

Are You a Young, Proud, Rude Pharisee

by Tim Conway

This sermon addresses the importance of discernment in living for Christ, focusing on a young man who received critical feedback from his youth pastor and others. It emphasizes the dangers of pride, the need for humility in prayer, and the impact of surrounding oneself with godly influences. The sermon also cautions against using doctrinal knowledge to exalt oneself and highlights the essentiality of preaching the Gospel of Christ over emphasizing doctrines like election and predestination.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:2, James 4:10, Proverbs 13:20, 1 Corinthians 8:1, Romans 14:1, John 3:16

Topics: "Discernment", "Humility in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

He says, now follow this, you have to be discerning, and I know I've read this thing three or four times, so sometimes you don't catch everything the first time you read it, but I want to live for Christ with all that is in me, okay, I mean you get that far, again, just love the sins the best, and take him at his word, I attended a youth group which I no longer attend, and the youth pastor sent me a long message, in it, so this is the youth pastor to one of the young men that was attending, in it he said I was a Pharisee, he called me stubborn, he called me judgmental, rude, cruel, toxic, and prideful, I mean to even get one of those words is not good, but when a pastor gives you all those words, he said this was feedback he received from others, and then the guy admits, those who aren't Christians have told me things like this, so this isn't the first guy that's told him this, and then he admits this too, I'm sure there are just as many Christians who think this, about him, and then he says this, obviously there is a disconnect here, I've watched you guys and I'll be honest, I read the Puritans, I read ten chapters a day of Scripture, and then he says this, I don't see how someone could be saturated with so much truth, and yet be accused of the things like this, if you're discerning I hope you recognize there's something really wrong with that, I love God, I love His word, and my life has drastically changed since my conversion, and then he admits this, prayer is a weak area in my life, so maybe my problem is there, if not, where else could it be? I bear marks of truly being saved, and those who are calling me all these things don't deny that I'm saved, but could it be that I'm still

lost? I don't want to be bringing so much dishonor to God with these things, so please help. Mario what do you tell him? That's tough, because those people could be testifying to right things in his life, but they could also be like resisting truth. Let me just ask this question, is it likely that multiple people telling you, because he admits that other people have told him similar things, when you have multiple people telling you that you are pharisaical, stubborn, judgmental, rude, cruel, toxic, and prideful, is it likely that there's not a shred of truth to it? It sounds like a cage stage to him.

Sounds like what? He's in a cage stage a little bit. Cage stage? Calvinism, like when you first learn about Calvinism and the truth, it's very easy to attack people. You're very obsessed about it and basically beat everybody around you over the head with it.

Now he doesn't bring that out specifically, but... The fact that he said those who aren't Christians have told me these things, to me that holds even more weight than the Christians. That unbelievers are telling him these same things that he's judgmental, stubborn, and toxic. Now, let's pick up on this.

How many of you were in the beginning when you came to kind of embrace the doctrines of grace? If you have. Maybe some of you haven't. But how many of you were somewhat obnoxious with it? Okay, so we've got hands.

But let me ask you, even, and so was I, okay, even in that state, as obnoxious as you were, did people say this about you? Did they call you Pharisaical, stubborn, judgmental, rude, cruel, toxic, and prideful? See, I actually don't remember anybody using those words to describe me. I just got told that I'm preaching to another god. Well, right.

That was more the thing. Well, it can't be true. Somebody told me, I hope you'll be happy in Heaven by yourself because it seems so narrow.

You told me I was judgmental. I was. That was a year and a half after I became a Christian.

So we don't know much about this pastor. He might be solid on the same page doctrine. Oh, he could be.

Yeah, there's no reason to believe that he's just some rank or a mini... At his age? Or did you skip that? I skipped it. He's 14. See, that softened people.

I purposely left it out for that reason. Because at 14, you're that proud, obnoxious, toxic. I mean, that word, that's a bad word.

Wouldn't it be easier for him to fall into that because he's so young? Perhaps. If he was 24, he'd have 10 more years of maturing as a person. But here's one of the things he says.

