parable of the wicked vinedressers was also presented to a hostile group.
1. This is in the same context as the parable of the two sons.
2. How would you answer the Lord? *(Mt 21:33-40)*
3. They answered correctly. Watch out! *(Mt 21:42-45)*
4. Most people who fail to understand do not have a lack of ability to think.
5. Did they see Jesus’ point? *(Mt 21:45-46)*

**III. Parables Exposing Blindness**

A. The Pharisee’s were made blind because of their pride. This was seen when Jesus healed a blind man. *(Jn 9:35-41)*

B. The parables of the lost sheep and the lost boy were spoken in controversy.
1. Jesus responded to this criticism. *(Lk 15:1-2)*
2. In the parable of the lost sheep men rejoiced! The Pharisee’s could not because of their blindness. *(Lk 15:3-7)*
3. We often focus on the prodigal son and his relationship to the father. This is not the point of the parable. *(Lk 15:11-24)*
4. The point of the parable is the elder son. Who do he represent? *(Lk 15:25-32)*

C. The parable of the great supper also was an answer to the Pharisees.
1. They were very critical of Jesus. They looked only to find fault. *(Lk 14:1-4)*
2. While Jesus was in their midst there was opportunity. These blind men were to fulfill the parable Jesus now tells. *(Lk 14:15-18, 24)*
3. How sad to be so blind as to pursue something only to reject it when it is offered!

**Conclusion:** What was the end of the Pharisees?

A. Some were converted to Christ. *(Phil 3:5, 8)*

B. Most were lost for eternity. *(Mt 21:45-46)*

C. Where is your heart? In what do you trust?
1. Your outward activity and your religious “heritage” is meaningless without a right heart before God.
2. Too many are very causal about the things of God. They will miss what God has for them unless they repent!