

## “Melting Sonshine”

### II Corinthians 4:5-12 & Mark 2:23-3:6

([www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=ii+corinthians+4:5-12](http://www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=ii+corinthians+4:5-12))

([www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=mark+2:23;3:6](http://www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=mark+2:23;3:6))

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### God’s Son melts our judgmental attitudes!

I have a friend who will say, “Enough Already,” when life seems to be too much. She will speak with frustration and pain in her voice. I can almost hear Jesus saying the same thing with the Pharisees. The Scripture tells us that Jesus *“looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart...”* (Mark 3:5) ([www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=mark+3:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=mark+3:5)) All Jesus wanted to do was to heal a crippled man. The Capernaum synagogue leader was very happy to have Jesus heal his daughter. But, these Jerusalem enforcers were not interested in people. They were only interested in making sure the law was kept. In their minds it was important for every Jewish person to maintain the entire Temple laws, the food laws, the cleanliness laws, and every other kind of law. “We’re going to watch you, Jesus! You step out of line and we will crucify you.” They say. In response to their attitude, Jesus says, “Enough already!” But, before we join Jesus with our own response, let us do a quick reality check.

### Are you more like Jesus or the Pharisees?

Who do you identify with the most—Jesus or the Pharisees? We want to say Jesus. We want to believe that we are like Jesus. We are striving to be like Christ. But, if we are honest with ourselves and each other we will say that most days we are more like the Pharisees. Every one of us has a little Pharisee living within us just waiting to take over the chatter in our heads.

I know the voice of the Pharisee in my head. That judgmental voice sometimes shouts out when as I sit behind the steering wheel of a car. When I am driving and some person is inching along at two miles an hour, my Pharisee’s voice of judgment is strong. I begin to utter prejudicial phrases about women, teenagers, dumb men, and senior citizens. I believe in equal rights for women. I have raised two strong daughters to be independent. I once was an adolescent. I can be dumb at times. And, I am a card carrying AARP member. I have no right to be prejudiced against a group of people. But, behind the wheel of the car, that Pharisee’s voice in my head turns ugly. Then, out of the blue behind me comes another car speeding and swerving all over the road. I just know a foreign person is driving. Now my Pharisee is working overtime. I am not against people who come to America, young people, older people, men or women. But, on those up tight days if I stay on the road too long I will be speaking in ugly, judgmental, legalistic, prejudicial things about everyone.

My Pharisee’s voice doesn’t just come roaring into my head when I drive the car. I have favorite topics of judgementalism. If I am not careful, I can find myself setting traps for someone else to prove just how stupid they really are. There are days that I can out judge the judgemental religionist whom I am judging.

I do not think that I am the only person who has a Pharisee’s voice speaking inside my head. I am not the only person who will consistently choose to walk in the broad and attractive way of the negative and ignore Christ’s narrow positive road. I am not alone in legalistically thinking that all we need to do to improve our world is to have better laws and enforce them. Do we not all know the voice of the Pharisee?

### Jesus path is the narrow path!

Jesus’ voice; however, is less well known. Unfortunately, Jesus’ often spoken messages are ignored, or unheard. We are not used to listening to the Son of God speak to us. Perhaps we feel unworthy. Maybe we are just too proud. Whatever the reason, Jesus voice is not the dominant one in our lives until, as He did with the silent observers in the Capernaum Synagogue, he yells; “Enough Already!” The Pharisee believes with all his heart that righteousness comes from obeying the law. Christ’s way is beyond the legalistic mind of any Pharisee. Christ’s way is the way of unconditional love, unfathomable mercy, unearned grace.

Christ's way of living is to begin at the cross with complete forgiveness and move into the world with unending grace. Will such a life style work? Is Christ's path a practical one? Can a community living in and through Christ's grace actually make a difference in the world?

Charles Colson in *"Making the World Safe for Religion,"* (*Theology Today*, November 8, 1993 p. 33) tells of visiting a prison in the city of Sao Jose dos Campos, one that was turned over to two Christians twenty years ago:

*They called it Humanita, and their plan was to run it on Christian principles. The prison has only two full time staff; the rest of the work is done by inmates. Every prisoner is assigned another inmate to whom he is accountable. In addition, every prisoner is assigned a volunteer family from the outside that works with him during his term and after his release. Every prisoner joins a chapel program, or else takes a course in character formation."*

