

*ACCIDENTAL*  
**PHARISEES**

*Week 2 – Overzealous Faith*

## *Overzealous vs Lukewarm*

- How would you describe **overzealous faith**?
- How would you describe **lukewarm faith**?
- What is the right balance between **overzealous faith** and **lukewarm faith**?
- Which **pleases** or **displeases** God more?



## Overzealous Faith?

- Which is more important – **the words of Jesus** (in the Gospels) or **the words of the Apostles** (in the Epistles)?
- Did Jesus preach a **different** Gospel than the Apostles?
  - Some people focus almost exclusively on the **hard sayings** of Jesus and ignore the Epistles.

*“A full and careful reading of the Gospels reveals that Jesus asked only **a few specific** individuals to leave everything behind and follow him. He actually told some who wanted to join him to **stay behind.**” – Larry Osbourne*

## *How did Pharisees Get Such a Bad Name?*

- *Calling someone a **Pharisee** wasn't always considered a bad thing:*
  - *They **excelled** in everything we admire spiritually.*
  - *They were **zealous** for God.*
  - *They were completely \_\_\_\_\_ **committed** \_\_\_\_\_ to their faith.*
  - *They were **theologically astute**.*
  - *They fastidiously **obeyed** even the most obscure commands.*
- *Who would be modern-day equivalents of **Pharisees**?*

## ***How did Pharisees Get Such a Bad Name?***

- ***Calling someone a Pharisee wasn't always considered a bad thing:***

***“For I tell you, unless **your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:20***

***“<sup>3</sup>Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; **as to the law, a Pharisee**; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.” – Philippians 3:4-6***

## *How did Pharisees Get Such a Bad Name?*

*“If we fail to understand how **spiritually impressive** the Pharisees were, we will remain blind to the danger of becoming like them. We’ll assume that their tragic transformation from passionate defenders of God into **mortal enemies of God** could never happen to us.”*

*– Larry Osbourne*

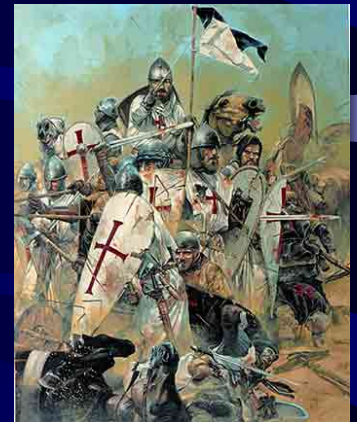
## ***Dark and Dangerous Side of Overzealous Faith***

- ***Larry Osbourne writes zealous faith can have a **dangerous, dark side**.***
- ***Do you agree with that statement?***
  - ***While recent calls for radical Christians have challenged many to be more passionate about their faith, the down side can be a budding arrogance and self-righteousness that “**accidentally**” sneaks into our outlook.***
  - ***No one starts out with the desire to become a modern-day Pharisee and no one looks in the mirror and sees a Pharisee. **No one describes themselves as a Pharisee – it always applies to someone else.*****

# Dangerous Dark Side – The Crusades?

- The Crusades were armed pilgrimages intended to liberate **Jerusalem** from Muslim control.
- The first Crusade was preached by **Pope Urban II** at the Council of Clermont in 1095 A.D.
- Urban promised **indulgence** to any Christian who took the Crusader vow and set off for Jerusalem.
- **Muslim** description of Crusades:

*“The population of the holy city was put to the sword, and the crusaders spent a week massacring Muslims. They killed more than seventy thousand people in Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Jews had gathered in their synagogue and the crusaders burned them alive. They also destroyed the monuments of saints, the mosque of Umar and the tomb of Abraham.”*



Historian **Raymond of Agiles** described the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099:

*“Some of our men cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from the towers; others tortured them longer by casting them into the flames. Piles of heads, hands and feet were to be seen in the streets of the city. It was necessary to pick one’s way over the bodies of men and horses. But these were small matters compared to what happened at the temple of Solomon, a place where religious services were ordinarily chanted. What happened there? If I tell the truth, it will exceed your powers of belief. So let it suffice to say this much at least, that in the temple and portico of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins.”*



## **Dangerous Dark Side – Inquisitions?**

- Starting in 1184 AD, the **Catholic Inquisition** was an attempt to combat heresy by conducting trials of suspected heretics.
- Defendants were sometimes interrogated under **torture** and finally punished if found guilty.
- Convictions of **unrepentant** heresy generally resulted in more torture and/or **execution** (by burning or drowning).
- In France, many trials were for **dead heretics** – in which case their bodies were exhumed and burned.
- Grew significantly during the **Protestant Reformation** (Roman Inquisition) and did not end until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