I watch you guys on I'll Be Honest. I read the Puritans and I read 10 chapters a day of Scripture. Now that's kind of Pharisaical right there.

This is like throwing out there. I read 10 chapters a day. And then to say, I don't see how someone could be saturated with so much truth and yet be accused of things like this? See, that's lacking discernment.

That's very ignorant. He's immature, but I think he's trying to protect himself. He's 14 in this world.

I don't know what kind of school he goes to. I think he goes to public school. I can see myself trying to wrap myself in the Word.

He's standing on it. So he's immature, but at the same time, I think he's trying to stay out of what's right. A lot of negative words in one sentence.

He's 14. He's a baby. So we don't excuse it, but maybe we are a little softer.

He needs guidance. Okay, what guidance are we going to give him? Because he's probably watching. Or he probably will watch with James.

What's the subject? Well, surrounding himself with those who are very gracious would be a good influence. It would be a good starting point. And you know, there's a possibility that he doesn't have saved parents.

He was converted maybe not through family means. He doesn't talk about his parental situation. But is there anything in Scripture that would lead us to believe that we kind of become like those we hang around? Can anybody quote someplace? Now that's the negative, but how about the positive? He who walks with the wise is wise.

Yeah, it's definitely a biblical reality. And there's the reality of imitation. We're to imitate the faith of people and we're very much called to imitate those who imitate Christ.

We're very much called to find people and it's kind of the leaven principle. Leaven leavens the lump. But it's amazing when you have godly people.

You know how often people came away from just sitting for a little bit and talking to Martin Lloyd-Jones? They said, you just felt a greater nearness to God. I remember Charles and Mona said that they were in Wales and a friend of Lloyd-Jones, and I can't recall his name right off, was it Macmillan? They spent a little time with him and they said it was like the fragrance of Christ stayed with them for a while. There's impact in being around people.

I noticed at the Denton Conference, you know, I'd look around and I'd look to see where Jared was. It wasn't that I was really looking to see where he was. It was just I would notice, hey, there's Charles, there's Jared.

Hey, there's Jeffrey Thomas, there's Jared. The guy's walking around with all the preachers. You know, there's something to that.

And if we surround ourselves with the godliest people that we can, it's really going to have an impact on our life. That would be one thing to tell them. I mean, being in a church where you have those kind of elders, men whose faith is worth imitating, what else would you tell them? I would say something that I learned earlier in my walk.

You mentioned the fact that he reads a lot of Puritans and people tend to use that as a justification and argue Puritans and Reformers. But I think maybe sometimes you need to lay off those books and go to Scripture and see how you're supposed to be a Christian. But that helped me because I got into the whole, well, I'm reading all this.

And then Matt told me one day, hey, you just lay off those books and just focus on the Bible itself. And that greatly helped me. And he says, I don't see how someone could be saturated with so much truth and yet be accused of things like this.

I would say to him, you can be saturated with a lot of truth, but if you're not living the truth, if you actually are being mean and cruel and toxic and rude and pharisaical, that's why you're being accused of it. How much intake of Puritans or how much intake of Scripture isn't the issue. Because there is a knowledge, there is a gaining of intellect that simply puffs up.

It produces pride. One of the things that can happen is we gain information and then we become judgmental. We judge other people.

Or we look down on other people because they don't know what we know. But what we want to aim for is to be transformed by this truth. And then he does admit this too.

He admits that his prayer life isn't very good. You see, that's another indication of pride. Because desperate people, needy people pray.

Proud people don't need the Lord. They don't need to pray. When people know, Lord, I can't do this without You, you find them out in the field praying or in their closet praying.

People who can bypass prayer, that is a real evidence of weakness, immaturity, pride, self-sufficiency, independent. Anybody say anything else? Finding that balance is difficult. That balance that James and yourself was talking about last Sunday.

That's a difficult thing. We need a lot of help from the Holy Spirit to find the balance. It's tough.