*"When I visited Humanita," Colson says, "I found the inmates smiling - particularly the murderer who held the keys, opened the gates, and let me in. Wherever I walked I saw men at peace. I saw clean living areas, people working industriously. The walls were decorated with biblical sayings from Psalms and Proverbs. Humanita has an astonishing record. Its recidivism rate is 4 percent compared to 75 percent in the rest of Brazil and the United States. How is all this possible?"*

*"I saw the answer when my guide escorted me to the notorious punishment cell once used for torture. Today, he told me that block houses hold only a single inmate. As we reached the end of a long concrete corridor and he put the key into the lock, he paused and asked, 'Are you sure you want to go in?'"*

*"Of course," I replied impatiently. 'I've been in isolation cells all over the world.' Slowly he swung open the massive door, and I saw the prisoner in that punishment cell: a crucifix, beautifully carved by the Humanita inmates - the prisoner Jesus hanging on the cross.*

*"He's doing time for all the rest of us,' my guide said softly."*

The old gospel hymn says it best: "Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe, Sin has left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow." Jesus wants us to believe our salvation is real and therefore, Jesus wants us to freely live in His love. We begin at the cross where every one of us is stained. None of us is worthy to be present. None of us can ever do enough to deserve God's love. The problem with the legalism of the Pharisees is just at this point. They believe they can eventually be good enough. Therefore, they create a set of laws they can obey. But, no one can live up to the perfection of Almighty God. None of us can bleach ourselves white enough to stand in God's presence. The Apostle Paul realized the false hope of religious legalism on the road to Damascus. He could never work hard enough to be good enough so that he would be righteous enough to enter into God's judgment hall.

## **Christ's Sonshine Melts, builds Grace filled communities.**

In all of his writings the Apostle Paul urges us to get about the work of building communities that hold the Christ light high. Paul knows the world is in need of sanctuaries of God's grace spread throughout the culture. The Apostle Paul does not foresee an easy time of this growth. Rather he knows these communities will be composed of people with clay feet. They will make mistakes. They will fail. They will be a part of the problem as well as offer solutions to the problems. Paul proclaims that Christ's Spirit will be present in these communities of God's grace. Paul promises that Christ will sustain. Christ will heal. Christ will overcome.

- We may fall down, but God will left us up.
- We will face death and Christ will offer life.
- We might suffer, but Christ will keep us from being crushed.
- We might be in a quandary and not know what to do or where to go, but Christ will never give up on us.

The Apostle Paul urges us to build up communities of God's grace who know beyond a shadow of a doubt that *"In times of trouble, God is with us."* **(II Corinthians 4:9)**  
([www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=ii+corinthians+4:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/bible?passage=ii+corinthians+4:9))

Jesus has to say, "Enough Already," to me quite a bit. The Pharisee in me wants often to be right rather than see someone as Christ sees them. I prefer to follow tradition, rather than let God's Spirit teach me a new way of doing something. We all need our hearts melted by Christ's Sonshine. The tradition of seeking the law to be righteous is strong among American Christians. Jesus is urging us to acknowledge the law and then move beyond the law. We are not doing away with it. We are letting Jesus move us beyond it. Within communities of God's grace we can learn a grace filled lifestyle. That lifestyle begins with confession at the foot of the cross. The healing love lifestyle continues seeking to live and share God's grace. The Christ filled lifestyle is possible when we learn to listen to God's voice speaking to us rather than the voice of our inner Pharisee. God is seeking people who will build up Christ's body so that the world will know the truth of God's grace.

Will you join me at the foot of the cross? There you must be willing to learn how to live transparently. To be at the foot of the cross is to confess that you cannot make it by yourself. It means that you must give up the control dramas that keep you protected from others. Yes, you might feel unworthy. And because of your feelings of self hatred you have learned to protect yourself by intimidating others, or playing poor me, or constantly interrogating, or having to care for everybody. Are you willing to share with your brothers and sisters in a transparent, open fashion your own feelings of unworthiness? Are you willing to admit that you have feet of clay? Then, you are ready to receive and to live God's grace.

God is growing communities of people who are willing to be so transparent that the light of Christ shines through them. God is growing communities of people who are willing to be so in love with Christ that God's law is written upon their hearts. God is growing communities of people who are ready to listen to Christ's voice and join Jesus in saying to the Pharisee in their head and in the world, "Enough Already!" In Jesus name, we must say "Enough Already" to the Pharisee, the Legalist, the Self-righteous, and the Judges of the current Christian church. God's love and healing grace is available. Let's share it with each other and with the world as we build up communities of God's healing love and grace within our Chilson Hills congregation.