

Matthew 22-02-13b

Let's take a fresh look now at Matthew chapter 23. We're picking up here with the words of the Lord Jesus indicting the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites, as fools and blind. We were reminding ourselves on the break that this fools and blind is quite a strong term.

Our word moron comes from it m-o-r-o-n and it's harsh. There are times when we need rebuke as much as we need correction and instruction. And reproof or rebuke is a part of what the shocked awake.

To be blithely assuming that we are on a good path means that we've not spent enough time in self-examination when there are severe problems such as this. And so Jesus points them out and in looking at them we see this brought up in terms of faulty evaluation. Faulty values lead to faulty reasoning and the faulty reasoning in these oaths underpins and underlies a lot of the problems.

So how can we individually fix that? It is helpful to be aware that there is such a thing as confirmation bias. We tend to hear and attach to things that we agree with. We tend to not pay as much attention to things that counter our intuition or counter our set of adopted values.

And it is helpful. I can celebrate the merits of getting a bad commentary. If you do nothing but watch conservative news sources once in a while, do the G. Gordon Liddy thing.

He famously in his book Will described how he would light a lighter and then put his hand over it and see how long he could hold it there before he had to take it away. This is my experience of trying to watch some other news sources. Actually I can get that way on almost any news source if I watch it for very long.

I get almost as put out with the conservative ones as I do the liberal. But we need balance. We need to hear things we don't like to hear.

We need to listen to what we don't agree with at least occasionally. Our goal is not to be diverse. Our goal is not to be persuaded away from things that are important and true.

But it is helpful to understand the other side. Centuries ago in the art of war and the principles that guide conflict, it has been pointed out. You can read Sun Tzu.

You can read many of the great military strategists of the past. Know your enemy. Why do they think what they think? Matthew sent me an interesting commentary linking two things that I had not formerly attached in my own mind.

But it helps me understand some of the motivation for why things are happening in terms of the transgender movement. Why is there such a push to take this extremely

minority issue of the vast population of the world? How many people are actually in the throes of trying to convert themselves from one thing into another? But it has been shoved into the center of focus for certainly our entire nation and other major nations around the world. It's in the press.

Cases are brought up. Such an issue is being made out of we need to help children in even single-digit years chemically and surgically convert themselves from one thing into another. Why? Why not let that just be private? If people want to make a decision between them and their doctor, go do that.

Why do I need to know about it? What's the big deal? But this point of view looped in another seemingly unrelated thing that we looked at just a few weeks back dealing with transhumanism, with the marrying of technology with biology to implant chips to give us bionic capabilities. You can replace a faulty heart with a mechanical one. You can, over time, transcend the limitations of the body and the brain.

Elon Musk and others are already actively experimenting with electronic interfaces to brains. Everything is a mixture of potential good and potential evil. You think, well, if I'm paralyzed and my brain cannot send signals to my arms and legs, wouldn't it be great if there were a piece of technology that could be installed somewhere in my skull that would essentially Bluetooth instructions past the interruption of my spinal cord and wake up my muscle control and enable me to walk and move my arms and so on? If systems shut down and we have a technological way to fix it, how many millions of people have benefited from hip replacements, knee replacements? I know over a dozen people personally, and I've got a very small social circle, but I know over a dozen people who have had a joint replaced and have greatly benefited, relief of pain, greater mobility, and so on.

We're not against technology improving the human physiology at all, operations to remove stones and repair things and take out stuff that's going bad. There is a goal that goes beyond repair and extension of usefulness and so on to trying to transcend limitations that are natural limitations and to essentially confer some form of, if not eternal life, at least greatly extended life, man by his own efforts solving his problems. Instead of Yahweh Rapha, the Lord who heals, we're going to be the people who heal, the technology who heal, and we go beyond healing to augment, you know, build.

Can you imagine? To me, this would be the worst curse since the curse on Cain or the curse on Canaan to have the internet implanted into your head so that you just got pop-up web browser in your eyeballs and anytime you want, you don't even need the glasses. There's a chip, you know, in your forehead or in your temple somewhere that just pipes internet and you just control it, you know, hey Siri, identify what I'm looking at and all the restaurant names and street names and people walking by and so on are got little signs, little thought bubbles over them and this is what they're shooting for. They're

going for extension of life.

