

April 30th, 2023
Pinecrest Baptist Church
p.m.

Sermon Title: The Biblical Reality of Religious Delusion
Sermon Text: (Luke 6:6-11)

I copied down an article that I read years ago credited to a German preacher named Helmut Thielicke.

Thielicke wrote - "One had to look very closely at his . . . book very carefully to see the cloven hoof beneath the angel's luminous robes. He made free use of the Christian vocabulary, talked about the blessing of the Almighty and the Christian confessions which would become the pillars of the new state; he rang bells and pulled out all the organ stops. He assumed the earnestness of a man who is utterly weighed down by historic responsibility. He handed out pious stories to the press, especially the church papers.

It was reported, for example, that he showed his tattered Bible to some deaconesses and declared that he drew the strength for his great work from the Word of God. He was able to introduce a pietistic timbre into his voice which caused many religious people to welcome him as a man sent from God."

- Of course, the book he is speaking of is Mein Kampf, and the author was Adolf Hitler —Helmut Thielicke

Someone has rightly said, "Men never do evil so thoroughly as they do in the name of religion."

If there is anything more dangerous than bad religion, it is when bad religion becomes the substitute for ultimate reality.

- And I believe we are in a place in our time, in our culture, when not only can people tell the difference between Right and Wrong; we are living in a time where people cannot tell the difference between what is real and imaginary!

- As our nation and world speeds down the cliff, our need for discernment only intensifies as time goes on.

- But now that being said:

1.) First – we must be able to discern the difference between what is real and what is imaginary. – That is for sure.

2.) Second – we must also be able to discern the difference between what is real, and what is merely "Religious."

It does no good to shore up our minds to know Reality from Imagination; if we cannot Discern Reality from mere Religion.

One preacher said, "If the Lord pulled His Holy Spirit from the world, 95% of what we are doing would still go, we wouldn't miss a thing, and we still brag about it."

- If the Lord isn't working through us, then NOTHING is working!

This evening we turn to a passage that reminds us of the difference between being a people saturated with religion; or a people who are living in divine reality.

- I remind you that Religion without Righteousness and Reality is not benign, it is outright evil.
- Satan offered Adam and Eve Religion without Righteousness, when he told them that they could be “like god” without obeying God.

This event happened in the region of Galilee

There are 4 over riding truths that emanate like light beams from this account of Jesus’ healing of the man with the withered hand.

1.) There is a Difference in Religion and Reality

- If there is perhaps any clear scripture that defines the difference between Religion and Reality 2 Timothy 3:5 – Probably sums it up – “Have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof from such turn away.”

Let’s notice some things:

A. Reality is Truth as Revealed by God

*Note - The Sabbath issue seemed to be the tip of the spear between the religious leaders and the Lord.

- Luke 13:14 – “And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.”
- The first part of this chapter was a contention about Jesus eating corn in the corn fields on the sabbath day.
- Mark chapter 3 – contentions about the Sabbath
- John chapter 5 – contentions about the Sabbath

- John chapter 9 sums it all up in John 9:16 – “Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day . . .”

*Note – The fire in their belly was because they said Jesus didn’t keep the laws of God.

- What was the law of God on the Sabbath Day?
 - 1.) The laws of the Sabbath as revealed by God and repeated by God . . .

It was Revealed by God – (Exodus 20:8-10) “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates”:

It was a Refreshment from God – (Exodus 23:12) – “Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.”

- God’s instruction forbid work, so that it could secure rest!

It was Repeated by God – (Exodus 31:14-15) “Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.”

- Understanding what Moses wrote, what God forbade on the Sabbath day was the Hebrew word that meant “industriousness – employment –

- deputyship, i.e. ministry; generally employment (never servile) or work (abstract or concrete); also property (as the result of labor) :- business, + cattle, + industrious, occupation.”

- it was not an injunction against physical activity per se – it was an injunction against the normal means of business, trade, productivity, and industry.

*Note – God gave the Sabbath command 4 primary purposes:

- 1) As a Protection against Stress
- 2) As a Provision for Rest
- 3) In Principle as a Test – it was the first thing He called Holy!
- 4) As a Program for our Best – “**acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths**”
 - the keeping of the Sabbath is the time managements acknowledge of Him!

*Note – That is the Reality that God Revealed when He gave man the Sabbath.

- Reality is the Truth as it is Revealed by God.

B. Religion is Spiritual Effort Designed by Man

*Note – The contention of the Pharisees was starkly different than what God designed.

- *The Meriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary gives the definition of “religion” in the sense that we are talking about as,*

- *personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices*

- *scrupulous conformity: conscientiousness*

- *a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith*

1.) The laws of the Sabbath as prescribed by the Jews.

39 categories of restrictions that missed the entire point of the law.

Why did they do this?

- if we were to give them the benefit of the doubt, we would say, ‘they just wanted to make sure no one violated God’s law.’

- but that’s not what the Bible says . . . When Paul spoke of these Judaizers with the same behaviors he explained – they abuse the law of God – “**that they may glory in your flesh.**”

(Galatians 6:13)

- how did Paul know that? – Paul used to be a Pharisee!

*Note – It was not enough for men to obey God, they wanted men to obey THEM.

- Any prescription for worship or for communion with the Lord that is not revealed by the Lord is nothing more than homemade holiness, and self-designed righteousness.

This is how religion often becomes a “false reality.”

From ***The Prairie Overcomer*** -

- *We remember hearing a leader of one of the great evangelical missionary societies commenting on what seems to be the natural development of many an organization. He said, there is a man. The man creates a movement or a mission. The mission*

gradually becomes a machine. Finally, the machine ends up being a monument. Only the power of God can prevent a Christian organization from becoming a monument to the man who under God brought it into being.

