

# Pharisees Do Not Practise What They Preach

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living the Word and not preaching what you have not done yourself, lest you become a Pharisee.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 19:2, Jeremiah 23:17, Jeremiah 23:30, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 23:3, Acts 1:1, Colossians 3:17, James 1:22, 1 John 3:18

**Topics:** "Hypocrisy", "Authentic Ministry"

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## Description

Zac Poonen delivers a powerful sermon contrasting the Pharisees who taught but did not practice what they preached with Jesus who did first and then taught. He emphasizes the importance of living out the Word before preaching it, highlighting that true anointing and life in preaching come from personal experience. Poonen warns against seeking honor for oneself by preaching secondhand sermons and urges preachers to only share what they have first practiced in their own lives.

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## Transcript

"Pharisees say things and do not do them" (Matthew 23:3).

This verse is the opposite of Acts 1:1 where it is written about Jesus that He "did (first) and (then) taught". The Pharisees taught but did not do. They did not practise what they preached. Jesus however did first and then preached only what He had already done!! These are two opposite spirits. Those with the spirit of the Pharisees will build the harlot church Babylon. And those with the Spirit of Christ will build the bridal church Jerusalem.

Jesus never preached what he had not first done. How long do you think Jesus took to prepare the Sermon on the Mount - (Matthew Chapters 5, 6 and 7) - the finest sermon that anyone has ever preached? It took Him 30 years to prepare that sermon. It came out of His life and not just from His mind.

When you preach a sermon that you heard from someone else, that only comes out of your head. It is mere knowledge. There is neither life nor anointing in it. If you want to preach as Jesus preached, then you must first live the Word and then preach it. Some people have asked me. "Brother Zac, can I preach your sermons in my ministry?" And I have told them, "Yes, if you live them out first and are honest to admit where you got them from." God says,

Have any of these preachers bothered to meet with Me and listened to Me and then lived out my Word?...I never sent these preachers, I never spoke to them, but they preached anyway (Jeremiah 23:17, 18, 21 - MSG).

When you preach someone else's sermon, without living it out yourself or telling people where you got it from, you are just seeking honour for yourself. That is a dangerous habit and can result in spiritual death for you, because God has said,

I am against the preachers who get all their sermons secondhand from others and who say, 'This message is from God' (Jeremiah 23:30, 31 - MSG & TLB).

For some 30 years now, I have tried my best to ensure that I preach only what I have first practised in my life. Let me give you one example: I have never preached anywhere, urging people to go as missionaries to North India. Why haven't I done that, when many hundreds of missionaries are needed in North India. Only because I have never lived in North India as a missionary myself.

Now listen to what I am going to say and see if it is not true: Almost every leader of evangelical missionary societies in India lives in the comfort of South India and challenges others to go as missionaries to North India. These leaders send their own children to good schools and colleges in South India. But they tell their missionaries who are in remote villages in North India (where there are no schools) to send their children to some distant boarding schools. I am not here to judge these leaders, for God is their judge. But I do say this that I will never follow their example. I would be a Pharisee if I preached as they did, because I would be asking others to do what I am not doing myself. Only someone who has lived in North India and brought up his children in the difficult circumstances there, has the right to tell others to do the same thing. All the rest are Pharisees. This principle applies in many other areas too.

Don't ever preach on anything that you have not done yourself. Don't try to advise parents who have teenage children how to bring them up their teenagers, if you yourself have never brought up teenage children aright yourself. That would be as foolish as a bachelor telling parents how to bring up their children. Many a time, we can bless others by just praying for them and keeping our mouths shut as far as any advice is concerned.

Can you teach Chemistry without studying Chemistry first? No. If your college-degree is in English, you can only teach English. That is such a simple truth that every teacher knows. But Pharisees do not understand something as simple as that.

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