They ideally in some future time would like to transfer consciousness into a machine that can be infinitely renewed, repaired, upgraded instead of the failing flesh that, you know, your telomeres get shorter and shorter and pretty soon your replication quits, your skin gets oldy and foldy and wrinkly and your eyesight goes, your hearing goes, etc. So transhumanism, well here's the link and I'm doing this for a reason. I'm not talking scripture right at the moment but the two are related because as you depersonalize the human body and say this body can be anything I want it to be just because it was born male doesn't mean it has to stay male.

Just because it was born one gender doesn't mean that I can't be whatever I want to be and I am not defined by my body. You can begin to see a philosophical link between transhumanism. I'm not going to be limited by my body.

Why should we let guys alter their hormone levels to a sufficient level and then engage in swimming competitions and beat all of the girls by two laps? Well my body shouldn't define me. If in my mind I'm a girl then I should be able to excel and transcend the limitations. I was 347th in the list of guy swimmers but when I become a girl I'm number one and number one by a wide margin.

So you know be all you can be shouldn't be limited by my body. Well if I can surgically alter, if I can chemically alter bodies and if I can get people on board with thinking bodies are not important and they're not definitional. It doesn't matter if your mom is too thin or your daddy's too fat.

It doesn't matter if you are this that or the other. What color, what size, what shape, what gender. Your body is unimportant.

The you inside is what counts. Now you see why meta is creating the metaverse where you can define yourself by your avatar and your persona that exists in a virtual world that maps over and in many ways replaces the real world. You get metaversology, you get transhumanism, and you get transgenderism all motivated by what you and I could easily understand as Tower of Babel.

I will stack the bricks in an ascending ziggurat to raise my altitude and my elevation and touch the stars. It's very similar in parallel to I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will be like the high.

If God somehow determined that I would be born in this circumstance with this particular set of gifts and limitations, I can one-up God. I can do what God didn't do and because I'm smarter than he is and I have a better plan, I have a better purpose, and it is this I will be my own God. I can name myself.

I can define myself. I can reinvent myself, and it is the mighty God of me, myself, and I,

that unholy trinity. And you can see how this mindset by seeping in through multiple cracks in the foundation and expressing itself in multiple ways, I will force you to talk to me in a certain way.

You cannot call me he and him. I want you to use the pronouns of my definition. And there is this sort of your behavior will be determined by my standards and values because I am the local God here.

And if you don't comport with my standards of worship, I will smite you with the power of the crowd and the masses and social justice warrior punishment piling on. I can cancel you. I can eliminate you.

We can control and dominate you as the freedom to choose a religion never did. So this bears on what we're talking about here because if you create an alternate value system that underpins what goals and priorities are going to be, and if you can browbeat and coerce others into conforming to that system, this is what the Pharisees did. We think Phariseeism is legalism and holier-than-thou righteous rules, and we tend to think in religious terms.

Think in social terms. You want to talk about there being Phariseeism and blind guides on social media and on the internet with thought leaders and influencers and these who define what you can and cannot say and do in this increasingly prevalent virtual world? That's Phariseeism. That's scribes, literally, these people who blog and who opine, who tweet, who call out and vilify with a completely strange set of values that don't even make sense to reasonable, pre-modern trained thinking people.

In the post-modern world, the scribes dominate. What they say goes. What they say the news is, is the news.

What they say isn't news, however heinous, however high up in the government it may be, it just isn't news because the scribes have defined what is truth. To the extent that we invest, to the extent that we follow, to the extent that we tolerate this kind of influence in our lives, we become those who allow blind guides to take us places we never wanted to go. So it is an interesting question to ask, what is God's call on my life by way of countering this culture, of opposing this false system of righteousness? It is no longer time to look for Phariseeism in just the church.

It is time to recognize what Jesus is talking about is worldwide web. There's a reason there's three W's. There's the reason that it's the Hebrew number 666.

It is the worldwide. Never before have we had the scale and the scope and the power. You can literally have your voice silenced.

You can literally have your money taken. Whatever you want to say or think about the Canadian truck drivers, people who voluntarily gave them \$10 million because they

believed in their cause, that money was taken. It was taken from the contributors and it was taken from the destinators.

Why? Because it's online. If those people had collected cash in a big trunk and hauled it up there in a truck and given it to the truckers, they would have it. But commerce is now conducted entirely electronically.