*Note – Make no mistake about it, Jesus Kept the Sabbath, and He taught the Jews to keep the Sabbath. – The way that God intended for it to be kept – He had no use, made no concession, and never acknowledge the laws that the Pharisees lorded over the people.

- Jesus did not recognize their Homemade Holiness!
- and He doesn't recognize yours or mine either!

#1 - There is a difference between Religion and Reality!

2.) There is a Distance between Observance and Obedience

*Note – Never get the idea that mechanical observance is the same as meaningful obedience.

- ***the purpose of the sabbath law was not merely to cease work of man, but was to employ the work of God, to enjoy the worth of God and declare the worship of God.***

- There is an eternal difference between Observance and Obedience that is demonstrated in twice in this event.

A. When Man's Practice Substitutes God's Purpose

Exodus 23:12 – “Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the

son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.”

*Note – *God's purpose was not the practice, but the practice was given for a purpose!*

- Anytime anyone loses the purpose of the Lord's instruction, they have actually lost the instruction!

*Note – Later on in this book, Jesus addressed this point.

Luke 11:42 – “**But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.**”

B. When God's Law is Stripped of God's Love

*note – The ultimate purpose of the law of God was driven by the love of God to “protect us from harm” and to “direct us to Jesus.”

- The law of the Sabbath was driven by the love of Almighty God.

1.) They were “loveless” – for this withered man.

2.) They were “graceless” – toward Jesus as a man – desiring to find something to condemn Him with.

- the heart of a religious man is that he is always looking for someone to CONDEMN, in the name of being vigilant and discerning.

3.) They were “changeless”

- They were never, never, never, introspective or self-judging – and

were blind to their own moral character.

4.) They themselves were “lawless”

- there was no Biblical Law against Healing on the Sabbath Day!

In Matthew 12:5 – Jesus addressed the Pharisees this way

- Matthew 12:5 **“Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?”**

- the priests worked by slaying the animals, offering sacrifices, building fires. – and they were blameless

- John 7:22-23 – Jesus said, **“Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?”**

- The Priests could work – slaying, slaughtering, sacrificing
- Children could be circumcised –
- Then the High Priest of all could Heal! Healing on the Sabbath was not forbidden by God.
- If a man could be circumcised, a man could be healed!

1.) There is a Difference in Religion and Reality

2.) There is Distance Between Observance and Obedience

3.) There is Delusion when Clarity brings Hostility

Luke 6:11 **“And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.”**

There are two times when raging delusion settles in:

1.) When someone gets clarity – and Hates It.

*Note- They realized and knew all that Jesus was saying and doing was true, and it ignited a fury and hostility in their heart!

*Note – They spiraled into a spiritual freefall, and an emotional madness.

*Note – When a man sees what is right and it enrages, inflames, and infuriates, you have a man who is on the road to delusion.

2.) When someone repeatedly, willfully, openly, and defiantly denies what they intrinsically know to be true.

- Hating what is Right is the Empirical Sign that something is Desperately Wrong!

- There is nothing more healthy – than righteousness
- There is nothing more practical than righteousness
- There is nothing more sensible than righteousness

- But when a man is faced with righteousness and infuriates him, there is no REMEDY for such insanity.

- Proverbs 29:1 – “He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

A. Sight without Sense

1.) They “watched” expecting Him to heal!

2.) They had seen him heal before.

3.) They wanted to “condemn” Him healing, and the man being healed.

They knew He could, knew He would, and wanted Him to; so, they could manipulate the law and kill Him. -

B. Rage without Reason

1.) Is it lawful to do good or evil on the Sabbaths?

- a.) It is NEVER lawful to do evil.
- b.) It was ALWAYS lawful to do good.

"He humiliated the religious leaders and healed the man all at the same time without even breaking the Pharisees' law. It is no wonder that the religious establishment was furious and sought a way to get rid of Him." [Note: Martin, p. 219.]

- It is interesting to note that as Jesus looked around upon them, it appeared that they knew they had absolutely no legitimate argument.

- 1.) There is a Difference between Religion and Reality
- 2.) There is a Distance between Observance and Obedience
- 3.) There is a Delusion when Clarity produces Hostility

4.) There is Deliverance in the Lord, not the Law.

*note – This apparently occurred “at the invitation” or “after the sermon.” – Jesus taught/preached His message, and then provided His miracle.

- He gave His Word, and Did His Work
- that’s how all worship services are supposed to be.
- the Word of God to the Mind
- the Work of God on the Man

We are to listen Individually, not just collectively. – He speaks to crowds of people, and people in the crowd.

A. In Spite of the Opinions of Men

- 1.) Their hatred for Jesus stopped Jesus the same way a mosquito stops a truck.

B. In Sight of the World Around

Conclusion: - In a United Press article from several years back – it stated

A United Press survey found that the “typical American” is a twenty-seven-year-old who does not read one book a year. He is materialistic, satisfied with small pleasures, bored with theological disputations. Although he may attend church twenty-seven times a year, he is not interested in the supernatural. He is concerned with neither heaven nor hell. In fact, he has no interest whatever in immortality. His principal interests are football, hunting, fishing, and car-tinkering.

- Religion always tries to straighten the deck chairs on a sinking ship.

(Deluded insanity, is deluded insanity – whether it be a man who thinks he’s a woman, or a Pharisee that thinks his religiousness provides his righteousness. –

- the only difference between the insanity in secular society, and the religious delusion within the church – is that insanity in the secular society is too often much easier to see.

- Let us deal with what is REAL, as it is REVEALED to Us in the Word of God.