



May 30, 2021

“Opposition to Jesus and His Church”

Mark 12:13–27

Pastor Gary Hamrick

There were three groups that held religious and political sway over people in Jesus’ day: the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees. Normally they weren’t in agreement about much, but there was one thing they were united about – their opposition to Jesus and His ministry. Sadly, the same three types of groups are working today to undermine the ministry of Jesus and His True Church. We must be careful to avoid the modern version of this ungodly influence that takes the form of religious piety, political correctness, and liberal theology.

1. Pastor Gary said, “As I was studying and looking at [these groups], I realized that the same type of groups are working today to undermine the ministry of Jesus and his true Church. And sadly, these types of groups often operate within our own ranks. Now, I don’t mean in our own ranks as in the ranks of Cornerstone Chapel specifically, although we should not think ourselves immune to this, but I mean the ranks of Christianity in general. And if we are to effect change in our culture, the kind of change that comes from representing Christ and representing him well, then we must be aware of these three different types of influences in our world, in the church today, and reject their religious, philosophical, and ideological views, which are often based, by the way, on the principles of this world rather than on the principles of Christ. ... There is a lot of human influence that has crept into the Church, that has not only infiltrated the Church but dominated the Church. [Cornerstone Chapel] can be just as vulnerable as any [other church] to these creeping influences if we are not careful. ... What we are going to look at today is the spirit behind these three groups because there’s a modern version of Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees even today, and this is what we have to be warned about lest this modern version creeps into our lives or into our church.”
  - a. [Colossians 2:8](#) - *“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic*

*principles of this world rather than on Christ.” (NIV 1984)*

- b. **Acts 20:30-31** – *“Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.” (NIV 1984)*

## 2. Pharisees

- a. The Pharisees were known as strict separatists, religious legalists, and proud moralists.
- b. Pastor Gary said, “If we are not careful, we can allow a Pharisaical spirit to creep into our lives, which is not glorifying to God and it is certainly off-putting to other people. [This spirit] is basically an attitude in which one is a little morally superior to other people and starts to look down his or her nose at [the less than righteous lives that don’t measure up to theirs]. ... This opens the door to two ugly twin sins... pride and hypocrisy.”
- c. Pride
  - i. **Luke 18:9-14** – *“Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, “God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.” And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’ ”*
  - ii. Pastor Gary said, “In our passionate plea to take back our culture and to stand for what is right and true we must not think of ourselves as better than anybody else. We have to stay humble in all of this because we are in the same need of grace as the next person. The difference is that we know how much we need grace because we know how much we’ve been forgiven. [Others just don’t know how much they need God’s grace].
- d. Hypocrisy
  - i. Pastor Gary said, “If it’s not pride that creeps into our lives through a Pharisaical spirit, it’s hypocrisy. ... The moment you don’t live up to your own high moral standard, you will be labeled a hypocrite. ... People are watching, and the moment we don’t live up to our own standards, they will pounce on us like a lion on a wildebeest! [People] will use our own failures, not only to shame us, but to justify their own evil behavior and their own immoral agenda.

- ii. [Matthew 23:3](#) - *“So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.”* (NIV 1984)
- e. Separatists
  - i. In [Luke 7:36-50](#), we read the account of Jesus being invited to the home of Simon the Pharisee, and during the meal a prostitute came into the room.
    - 1. She started to weep, anointed Jesus’ feet with a fragrant oil and dried them with her hair.
    - 2. Jesus told Simon that she understood that she had been forgiven much, and that was why she was so broken and emotional; she knew the love and forgiveness of Jesus.
  - ii. Pastor Gary said, “We can’t be strict separatists. We have to still be a part of building relationships with other people who don’t know Jesus. How else are they going to find out about Jesus? If we just become separatists who don’t engage with people and don’t have some kind of relational connection with people, then the very people who need Jesus will not see him demonstrated in our lives or hear about him through our stories and our testimonies.”

### 3. Herodians

- a. The Herodians were a sect that was part political and part religious, with loyalty to King Herod.
- b. The Herodians strongly favored Hellenistic (Greek) customs, and they were very secular and pro-government.
- c. Pastor Gary said, “They were about God, government, and Greek culture. ... When you think about a Herodian spirit today, this would be the people in the Church today raising the banner of social justice. [These are people who see] government as the solution to human ills about as much as God is. ... In addition, these people] would champion the latest socio-political cause even if they don’t fully understand it or even if it may not align with biblical truth. ... It’s more about what the popular thing is... [These people] would say that they are more enlightened today, more woke than what an old book [like the Bible] says, especially if a majority of people say that something is so, then it must be true. ... [With this kind of a spirit, people will apologize for their skin color if that’s the popular thing to do; people will acknowledge a multitude of identities if that’s the popular thing to do; people will use buzz words like cisgender, nonbinary, pansexual, and gender fluid if that’s the popular thing to do; and people will use terms like reproductive rights instead of abortion, alternative lifestyle instead of aberrant lifestyle if that’s the popular thing to do]. ... And when it comes to all of these pronouns that people want to be called based on their perceived identity, we are not really loving people when