And once something leaves your little numerical pile, anybody with access to the numbers can mess with it, can stop it, can do whatever they want to with it. It is true with information. One of the reasons you are watching me now over a private and secure system that nobody can touch is because otherwise you're investing in the system.

The only controllable part of our system here, just so you know, is your internet service. They can see that something is happening, but because it's encrypted, they don't know what it is. I could be giving stock tips or talking about the farm predictions for the coming growing season.

It is this Bible class and our fellowship over the link here in between classes and afterward is encrypted end to end. So from the time it leaves your phone or computer to the time that it gets to its various destinations, the most they could do is just say, well, something nefarious is going on. We're taking away your internet service.

Or they could try to block the ports, but Matthew and I are clever enough to find any ports we want. You can't do it by port blocking. But what we say and to whom we say it is between us.

And this is not so much a leap forward into wonderful technology as a step backward into what used to happen in churches in homes. Churches did not meet in the city square and say, Hey, everybody stop your shopping and come listen to what we're saying. Churches met in homes and they did that for a reason.

Jesus taught his disciples largely in private for a reason. Our spiritual food and our spiritual formation should be done privately. And this gets back to what Jesus is saying here.

Rather than trying to fix society, rather than falling into the trap of meeting the enemy on his ground, where he's going to fight social justice battles and political battles and economic battles and election battles and philosophy battles out in the open square. This is not the way. This is not what we're called to.

There is a time to put spiritual bread on the water. Jesus can stand up on the last great day of the feast and say, Ho, let him who is thirsty, come to the waters and drink. Come to the waters, come find the waters where Jesus didn't stand up there with a fire truck and blow water all over the assembled feasting crowds.

He said, if you want water, it's available. Come find it, ask and seek and knock. But we have our hands full ensuring that we have not become defiled, that we are not corrupted, that we do not fall into these various kinds of trap.

And the 7,000 that did not bow the knee to Baal in Elijah's day are not named. They are not grouped. They don't assemble in one place to be blocked into a cave or locked in and have their building burnt to the ground.

They are scattered. They are little individual lights brightening the corner where they were. But God knew where every single one was and God knew how to use every individual person.

There may be a time to be public. There may be a time to stand up and speak. There may be a time to be one of the two witnesses who makes an issue to the world.

But that's the exception. Jesus is an exception. And people who say, you know, this is what Jesus did, do what Jesus did.

You've got to be a little bit perceptive. I don't think anybody decides they want to go get themselves crucified. I don't think anyone is up for the scourging with the Roman cat-of-nine-tails.

And I don't think we all feel qualified to stand up in the public square and denounce the Pharisees in public. Jesus said, all judgment has been delivered from the Father to the Son. He didn't tell the disciples, and I have then delivered all judgment to you.

Judgment resides with the Son. And if he decides to announce condemnation and judgment, that's great for him. But that's not an example I am called to follow.

We can follow Jesus in many other ways. His example of love, His example of functioning in a servant role, His example of not trying to punish His enemies. There is much to command and much to follow in Jesus' example, but not everything.

There is much to command and much to follow in the guidance Jesus gave to His disciples, but not everything. You'll be witnesses to me in Jerusalem? Okay, hands up all the Christians ready to go to Jerusalem? Well, why aren't you in Jerusalem? Well, that was for them. I will have to extrapolate a spiritual lesson.

Exactly. So we need to be careful about this current and growing emphasis on the Jesus hermeneutic, and we're only going to do what Jesus did, and we're only going to say what Jesus said. Careful.

If you really want to do what Jesus said, Jesus said, man shall live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, and you better not take a single jot or single tittle out of the law of the prophets, Old Testament or New, until it's all fulfilled. And this picking

and choosing is dangerous, and I can't go fix that for people that are doing that. Who am I to judge another man's servant? To his own master he will stand or fall.

Now if someone claims to be serving God, God can deal with them. If God wants me to say anything to them, God's going to have to move them right into my field of voice range, my bursting radius as an artillery shell. But unless and until God brings somebody to me who's asking and seeking, saying, you know, I've been doing this whole progressive Jesus thing, and I'm not sure it's right.

What do you think? I'm not going there. I'm not going to enter bad strategic ground and do things that are fruitless and pointless. This is why the Pharisees are under condemnation.

They're doing fruitless, pointless things, and in their efforts to attain to righteousness and preach righteousness, they're the opposite. They are shutting the kingdom. They're not going in themselves, and they're deflecting and distracting other people from going in.