One of the things that we need to remember too, he's not actually saying that this has to do with embracing the sovereignty of God or the doctrines of grace. But I will say this, it was very interesting to me when I was studying, I did a number of messages, six messages here at GCC on hyper-Calvinism several years back. And what was very interesting to me is that Calvin in his Institutes, he started by having election first and then the doctrine of justification.

Now think about, that's the order in which they happen. In eternity past, God chooses. In the course of time, we believe and are justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

So he put them in an ordo salutis fashion. But you know what he recognized? He recognized the doctrine of election is a stumbling block for the lost. And he changed the chapters.

He put justification by faith before election. There's a lot of wisdom to that. A lot of people come across the doctrines of grace and you know what they want to do? They want to go to lost grandma and start talking Romans 9. That's not what you want to do.

You want to go to the text you went. Whoever thirsts, that's what you want to do. You want to preach the Gospel to them.

Banging people over the head with election doesn't save them. People need to trust Christ. You need to show them Christ.

You need to show them the beauties of Christ. You need to put Him up as the only hope of mankind. Because really when it comes to the responsibility of men, their responsibility is God commands all men everywhere to repent.

That's their responsibility. Because what happens is I thank the Lord. I was not bogged down by election and predestination.

I came across the Gospel according to Jesus and I was hit full blast with the Gospel out of Matthew's Gospel primarily. And I didn't know those things, and so they weren't a stumbling block. They weren't a snare to me.

But I've seen people get so ensnared by that. But it's a non-issue. You say, why? If I'm not chosen, I can't be saved.

Technically speaking, yes, that's true. But the reality of Scripture is that if you come to Christ, He's not going to cast you out. If you thirst, drink.

That's what Scripture says. Whosoever, if you're thirsty, drink. So you don't want to hit people with this thought.

And you know what Jared was just saying? This last Sunday, he preached out of John 7 and when he was all done, a woman came up and said, I didn't like that message. Because you didn't emphasize the fact that God chooses us. See, that is the hyper-Calvinism right there.

Because you know what happens? You tell the sinner, well, you can only be saved if you're elect. And so you know what they do? Now they're going to sit there and they're going to wait to see if they're elect. And they're going to think it's useless to do anything else until they can figure out if I'm elect.

But they're never going to figure out if they're elect. When the reality is, Jesus didn't come along and say, well, you've got to figure out if you're elect. But He came along and He said, repent and believe the Gospel.

And we appeal to man's responsibility, not to God's sovereignty, not when we're preaching the Gospel. And it's a snare. I think Calvin was absolutely right in doing what he did.

So we need to be careful. We come to these doctrines. We come to the doctrine of the sovereignty of God.

But what that ought to do is not be this club to beat people over the head. It ought to fuel your confidence that when you take the Gospel and preach it, it's going to be the power of God unto salvation. People are going to get saved.

Because God's going to see to it that people get saved. But they're going to get saved as you lift up Christ. Remember what Christ said.

It's just like out there in the wilderness. You had all these fiery serpents and they were biting people. And what happened? Moses made a brazen serpent and he lifted it up on a pole and as many as looked, and he said in the same way, the Son of Man is going to be lifted up and whoever looks on Him and believes, they're going to be saved.

That's what we want to show people. Christ is your only hope. Scripture does not say election is your only hope.

Christ is your only hope. And yes, in a way, I know you could argue, well, election does bring hope. And it does.

It brings certainty to the reality that our Gospel is going to produce fruit. Brother, I heard Lloyd Yellin's book was an evangelical. And he said he boldly stated yes, I'm a Calvinist, but I wouldn't put predestination and election under the essentials.

He said it's not essential. It's the resurrection and being born again. That's what's essential.

Anything have any other word for young Zechariah? Okay, He was warned against pride. The problem with pride is that it's blind. The problem with pride is it exalts self.

When you're exalting yourself, you're right in your own eyes. And so, that's the difficulty. I would probably ask him if he's gone to a confused pastor and ask him why he said those things.

And examine himself to see if there's a weight behind it. Well, I have a feeling there is definitely weight behind it. There's truth behind it.

And I guess that's one of the things I'd say to him is take these things as being true and repent of these things. Humble yourself before the Lord. What time do we have?

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