we deny them reality in order to somehow make them feel better. That's not love. ... Isn't it interesting that some of the same people who tout science as the gold standard deny science when it doesn't serve them. ... I'm not laughing at the people who are struggling with all of this... We are being told this is the new reality. No, it's not! That's an unreality that [people] are living in. [What] is so tragic is that the medical community can't help [people] anymore. This used to be called Gender Identity Disorder. In the DSM manual [of the American Psychiatric Association], this was one of the statistical mental illnesses until 2013. ... [This is no longer considered to be a mental illness, so the people who struggle with this can't even get professional help because the medical community has abandoned them.] Of course, we know that Jesus is the great and ultimate healer and that he can bring wholeness to people who don't feel whole. ... We have an answer [for] people who struggle with all sorts of issues because Jesus is the ultimate reconciler, and healer, and Savior. ... And what is so sad is that the church instead of being a place of grace and truth where people can find healing and forgiveness through Jesus, many churches have capitulated to the culture on this in an effort to make people feel loved and accepted. ... The most loving course of treatment is to tell people the truth and to tell them in love. So, political correctness seems to be more important than biblical truth, and this is the spirit of the Herodians, today."

#### 4. Sadducees

- a. The Sadducees were a religious sect that rejected certain theological truths like eternal life in heaven or hell, angels, and demons.
- b. The Sadducees believed in unrestrained free will, meaning that God had no role in the personal lives of human beings.
- c. This would be the spirit in the Church that embraces liberal theology and rejects certain doctrines and truths of Scripture.
- d. There are people who believe that God is out of touch on a number of things and that they are more enlightened than God.
- e. There are people who look at Scripture as being intolerant and not aligned with mainstream culture.
- f. There are people who want the culture to shape the Bible and the Church, instead of the Bible and the Church shaping culture.
- g. Pastor Gary said, "At the same time that churches embraced liberal theology around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century... a similar thing was happening in academia. ... [Most colleges and seminaries] were originally started as Christian colleges and seminaries to train people to grow in their faith. ... The combination of the two, between churches and universities that [abandoned] their Christian heritage, you have this liberal theology and liberal ideology creeping in... Did you know that one hundred and six of the first one hundred

and eight colleges that were first formed in America [were] formed by Christians and built upon Christian principles? But where are they now? The result of this liberal theology and ideology over the years has now led to the accepted practice in many denominations and churches of things like denying the inerrancy, inspiration, infallibility, and relevancy of Scripture; tolerating sin under the banner of love rather than addressing sin under the banner of truth so that people can experience genuine forgiveness; ordaining homosexuals; performing [so-called] 'same-sex marriages'; abandoning the pro-life position; abdicating our role to be salt and light in the world in culture and politics; opting for social justice instead of biblical justice, advocating a universalist view that all people will eventually be saved and that hell only exists on earth. This is the spirit of the Sadducees. That's why the Bible predicts that there will be an abandoning of the faith and a falling away from truth in the latter days before Christ's return."

- i. [Matthew 24:10](#) - *"At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other..."* (NIV 1984)
- ii. [1 Timothy 4:1](#) - *"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."* (NIV 1984)

5. Pastor Gary said, "[There] will always be people and groups in opposition to Jesus and to his true Church. Sometimes that opposition [will come] from without and sometimes that opposition [will come] from within. The spirit of the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees is still alive and well, and we must not allow any of it into our lives or into our church. There is no place for religious piety like the Pharisees, for political correctness like the Herodians, or for liberal theology like the Sadducees.
6. [Hebrews 10:35-39](#) - *"So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.' But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved."* (NIV 1984)

#### Discussion Questions

1. Read [Mark 12:13-27](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.

2. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about the three groups (Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees) that are still at work trying to undermine the ministry of Jesus and the true Church. (See #1 above)
3. Read and discuss [Colossians 2:8](#) and [Acts 20:30-31](#). (See #1a and #1b above)
4. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about the pride, hypocrisy, and separatist views of the Pharisees. (See #2a through #2e above)
5. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about the religious and political views of the Herodians. (See #3a through #3c above)
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about theological views of the Sadducees. (See #4a through #4g above)
7. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about ways Christians should be aware of the spirit of the Pharisees, Herodians, and the Sadducees is still at work in the local church. (See #5 above)
8. Read and discuss [Hebrews 10:35-39](#). (See #6 above)
9. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)