The key is to be a seeing. If you're going to be a guide, be one who can see. And the only way you can see is to look, have your eyes open, have the scales fall.

And this is God's grace. This is God's spirit. And I need that, me personally, individually.

I don't need to fix a political party. I don't need to fix a candidate. I don't need to fix people who follow a political party or a candidate or a point of view or a policy.

I am largely uninterested in things that are not in my purview. There is the principle of being salt and light, but it is being salt and light, not preaching saltiness and preaching lightness. Light shines.

It doesn't tell people to be light. It is light. Jesus is the light of the world.

He can reflect his light off of us, and I'll let him decide when and where and how. So again, when you get to this fourth woe, which is at the center of the seven, and therefore emphasized, you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin. These were house garden spices.

You could grow a little of it, and it would last you a good while. Even people that didn't have fields and servants and large agricultural operations could have a little, what they called back during World War II, a truck garden, or a little house garden, a garden in the backyard. My grandparents, my dad and my uncle, grew up in a house that did this during the Depression and during World War II in the days of ration stamps and hardship, and so they would just grow their own stuff.

Well, the Pharisees said, even if you're just growing a little bit of anise, a little bit of

cumin, you need to take a tenth of it and dedicate that to God, because that's in the law. Now, where are they getting that? We don't have time to turn there, but you can write these down. Tithing for Israel is prescribed.

If you are Israelite, tithing is prescribed in the same way that if you are Israelite, there is a Levitical priesthood for you, and there are Levitical offerings and Levitical feasts from the book of Leviticus and the book of Deuteronomy and some in the book of Exodus, some even in Numbers. The law prescribes physical observation of certain overt sign functions. Leviticus 27, verse 30, Numbers 18, 21.

Again, Leviticus 27, 30, Numbers 18, 21, Deuteronomy 12, 6, and Deuteronomy 12, 22-27. I'll give you those again. Leviticus 27, 30, Numbers 18, 21, Deuteronomy 12, 6, and Deuteronomy 12, 22-27 detail the way tithing should work in Israel by and for Israelites.

Tithing is only mentioned four times in the New Testament. Three of those times are this passage and its parallels. Jesus condemning the Pharisees for faulty tithing, for emphasizing tithing at the involving tithing, talking to Jews, talking to people in Israel about the requirement of the law to tithe.

He denounces them because they are doing it wrong. The only other place tithing is mentioned is in Hebrews 7, verses five through nine, and that's a historical detail. It's before Israel.

This is Abraham and Melchizedek, Abraham bringing tithes to Melchizedek. Is there a principle as with everything else for Old Testament Israel? Is there an interpretation and application for us? Of course, but in the same way that the seventh part, the Sabbath that Israel was called to observe, remember the Sabbath day, hallow the seventh day, keep it holy. Six days God did his work and on the seventh he rested.

You should work six days and rest one. We take the spiritual lesson from that. It is not a matter of observing signs and seasons and days and years, as Paul tells us, in the same way that observing clean and unclean animals.

Do you remember the sheet that is let down in Peter's vision? Arise, Peter, kill and eat. What God has sanctified, let no man call common. And God has sanctified to our use all foods.

God has sanctified to our use all days. And can you defile a day, even if it's a Tuesday? Can you defile an hour, even if it is on a Saturday? Absolutely. Can you defile a food, even though God has sanctified it? You absolutely can.

What is the issue? It is the heart. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. What are the thoughts and intents of our hearts? We don't have to restrict our activities on a Saturday any more than we have to restrict pork and that which divides the hoof and, you know, the whole don't eat pigs and don't eat shellfish.

We're not under those limitations because we are under a higher obligation to figure out that we are doing too much work and not enough rest, that we are too much in the world and not enough into reflecting on and stopping the presses, stopping the machinery, and going to the secret place of the most high and reflecting and marinating in God's word, God's truth, availing ourselves of the presence of God's spirit and God's power and making course corrections as necessary. You can't do that if you are busy 24-7. Take it from one who knows.

You can be so busy trying to do good that you are no good and we have to have that Sabbath rest. Take it where you can find it, but take it and take it regularly, take it consistently, and don't overlook its importance. That's what the Saturday Sabbath was all about.