## **Dark and Dangerous Side of Overzealous Faith**

- **Unaligned zeal** in ourselves.
  - It is easy to see in **others**
  - Area's of biblically unaligned and overzealous faith are **unintentional**.
  - It doesn't matter if overzealous is by **choice** or by **accident** – it messes everything up and hurts everyone

***“Most of us think of unaligned zeal as someone else's problem. We have a hard time seeing it in ourselves.”***

***– Larry Osbourne***

# Dark and Dangerous Side of Overzealous Faith

## • Jerks for Jesus

- Self-appointed spiritual watch dogs.
- Fail to do it in a **loving way**.
- Fail to do it **without quarrelling**, to be kind, and to be gentle.

*“For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, **who pervert the grace** of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” – Jude 4*

*“<sup>24</sup>And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome **but kind to everyone**, able to teach, **patiently enduring evil**, <sup>25</sup>**correcting his opponents with gentleness.**” – 2 Timothy 2:24-25a*

## *Dark and Dangerous Side of Overzealous Faith*

*“Accidental Pharisee are people like you and me who, **despite the best of intentions** and a desire to honor God, unwittingly end up pursuing an **overzealous model of faith** that sabotages the work of the Lord we think we’re serving.”*

*– Larry Osbourne*

## ***Dark and Dangerous Side of Overzealous Faith***

- ***Inevitably, being right will become more important than being kind, gracious, or loving.***

***“Thinning the herd will become more important than expanding the kingdom. Unity will take a back seat to uniformity.”***

***– Larry Osbourne***

## ***Dark and Dangerous Side of Overzealous Faith***

***“The biggest problem with overzealous faith ... it’s almost always true to Scripture, but it’s not true to **all of Scripture**. It’s partially right. It fixates on one area of God’s will (for instance, **defending the faith**) while ignoring other parts (doing so **kindly** and **gently**).”***

***– Larry Osbourne***

## ***What Constitutes a Real Disciple?***

- ***How do you see the **Gospel**? Is the barrier to entry low or is it supposed to be high?***
  - ***Did Jesus come to let the **riffraff** in or to drive the **lukewarm out**?***
  - ***Did Jesus come to call the masses or to **thin the herd**?***
  - ***Did Jesus come only to call those **strong in faith**?***
  - ***Does Jesus like **consumer** Christians?***
  - ***Does God call **each of us** to leave everything behind to be saved?***

## **What Constitutes a Real Disciple?**

- **Passages that teach that following Jesus is hard:**

***“<sup>23</sup>And he said to all, ‘If anyone would come after me, **let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.** <sup>24</sup>For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup>For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup>For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.’” – Luke 9:23-26***



## **What Constitutes a Real Disciple?**

- **Passages that teach that following Jesus is hard:**

***“<sup>59</sup>To another he said, ‘Follow me.’ But he said, ‘**Lord, let me first go and bury my father.**’ <sup>60</sup>And Jesus said to him, ‘Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.’ <sup>61</sup>Yet another said, ‘**I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.**’ <sup>62</sup>Jesus said to him, ‘**No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.**”* – Luke 9:59-62**

## ***What Constitutes a Real Disciple?***

- ***Passages that teach that following Jesus is hard:***

***“<sup>13</sup>Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.***

***<sup>14</sup>For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” – Matthew 7:13-14***

## **What Constitutes a Real Disciple?**

- Passages that teach that following Jesus is hard:

***“<sup>21</sup>Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ <sup>23</sup>And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” – Matthew 7:21-23***

## What Constitutes a Real Disciple?

- Passages that teach that following Jesus is hard:

*“<sup>17</sup>And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, ‘**Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?**’ <sup>18</sup>And Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. <sup>19</sup>You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’ <sup>20</sup>And he said to him, ‘Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.’ <sup>21</sup>And Jesus, **looking at him, loved him**, and said to him, ‘**You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.**’ <sup>22</sup>Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.’” – Mark 10:17-22*

## What Constitutes a Real Disciple?

- Passages that teach that Jesus is compassionate on those with weak faith:

***“<sup>28</sup>Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*** – Matthew 11:28-30

## What Constitutes a Real Disciple?

- Passages that teach that Jesus is compassionate on those with weak faith:

*“<sup>31</sup>Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup>but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” <sup>33</sup>Peter said to him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.’ <sup>34</sup>Jesus said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.’” – Luke 22:31-34*

*“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” – John 21:15*

## What Constitutes a Real Disciple?

- Passages that teach that Jesus is compassionate on those with weak faith:

*“<sup>24</sup>Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, **I will never believe.**’ <sup>26</sup>Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ <sup>27</sup>**Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.**’ <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’” – John 20:24-29*

