

## Small Group Questions

January 19, 2020

Interview with the Devil (part 2) – “You Mad God?”

Message: “When Rules Get in the Way”

This four-part series explores times when Jesus got mad. Many people have mental images of an angry God but the surprise here is found in the things that mad Jesus mad are the same things that make people mad when it comes to church and to God. Each week, we unpack one story and seek understanding and application of the righteous anger Jesus displayed. It can be easy to take Jesus’ anger and aim it at the groups we don’t like or the behaviors we disagree with, but we will be looking at ourselves rather than others. Much of Jesus’ anger was aimed at the religious leaders of the day, the insiders. Those of us who follow God and attend church need to examine our walk with God to make sure we do not repeat any of the bad religion that drove people away from God rather than to Him.

The main goal of this series is for people who follow Jesus to build bridges to those whom God is pursuing and to create the kind of community that welcomes all who seek the Jesus of the Bible. Man-made obstacles to a relationship with God must go but it’s often hard to see that within ourselves or our own church community. May God help WHC to become increasingly the kind of place that facilitates relationship with God.

Thank you once again for your service to God by loving the people in your group!

(Questions to get everyone to participate)

1. When you were growing up, who was the most “religious” person you knew?
2. Did you learn any rote prayers as a child? Can you still remember one of them?

(Questions based on the primary texts)

Read Matthew 6:1-15.

3. Read Matthew 5:20 to see Jesus’ strong critique of the Pharisees and teachers of the law. In 6:1-15, Jesus examines three main areas of Jewish spirituality, one of which is giving to the poor. Based on 6:1-4, how have the Pharisees corrupted giving to the poor?
4. Based on Jesus’ words, what does their hypocrisy look like? What is its motivation? What is its reward? How does it contrast with genuine compassion for the poor?
5. Based on 6:5-15, how does the Pharisees’ hypocrisy affect their prayer? How does their reward contrast with that of those who pray sincerely?
6. Why does Jesus warn His followers to avoid wordiness? Does Jesus’ warning concern you or encourage you? Why?
7. What attitude does it take to practice our spiritual life in the way Jesus describes? When used rightly, what is the value of spiritual practices like giving to the poor and prayer?
8. Which side of this spectrum do you lean: “I can do spiritual things for self-serving reasons” OR “I’ll not do spiritual things and keep my faith on the inside only?”