

# Weaving the Word

## *Hypocritical Surmisers*

November 17, 2019

**Welcome to where we love authenticity and hate hypocrisy!**

Hello. My name is Bruce; and, I'm a recovering hypocrite. I've been clean for about twelve hours ... having slept most of those.

**On a scale of 1-10, how hypocritical are you?**

**It's an equation of the extent to which our words and actions match our beliefs.**



We've talked about loving to the full extent; and forgiving to the full extent; so, now let's talk about **authenticity to the full extent.**

Let love be without hypocrisy. – Romans 12:9a NKJ



I have the best example of hypocritical judgment! About 10 years ago, I was running along Hwy 20; and there's a bearded man in dark glasses walking toward me. So, I smile and nod as I pass by. And, he turns and yells: "Joshua one-nine!" Really?! **That's your witness? Shouting Scripture references at strangers?** You don't know me, but you can judge me? Well, I love *Jesus* and I'm a *pastor!* When I got home I looked it up: "*Be strong ... for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*" (Josh 1:9) Okay; not as bad as I thought it'd be. Then I saw him in my neighborhood and realized I know him without a beard. A neighbor. Knows me. Great guy. Very Encouraging. **Isn't that just the best example of hypocritical judgment ever?!**



**I was hypocritically misjudging *encouragement* as judgment.**



Here's another question: If you were on Survivor, and the vote-out criteria *for everyone* was based on *your* Christian convictions, how long would *you* last?

Well, I was being a *surmiser*. Quite often we're surmising when we think we're discerning.

**Surmising is supposing without verification.**

**Discerning is perceiving with good judgment.**

**To discern is to judge by what is right; and to surmise is to judge by what is apparent.**

Jesus often rebuked surmisers who thought they were discerners.

Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.” – John 7:24 NIV

So, how often are you a discerner and how often a surmiser?

The worst of the worst are hypocritical surmisers!



The thing I love about weaving the four Gospels into one story is the incredible context it adds to each account. For instance, Jesus had a run-in with hypocritical surmisers in Jerusalem. And, He left *them* to get away to Bethsaida; and He left *them* to get away to the countryside of Tiberias where He went ahead and just fed *everyone*. Here’s a condensed recap:

When about five thousand men, besides women and children had all had enough to eat, Jesus said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. About the fourth watch of the night [3:00-6:00 am] Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. They landed at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, [and His twelve apprentices carrying twelve baskets, and heading to Capernaum (about four miles away)] they ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And ... placed the sick in the marketplaces ... and all who touched him were healed. When they found him [“teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum” (Jn 6:59); they said] ... Our forefathers ate the manna ... [Jesus said] “it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. [To which those twelve baskets of leftovers offer undeniable evidence] ... Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life ... If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh ... Whoever eats my flesh ... remains in me ... so the one who feeds on me will live ... The words I have spoken ... are life. ... Many of his disciples turned back ... “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “Lord ... You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” – Mt 14:20-36; Mk 6:42-56; Jn 6:12-71 NIV

Remember how Jesus said to **gather the leftovers** and **let nothing be wasted**? I’ll bet they readily obeyed when their stomachs started growling.

Then some Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed. and asked, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!” Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?” – Mt 15:1-3; Mk 7:1-2 NIV

BOOM! Right in the ol’ bread basket! **Pretenders need to devise a means of measuring for comparing, in order to support an ongoing self-assessment of superiority.**

It's easy, we do it all the time: **establish an attainable standard based on your own *strong qualities***; then **use it to compare *your virtue* to anyone who appears weaker in that specific category**. Swearing. Smoking. Drinking. Voting. It can be arbitrary. **The goal isn't to help anyone, or seek truth. It's just to maintain a foolproof way of foolishly feeling good about ourselves.**

(The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace [as had Jesus and the Twelve *and those leftovers*] they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.) So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?" He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; [i.e. actors; pretenders; mask wearers] as it is written: [In Isaiah 29:13] 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' – Mk 7:3-7 NIV

Our subjective means of measuring have a tendency of confirming whatever preconceived notions or judgments we already hold. **Usually, we'd rather be a judge than a witness; because, let's face it: few activities rival the thrill of passing judgement.**

Ever been invited to a movie, and you have to say that you don't go to those types of movies because you're a Christian? Or, we turn down a drink at an office party, and we think that some great victory has just been won for the cause of Christ and His Kingdom, as a result of our unflinching stand? **That's not our witness to the world. That's our obedience to the Lord.**

And, He doesn't seem to like it when we get the two mixed up. Obedience is very good. But, **it takes sensitivity and grace to ensure that our obedience to the Father doesn't foul up our witness to the world, by coming across as arrogant condemnation.**

[Jesus continues] You have let go of the commands of God [as your primary means of measuring yourself] and are holding on to the traditions of men." [It's just that it's so easy to mistake our own limited, personal preferences for eternal, omnipotent, omniscient truth!] And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! For Moses said, [that] **God said**, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), then **he is not to 'honor his father' with it.** You no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. Thus [even though it looks and sounds (and you believe it to be) *really noble*] you nullify the word of God by your tradition for the sake of your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that." – Mt 15:4-6; Mk 7:8-13 NIV

**Anytime anything we do allows us to justify setting aside any "minor" command of God, we're nullifying the Word of God.**

**Do you fit Jesus into your life, or your life into Jesus?**

When you solicit advice, do you call a sponsor or a buddy? **There's a big difference between a sponsor and a drinking buddy.** Both serve a purpose; question is: **do you want to hear what you want to hear, or what you need to hear?** Jesus said: *"If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."* (Mt 15:14) And yet, **we usually prefer the input of those who see things our way.**

You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: – Mt 15:7 NIV

[The Holy One of God is sure trying to get us to read Isaiah; so lets] *"These people ... honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men. ... [They say] "Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions. Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!"* – Isaiah 29:13, 30:10-11 NIV

[And that's not the only thing Isaiah had to say about these people!] Woe to me! ... For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, **the Lord/YHWH** Almighty. – Isaiah 6:5 NIV

[And, John tells us that] Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. – John 12:41 NIV

For the fool [says Isaiah] will speak foolish things, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice hypocrisy, and speak to **the Lord/YHWH** deceitfully, and to make empty the soul of the hungry, – Isaiah 32:6a DRA

Such a person feeds on ashes; a deluded heart misleads him; – Isaiah 44:20a NIV

[Now Isaiah passes to Job] Your platitudes are proverbs of ashes, – Job 13:12a NKJ

[And back to Isaiah] This people ... honor Me with their lips, while their hearts are far from Me, and their fear of Me is a commandment taught by men, – Isaiah 29:13 ESV

[It's handed off to Solomon] Does not wisdom cry out? ... "The fear of **the Lord/YHWH** is to hate evil; pride and arrogance ... I hate. – Proverbs 8:12-13 NKJ

[And Isaiah's running with the ball!] Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but you shall cry for sorrow of heart, – Isaiah 65:14a NKJ

And the glory of **the Lord/YHWH** shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of **the Lord/YHWH** has spoken." – Isaiah 40:5 ESV

I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. – Isaiah 45:23 NAS

[And it's a full field pass from the OT into Paul's letter to the Philippians] So that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow ... and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; – Philippians 2:10-12 NAS