## What Constitutes a Real Disciple?

- Passages that teach that Jesus is compassionate on those with weak faith:

*“<sup>25</sup> And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, <sup>26</sup> and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. <sup>27</sup> She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. <sup>28</sup> For she said, ‘If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.’ <sup>29</sup> And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. <sup>30</sup> And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched my garments?’ <sup>31</sup> And his disciples said to him, ‘You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, “Who touched me?”’ <sup>32</sup> And he looked around to see who had done it. <sup>33</sup> But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, **came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.** <sup>34</sup> And he said to her, ‘Daughter, **your faith has made you well**; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.’” – Mark 5:25-34*



# Pendulum Shift in the Church

- Current trend in the Church is to drive the **lukewarm** out:



Are You Lukewarm?  
Take the Test

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Christians need the law
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am conscious of my sins
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	God wants my sacrifices
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am trying to become holy
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I make promises to God
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I feel condemned
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am merely God's humble servant

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## Joseph of Arimathea

- *Larry Osbourne teaches that **Joseph** is a key figure in the burial and resurrection of Jesus.*
- *Joseph had the courage to ask for the **body of Jesus** and to bury him:*
  - *In the first century, the body of a condemned criminal was often dumped on the **rubbish heap**.*
  - *It was left for **scavenging dogs** and **vultures**.*
- *Joseph likely made himself **ceremonially unclean** by touching a dead body right before the Passover.*



## *Joseph of Arimathea*

*“No Joseph of Arimathea. **No body to resurrect. No empty tomb to point to.** Joseph was the only disciple who stepped forward to take the body.” – Larry Osbourne*

## *Joseph of Arimathea*

- *Don't miss it – Joseph was the **only person** who stepped forward.*
- *All of the other disciples had scattered:*
  - *Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two other unnamed disciples? **Gone fishing** (John 21:1-3)*
  - *Other disciples? **Not mentioned.***
- *Because of his **courage**, Joseph becomes a key person in the crucifixion.*

## *Joseph of Arimathea*

- *Joseph should be a **hero**.*
- *How would **Joseph** be viewed by the church today?*

*“Joseph would be the poster child for a **counterfeit disciple**. He’s exactly the kind of Christ follower that most speakers **preach against, ridicule, and warn us not to become.**” – Larry Osbourne*

## Joseph: Counterfeit Disciple?

- Strike 1 against **Joseph**:

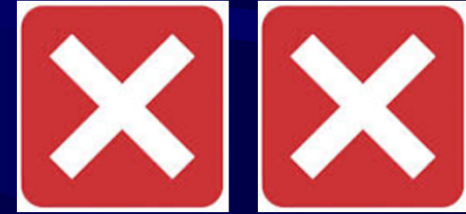
– He was \_\_\_\_\_ **rich** \_\_\_\_\_.



*“When it was evening, there came **a rich man from Arimathea**, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus.” – Matthew 27:57*

## Joseph: Counterfeit Disciple?

- Strike 2 against **Joseph**:
  - He was a \_\_\_\_\_ **secret disciple** because he was fearful.



*“After these things Joseph of Arimathea, **who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews**, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body.” – John 19:38*

## Joseph: Counterfeit Disciple?

- Strike 3 against Joseph:

- He was part of the ruling Sanhedrin,  
who put Jesus to death.



*“<sup>1</sup>And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and **the whole council**. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate ... <sup>43</sup>Joseph of Arimathea, **a respected member of the council**, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.” – Mark 15:1, 43*



## *Joseph: Counterfeit Disciple?*

- *Today's church would probably criticize Joseph because of these strikes. However, scripture says that he was a good and righteous man:*

*"<sup>50</sup>Now there was a man named **Joseph**, from the Jewish town of **Arimathea**. He was a member of the council, **a good and righteous man**, <sup>51</sup>**who had not consented to their decision and action**; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup>This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>53</sup>Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid." – Luke 23:50-53*

## *Application Questions*

- 1. Can you think of a time in your life when you were especially **zealous** for something in the spiritual realm only to discover later that your zeal didn't line up with Scripture?*
- 2. Does the story of **Joseph of Arimathea** change anything about the way you look at other Christians or how you look at wealthy Christians?*

## **Application Questions**

3. *The Pharisees of Jesus' day were champions of **self-discipline**, **personal sacrifice**, and **rigid morality**. Image you were alive back then:*

a. *How do you think you would have responded to their spiritual passion?*

b. *Would you have been inclined to look up to them, be intimidated by them, be repelled by them, or perhaps have some other response?*

*ACCIDENTAL*  
**PHARISEES**

*Next Week – Pride*