

## Some Of Life's Greatest Challenges

No. 224

### Introduction.

- I. Today I would like to speak on the theme "Some of Life's Greatest Challenges."
- II. Life presents all of us with many great challenges, but some of the greatest challenges of life consists in maintaining our spiritual "balance." We tend to go to extremes, emphasizing some things heavily while neglecting other important matters almost completely.
- III. Here are some areas in which we are challenged to maintain spiritual balance.
  - I. **Not To Neglect The Weightier Matters Of The Law** -One great challenge is not to neglect the weightier matters of the law.

A. Listen to what Jesus said to the Pharisees.

**MAT 23:14 [ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, even while for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you shall receive greater condemnation.] 23 "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. 24 "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! 25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 "You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. 27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 "Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.**

B. Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for two reasons.

1. First, they were **hypocrites**. They pretended to be righteous, but they were rotten to the core. Their religion was an external religion. They were concerned about the way they appeared to others, but their hearts and actions were far from God. They would cheat widows and to cover up their corruption made long prayers. He said they were like a **cup** that clean on the outside but filthy on the inside. He said they were like a beautiful **whitewashed tomb**, but on the inside they were full of dead men's bones and uncleanness.
2. Second, Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees because their **spiritual lives were totally out of balance**.
  - a. The scribes and Pharisees were very zealous when it came to tithing. Jesus indicated they would even tithe the small garden herbs - "mint, dill and cummin."
  - b. Jesus did not condemn them for tithing or even for tithing the small garden herbs. The law of God required them to tithe (Lev. 27:30), and technically may or may not have included the tithing of the garden herbs. Tithing the small garden herbs, however, was not the most important thing about the law.
  - c. They were **majoring in minor things and neglecting the most important matters**.
    - 1) They were neglecting the "justice, mercy and faithfulness" the law required.

2) They had no mercy on the poor and the down-trodden. They were not concerned about justice for the poor. They were not motivated by their man made rules and traditions - not faith in God in Christ.

d. There lack of spiritual balance also manifested itself in **the way they misinterpreted and twisted the Sabbath law.**

1) God had said. (Exod. 20:8).

**EXO 20:8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.**

2) The Sabbath was given that both man and beast might have a day of rest. It was intended for the good of man and was not intended to be a burden to him.

3) The Sabbath law did forbid some things.

a) Cooking on the Sabbath - **Exod. 35:3 "You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day."**

b) There was to be **no unnecessary work.** (Num. 15:32-36).

4) The scribes and Pharisee were not happy with God's restrictions, but added many to it. They made the day Sabbath day a day of endless man made rules and regulations.

5) **Here are some of the 1521 things they said violated the Sabbath.**

One could not carry a load that weighed more than a dried fig.	Baths could not be taken.  [Some kids would like this]	A cripple may go out with his wooden stump. But if it has a cavity for pads it is susceptible to uncleanness
One could not eat anything larger than an olive.	Women could not look in the mirror	Clothes could not be washed.
One could not throw an object in the air with one hand and catch it with the other hand.	A knot could be tied if it could be untied with one hand.	If a man bears a loaf of bread he is culpable, but if two men bear it they are not.
Nothing could be bought or sold.	A bucket may be tied to a belt but not to a rope.  One may spit if he spits on a smooth surface but not on a rough surface	They taught it was alright to pull a valuable sheep out of a ditch on the Sabbath, but it was sinful to heal a man on the Sabbath day. (Matt. 12:9-13). <b>They did not understand the Sabbath was never intended to harm man, but was for his or her good</b>

**C. Jesus does not want us to be like the scribes and Pharisee.** He does not want us be hypocritical. Neither does He wants us to get our spiritual lives out of balance.

1. It is fine to give a tenth or more of our garden herbs or of our tomato crop or anything else.

2. It is necessary and commendable for us to be careful to observe God's laws in small matters. Jesus said, **"but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others."**

3. We must not, however, neglect **"the weightier matters of the law."** We must not let our concern for small matters substitute for "justice, mercy and faithfulness."

4. Both the law of Moses and the law of Christ require that each person be fair, merciful, loving and trustworthy toward his neighbor. He was treat him as his equal. (Lev. 19:18; Rom. 13:8).
5. Today some manifest **lack of balance** by becoming more concerned with methodology and human opinion than they do the commandments.

