

Judica

“Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

Jesus is so on a different plane, that we have no chance of understanding Him today unless we shelve absolutely all of our own ideas, thoughts and opinions and listen intently to Him as though hearing Him for the first time.

The Pharisees tried to converse with Him as though talking to a peer and they got so turned around that they ended up proving Satan to be their Father.

So, I plead with you. Don't be like them. But hear me out from the beginning. In so listening, you will be of God and not of Satan.

Never forget that the Pharisees are not evil people as the world counts evil.

In fact, just the opposite. Without irony or exaggeration, the Pharisees are the holiest and most righteous as the world counts holiness and righteousness.

That is why it is so earth-shattering that Jesus should treat their righteousness so completely worthless and antithetical to His own righteousness.

And that is why, unless you completely abandon your own world-view as well, you will never really hear a word that Jesus says or have any righteousness at all.

Let's start with Jesus' opening question: *“Which of you convicts Me of sin?”*

What an odd question to ask! How are the pharisees supposed to address it?

They haven't been around Jesus all that much. They don't know His private life.

As Jesus Himself says at the trial, *“I have said everything in public.”*

And as you well, know, people rarely sin in public. That's the place where they are honest and respectful, smiling and modest.

The really ugly behavior is done behind closed doors.

How are they supposed to *“convict Jesus of sin”* when they don't his private side?

Besides, even if you have not sinned yet, chances are you will. Thus, you can never be sure of your righteousness until you die and look back on your life.

So they guess and make accusations: *“You are a Samaritan and have a demon.”*

Throw enough mud at the wall and something will stick. That's politics.

But Jesus is on a completely different playing-field.

For Jesus, sin is not a matter of hind-sight -- only proven after the fact.

Rather, it is a matter of who He is. I am of God because I *“hear God's word.”*

“I honor My Father...My Father who honors Me.”

While we are busy trying to catalog sins, Jesus is operating under a simple, categorical statement. *“Whoever is born of God does not sin; for God's seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”* 1 John 3:9

And since Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God, He cannot sin--by definition.

It's as simple as that.

But those who are not of God will hear none of this.

They want to have a righteousness which is they have earned--not a birth-right.

They want deeds not seeds. Actions, not origin.

And so they get beligerent: *“Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’ Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?”*

Using the oldest trick in the book, they say, "That's just Your interpretation!"

Don't check the Scriptures. Don't listen to Moses or John the Baptist.

Don't see if it is in the Creed or the Catechism. Just say, "That's what You say!" and you have won the argument. Now you have no need to listen to any more.

But that is precisely the tragedy: To stop your ears to Jesus' Words.

For as much as Jesus' Words challenge your long-held beliefs...

For as much as Jesus' Words make you uncomfortable.

As much as they cut you to the heart.

As much as they discount and belittle your accumulated righteousness...

They also give you life. *“Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”*

And it's not that Jesus' Words also give you life in the sense that they stand along side other ways of life.

Rather, Jesus' Word are your ONLY life and only salvation.

And this is precisely they reason that, precisely in order to give you life His Words must challenge and destroy your long-held beliefs.

They must make you uncomfortable. They must cut to the heart.

They must belittle and discount your own righteousness.

Because all of these things leave you in sin and death.

All of these are lies and of the father of lies.

All of these are the righteousness of the Pharisees and of the world.

And none of them give you the righteousness that really counts.

But Jesus' Words do not only take away.

They take away in order to give.

And what they give is a new identity.

When you hear Jesus' Words, you become a child of God.

You share in the identity and in the origin of Jesus Christ!

“He who is of God hears God's words.” This statement not only explains why those holding on to their own view of righteousness cannot understand Jesus.

These words can also be reversed to point you to the cure.

“He who hears God's Word is of God.” Now, the diagnoses us re-stated as the cure.

And when you are made "of God," you are in the same body with Jesus.

Your identity is completely defined by Christ who has no sin.

No one can convict Him of sin and therefore, no one can convict you.

When you are made One with Christ through His Words, then, His words are indistinguishable from your own.

It is simply impossible to separate His speaking from yours.

Now He says with you and you say with Him:

“Which of you convicts Me of sin? “I do not have a demon; ...I honor My Father, My Father who honors Me. I know the Father and keep His word.”

In this way our prayer is answered: "Vindicate mé, O God,* and plead my cause against an ungodly nâtion; oh, deliver me from the deceitful and únjust man!* for You are the God óf my strength;" AMEN.