

The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus day were the most religious people in the Jewish world. They kept the outward observable aspects of God's law to the very last and least detail, but they seriously lacked the willingness and/or the ability to address their heart issues. Jesus reveals some of their problem in Matthew chapter 23 and verse 23 when He said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others." [Mat 23:23] Because they neglected the things of the heart they were ill-equipped to minister to the lost and needy as Jesus pointed out in the following verse. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." [Mat 23:15]

That same difficulty extends into our day and for the same reason. We might categorize the people of our day into three groups. The first and perhaps the largest group are those who are lost. They are those who have never been born again by the Spirit of God. It is impossible for them to minister on any other level than the natural-man level. They are soulish people and can only minister on the mind-will-emotion level because that is all they have.

The second but smaller group are the people who have been born again, but who have never developed spiritually. They have received the Spirit of God but never allowed Him to be active as LORD in their lives. He comes to reveal sin and cleanse us; to reveal righteousness and empower us; to lead us into His eternal plan in every area and moment of life. This second group for the most part do not know Him or heed His voice. The Spirit is squeezed into a small corner of their lives while they continue to rule as king in their own little kingdoms. They have "a form of godliness, although they have denied its power....."; The Scripture counsels us to "..avoid such men as these." [2Ti 3:5] Some of these are relatively harmless good people who live quietly in our neighborhoods. Others are dangerous religious people who develop their head-knowledge of God and creedal Christianity.

Like the Pharisees of Jesus day, they are full of religious knowledge so they counsel and proselyte the unwary making them "twice as much a son of hell as" they themselves are. Religion is deadly for the religious one and all those they counsel and/or "win" to the Lord. [Usually they are only winning them to themselves or to their church or to their kind of faith rather than to the LORD. This is deadly and therefore it is not surprising that the Bible counsels us to "..avoid such men as these."]

Generally these dead-living ones ignorantly reproduce themselves into more dead-living replicas, or worse yet – just plain religious dead ones. One spectacular truth, however, should be noted. Sometimes, in spite of their foolishness and lack of spiritual life and power, God uses them to bring a few into a vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of the great mercy and grace of God Himself, God reaches in to save some of these unsuspecting ones and rescue them out of dead religion into abundant life of a true child of God. GOD IS SOOOO GOOD!

The third group is made up of spiritually alive "sons of God who are being led by the Spirit of God." [Rom.8:14]. Out of their bellies "flow rivers of living water." [Joh 7:38] These who are being led by the Spirit are releasing LIFE wherever they are and in whatever they say and do as the Spirit flows through them. People are attracted and intrigued by the LIFE that is being released through their lives, actions, and words. It is not what they know or even what they say that is so intriguing; it is the LIFE of the living God that captures the attention and stimulates the hunger within those who encounter these spiritually alive ones.

What makes them alive? DEATH! Death gives them life.

These are the ones who have died to the old nature [Gal.2:9; Col.3:3]; who have put to death the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit of God [Rom.8:13]; who have denied themselves and taken up their crosses to follow HIM [Lk.9:23]. They are ALIVE because resurrection life is guaranteed to those who die in following Christ. It is this resurrection life that attracts the lost and gives life to the hurting and the dying.

While the scribes and Pharisees knew far more Scripture and the traditions of the Jewish faith than did the disciples, it was the disciples who carried the life of the resurrected One and turned the darkened and dying world right-side-up! Likewise the sons of God of today can say, "our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." [2 Cor.3:5-6] It is resurrection life that releases the love of God within us "because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." [Rom.5:5] And while "we know that we all have knowledge – knowledge makes (us) arrogant, but love edifies." Resurrection life and that supernatural love is what we needed when we came to Christ and it is His resurrection life and love that our world desperately needs today.

The question we face every day is whether or not we will be willing to die enough today to continue to receive that flow of resurrection life and love which our darkened world so desperately needs. There are many who choose to live their own lives and expand their own abilities and knowledge giving the world nothing of lasting and living value. God is looking for sons who will die to themselves enough to allow the resurrected One to live in and through them.

It is all too obvious that our world does not need another religion or another kind of religious noise-making from any sector. The desperate need is for a fresh revelation of the living resurrected Christ. In every generation since the resurrection of Christ the world has been touched and changed by that ongoing living revelation of resurrection life.

Are you willing to carry that revelation into your world? It will cost you, but you can do it if you are willing. Nearly the whole world is waiting..... and so is God.

Love and blessing,
George