That's what tithing is all about. It is not a matter of calculating a tenth of everything by way of income or possessions or whatever else and trying to send that down to a church or a ministry and say, well, I have given it to God because I gave it to the brick and mortar building and the people inside it. It is a matter of ensuring that we recognize that everything we have comes from God, the principle of first fruits, the principle of offering the sacrifice of praise and offering the sacrifice of acknowledgement that every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights, that we don't have anything that we did not receive.

It transcends possessions and it transcends income to recognize that a portion of our time, a portion of our attention, a portion of our efforts and our energy, a portion of our opportunities should be dedicated consciously to God, offered to God willingly. God loves a cheerful giver, not just giving money to a group of hungry Jews in Jerusalem, but any gift that we offer, including the gift that we place on the altar before God. The Romans 12, 1 and 2, offer yourselves holy and acceptable to God, a living sacrifice.

It's a reasonable service. So when you get to tithing here, just remember when Jesus says, you are so meticulous and he compares this to filtering a gnat out. Have you done this? If you leave your coffee, sit for any length of time or other beverages, I'm sure.

But for me, it's coffee, especially in the summertime, there's inevitably a fruit fly or some kind of a little no-see-um that thinks it's a hard surface and tries to land on my coffee. First thing I know, there's this little bug in there. So you get something and you know how the nature of surface tension is.

Anytime you try to dip it out of there, it escapes. It surfs away out of the little mound you raise in the liquid. You're trying to filter out this little gnat.

Well, if my coffee has been made with, you know, somebody pours new grounds on top of grounds that were there from last Sunday. People go to church, you know, the coffee pot sits in a Sunday school room all week. And if somebody forgot to empty out the

grounds and somebody's talking in there, dumping in new grounds and the old grounds that are now covered with mold are in there.

The coffee itself, the entire batch is tainted. Patty was making us a wonderful dish a couple of weeks ago. And oh, it had all kinds, I was really looking forward to it.

But there was one ingredient that unbeknownst to her had gone bad. It was some fruit that had started to ferment. What was it? Pineapple, I think, had gone off.

And well, a little leaven leavens the whole lump. And it wouldn't matter if a bug landed on it and you got him off. The whole thing has been essentially corrupted by something far more significant.

It's what Jesus is talking about here. You strain at these easy to fulfill commands. I've quoted many times when I saw Charles Stanley say something that was actually memorable to me.

He said, you people who judge your righteousness by your church attendance, you're letting yourself off the hook. That's so easy. What do you do the rest of the week? Are you prayerful? Are you loving? Are you acknowledging your faults and coming before God and living a Christian life? Or do you say I'm good to go because you drive down here to his church? I think it was in Atlanta or somewhere, Charles Stanley.

And you judge yourself by your church attendance and give yourself an A or an A plus. You're here every time the doors are open. Shame on you.

It's too easy. You're doing the easy thing and you're not doing the hard thing. It's easy to drive to church.

It's really easy for us to tune into church, but what happens the rest of the time? That's the hard thing. You strain and do these little meticulous small things that are easy. Can you gather some garden herbs and split it into 10 parts and take one part and scoop it into a little bag and say, I'll run this down to the temple next time I go.

Okay. I've done my religious duty. You tithe these little, people say, well, it's small things.

They're not only small, but it's super easy because this is not a field full of grain and you're having to calculate bushels. You got a little table full of spices and you just say, well, I got 10 teaspoons here. Here's one teaspoon.

I'll dedicate that to God. It's so easy. It's so simple to deal in these little small things and say, well, I don't rob liquor stores and I don't do this.

I don't do these obvious and easy things. Therefore I'm good to go. And he says you have neglected the weightier matters.

I want you to notice pay is a present tense. You are paying these tithes. You do this all the time, but have neglected.

This is something that took place in the past. It's stronger in Greek than it is in English, but you could add in parentheses long ago, you chose to neglect. He doesn't say you are neglecting you.

You crossed this bridge long ago and then you burned it. The weightier matters of the law. You left that long ago in the past.

You're, you're doing these super easy things right now. And you got off the narrow road long ago. These weightier things of the law justice.

This is Krine, K-R-I-N-E. It comes from Krino, which means to judge, but this is to, this is, this is perpetrating and representing and supporting justice. Turn real quickly.

We've got to wrap up here, but turn with me to Proverbs 31, Proverbs 31, Proverbs 31, eight and nine is where we're going. Proverbs 31 verse eight, open your mouth for the speechless in the cause of all appointed to die or sons of passing away is what it literally says. You've got a text note to that effect, open your mouth for the speechless in the cause of all sons of passing away.

