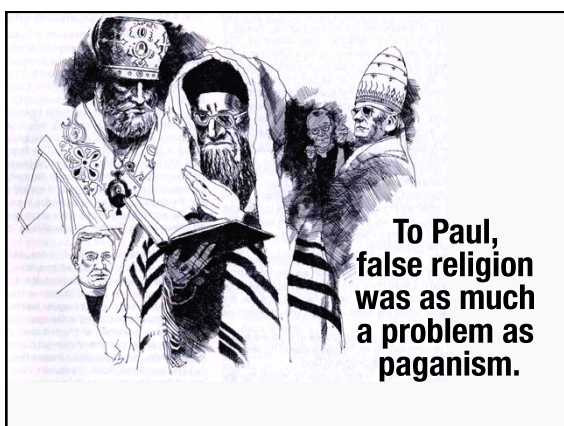


Luke 15:25-32
Sinners in the hands
of angry saints or
four signs
that we don't get it!

Galatians 1:6-9

"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is {really} not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, **let him be accursed**. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, **let him be accursed**."



Luke 15:25-32

"25 Now his **older son** was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things might be. 27 And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound." 28 But he became angry, and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began entreating him."

"29 But he answered and said to his father, "Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends; 30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him." 31 And he said to him, "My child, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found."

The religious spirit is

a score-keeping spirit.

"29 But he answered and said to his father, "Look! **For so many years I have been serving you**, and I have never neglected a command of yours;"

The Pharisee and the Tax collector Luke 18:10-14

Test yourself

- ✓ Is obedience an investment for which you expect a payback from God?
- ✓ Do you feel secure because you have a “better record” than those around you?
- ✓ Do you feel bitter when you don’t get recognition for your sacrificial service?

The religious spirit is

a superficial spirit.

“²⁹ But he answered and said to his father, “Look! For so many years I have been serving you, and **I have never neglected a command of yours**; and yet you have never given me a kid, that I might be merry with my friends;”

“you are like whitewashed tombs”
Matthew 23:27

Test yourself

- ✓ Do you find it easier to confess the sins of others than your own sins?
- ✓ Do you find security in looking good on the outside?
- ✓ Are you selective in what you count as a serious sin in your own life?

The religious spirit is

a separatist spirit.

“²⁸ But he became angry, and **was not willing to go in**”

“Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?”
Matthew 9:11

Test yourself

- ✓ Do you withhold love as a means of correcting others?
- ✓ Do you have a hard time forgiving those who embarrass or hurt you?
- ✓ Do you apply grace to others in the same way you do to yourself?

The religious spirit is

a sour spirit.

“³⁰ but when **this son of yours** came, who has devoured your wealth with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.” . . . “³² But we had to be merry and rejoice, for **this brother of yours** was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.”

“Behold, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!” Matthew 11:19

Test yourself

- ✓ Are you disappointed when those who have sinned against you are forgiven without suffering consequences?
- ✓ Do you have a hard time with Biblical examples of radical grace?
- ✓ Do you have a hard time being a blessing to those who have hurt you?

The point of this text

The blessings of God's Kingdom are for those who experience and express God's grace.

Lessons from this text

- ✓ **We must identify the religious spirit and deal with it harshly in our own lives.**
- ✓ **We need to resist the proud and give grace to the humble in our churches.**
- ✓ **We are to guard high ethical standards and not over react to legalism.**

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” **Ephesians 4:31-32**