<p><b>The way missionaries are supported</b> Individuals - Most agree. Single Church or two churches sending money direct to missionaries.</p> <p>Oppose sending funds to a sponsoring church</p> <p><b>Some argue over these things and do not support mission works of any kind.</b></p>	<p><b>The way orphans are supported</b> Individuals only - Most agree ok.</p> <p>Congregations cannot support orphan's homes.</p> <p>Churches can give to an orphan's home if controlled by an eldership. Some argue over who is an orphan</p> <p><b>Some argue over these things and do not help orphans - Jas. 1:27</b></p>	<p><b>Songs -</b> Books, notes, 4 part harmony , posting numbers</p> <p>example of couple who got upset over posting song numbers in advance.</p> <p><b>Some argue over these things and do not sing.</b></p>
<p><b>Must Use Only One Cup</b> Others argue for multiple cups</p> <p><b>Some of these same people do not always partake of the Lord's supper</b></p>	<p><b>Must Be Faithful to the Assembly</b> (Heb. 10:25).</p> <p><b>What if a woman's baby is sick?</b> <b>What if you pass a car wreck on Sunday morning?</b></p>	

II. **To Grow In Faith And Not Withdraw From The World** - A second challenge Christ gives us is to grow in faith and not withdraw from the world.

- A. **Jesus was a great man of faith, but He associated with the lost.** (Matt. 9:9-13).
- B. He does not want us to isolate ourselves from the world, but He wants us to spread the saving influence of the gospel. (Matt. 28:19).
- 1, We must have some contact with sinners in order to win them to the Lord.
  2. Even though we are to have contact with sinners, we are warned that we must be conformed to the world. (Rom. 12:2). We must not lose our taste or savor. (Matt. 5:13).
- C. **The Lord does not want us to be wreckless and throw away all caution in dealing with the sinful world.**
1. **The Christian who loses his balance will likely be lost.**
  2. He must not be so naive to think he can withstand any temptation. (1 Cor. 10:12).
  3. Jesus taught us to pray. (Matt. 6:13).
  4. **We must trust God and seek to grow in faith.** A growing faith enables us to overcome the world while living in it. (1 Jn. 5:4, 5).

III. **To Discipline Ourselves And Not Lose Patience With Others** - A third great challenge of life is to discipline ourselves and not lose patience with others.

- A. It is important that we learn self-control. (Acts 24:15; Gal. 5:22, 23).

**TIT 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness**

**and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,**

B. It is vital that we develop self-control, but we **must not develop a self-righteous spirit** and look down on others. (Lk. 18:9-14).

C. **Brethren, some of us have been Christians a long time.**

1. We have had the time to overcome a lot of our bad habits with the help of Christ. We have had the time to learn control of our temper. We have had the time to become more and more serious about our relationship with God. We have had the time to get our priorities in order.
2. We must not be less tolerant with new Christians and the spiritually weak than others have been tolerant of us. We need to encourage others and help them grow in Christ. We must not be so overbearing that we drive them away from Christ.

IV. **To Enjoy Life And Not Forget Heaven** - A fourth great challenge of life is to enjoy life and not forget heaven.

A. We must not forget that the scriptures commend wholesome happiness and enjoyment of life.

**ECC 3:12 I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime;**

**13 moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor-- it is the gift of God.**

**ECC 3:22 And I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?**

**ECC 5:18 Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.**

**Prov. 17:22; Psa. 148:15; 1 Pet. 3:10-12**

B. **Earthly happiness is certainly to be desired**, but we must not forget that heaven is even more to be desired.

1. **Heaven is the place where our citizenship** is and where this body of humiliation will be conformed to the glorious body of Jesus. (Phil. 3:20, 21).
2. Heaven is the place where our God and Savior abide.

C. **Heaven also presents us with some difficult choices.**

1. Sometimes we want to go to heaven and be with God
2. Sometimes we want to be here longer and feel like the words of this hymn,

**"I'd like to stay here longer than man's allotted day,**

**and watch the fleeting changes of life's uneven ways;**

**but if my Savior calls me to that sweet home on high,**

**I'll live with Him forever in glory by and by."** (J. M. Henson).

3. Though we often feel like the words of this song, let's keep our eyes fixed on heaven. (Col. 3:1,2).
4. Let us not so fix our eyes on heaven that we forget to enjoy life and experience Christian joy here on this earth.

**Conclusion.**

I. Yes, we have looked at "Some Of Life's Greatest Challenges."

A. We must not let these challenges overwhelm us or discourage us.

B. We need to grow in faith and love so we can meet these challenges and be spiritually balanced and be acceptable to our Lord.

II. Another challenge of life **is to obey God while we have opportunity and the heart is receptive**. It is a horrible mistake to believe that we will be given more and more opportunities to obey God and the heart will remain tender to God's commandments. It is important that we obey God now. Now is the time to repent of our sins. Now is the time to be baptized for the remission of sins. Now is the time to live for God. Come now as we stand and sing.

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