People who are interested in opposing the heinous casual practice of abortion in this country. Here's your verse, open your mouth for those who can't speak for themselves in the cause of those who are about to pass away and they can't speak. Verse nine, open your mouth, judge righteously in the Septuagint.

That's our verb, Krino, open your mouth on behalf of those who can't open theirs, defend those who cannot defend themselves, open your mouth, judge righteously and plead the cause of the poor and needy. The Pharisees were famous for not doing this, not taking up the cause of the poor or the needy. Just think of your parable of the rich man in Luke, dining sumptuously, poor man at the gate, famous for this.

You have neglected the weightier matters and notice this is of the law. The law wasn't nearly as interested in your tithe as in your heart for the poor and your mercy and generosity and efforts on behalf of those who cannot help themselves, who can't speak for themselves, who are poor and needy. That's what the law's greater weight dealt with and people that are throwing out their Old Testament and saying, boo on the law and boo on the prophets.

Jesus himself said, the weighty matters of the law are matters of the heart, justice and mercy. This is eleos, this is compassion, this is empathy, this is recognizing when there is a genuine need and doing something about it and faith. This is pistos from pisteo, but this is a passive use of the noun and it doesn't say you need to go out and encourage faith.

This says you should be someone who is just and who supports justice. You should be someone who is merciful and supports mercy. Remember the Beatitudes, blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy, same word.

Faithfulness, being a person that can be counted on, that is trustworthy. This is faith in the sense of I keep the faith, I represent faith and faithfulness and that comes from placing our faith in God. We become faithful people and people that are trustworthy.

These are personal qualities. These you ought to have done without dismissing the others. Why does Jesus say don't dismiss tithing? You're still in the age of Israel and this is still a command of God and it still has effect, it still pertains.

There's a reason God gave the laws for tithing and that age is not over yet. So long as those commands pertain, you should follow them, but this is a matter of priorities, right? What's more important, making sure you got one teaspoon out of 10 from the spices or looking out for the poor, being mercy, being merciful, being just and supporting justice and being those who are faithful, faithful to God, keeping faith with others. This is the weight of the law.

This is what the law was supposed to create by way of emphasis and identity in the people of God. And those who throw the law out now and say you don't need to read your Old Testament are ignoring the very Jesus they claim to follow. Because Jesus said if you look at where the weight of the law is, it's in justice, it is in mercy and it is in faith and faithfulness.

That's what the law teaches. And if you don't see that, you're just as guilty as the Pharisees for missing it, and you're not going to be able to follow it and embody it for that very reason. Blind guides, verse 24, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.

The camel was the largest unclean animal not fit for eating in the ancient Near East. There was nothing bigger than a camel and it was unclean. And Jesus says you're straining out these little bugs and you're swallowing the biggest unclean animal there is.

And you remember this from chapter 19, verse 29, I think it was. Yeah, 1929, where he was talking about camel going through the eye of a needle. There must have been some camels in the vicinity because Jesus refers to them more than once in this context.

So here's the point. Easy to say boo on the Pharisees. We need to be looking within to find our personal little Pharisee wandering around in our hearts.

Find him, grab him by the stack and swivel, shake him and get him to pay attention to what Jesus is saying here. In other words, we should take these words personally and to heart so that when Jesus goes on in verse 26 to say blind Pharisee first. Circle it, put a star by it, run a line out to the margin and say me.

What should I do first? Before I go out to guide others, before I lead others to be twofold the child of hell and twice as blind as I am, blind Pharisee first. I need to look for ways to implement this caution and this command in my own life. It's the first imperative that Jesus gives.

He says, you ought to have done. This is what you are doing. This is what you did in the past with results into the present.

Here's what you should do. Blind Pharisee first answer that question and we're going to be well on the way to avoiding this condemnation and the woe that accompanies it. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for how powerfully you speak to us and you not only charge us and expose those things that need correction, but you give us the power to respond. You give us the ability to be cleansed, to be renewed, to be sanctified, to be useful and fit for your service. We pray that as we reflect on these things, those opportunities will be clear to us.

The potential will manifest and on a daily basis we can more fully reflect the Lord Jesus as we represent him here on this earth and look forward to the time of his return. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.