



SERMON NOTES

Week 4 March 12, 2023

“Loophole Religion”

Mark 1:15; 2:27; 3:21–22; 6:54–56;
7:1–3, 5–13; 8:31



I. Introduction/Review

- A. When religious people exploit a loophole in their own religion, we call them _____.
- B. Jesus said “The time has come, the Kingdom of God is _____, repent and believe the good news.”
- C. Jesus did not get angry when he didn't get his way, Jesus got angry when _____ got in the way.

II. God’s Commands vs. Human Traditions

- A. Jesus’ primary argument with the Pharisees, throughout his ministry, is not about the written law as much as the _____ Torah.
- B. Jesus never detaches the Old Testament law from the _____ associated with those laws.
- C. Christians honor their fathers and mothers because _____ instructed us to love one another the way he loved us.
- D. The religious teachers were using the words that supposedly came from God to _____ the people that God loved.

III. Application

- A. The question we should ask ourselves: “Is it possible that you have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to _____ traditions?”
- B. The decision to _____ Jesus is a decision to do away with all of our silly games and all of our man-made traditions.
- C. Jesus followers wake up every single day to this question: What does _____ require of me?

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *March 13-18, 2023*

INTRODUCTION

From an early age, we learn quickly to look for loopholes in the rules. We try to figure out what we can get away with and still be okay. We tend to take this same mindset into our relationship with God, but it doesn't work. When we opt for loopholes and workarounds, we find ourselves in a category no one wants to be in: hypocrites. Jesus calls us to move beyond loophole religion.

Monday: Mark 7:1-3

There was a myth that when God gave Moses the written law, that God also gave Moses the oral Torah or the oral law. Jesus' primary argument with the Pharisees, throughout his ministry, is not about the written law as much as the oral Torah... he just didn't believe it existed. Did you grow up with any religious traditions that, looking back, made God seem small and petty?

Tuesday: Matthew 5:23-26

Jesus tells us that reconciling our broken relationships is a top priority. Are you inclined to believe that confessing your sin to God makes things right between you and God, regardless of whether or not you've made things right with the person you sinned against? If so, why?

Wednesday: Mark 7:5-15

What stands out to you in this passage? Jesus accused religious leaders of nullifying the intent of God's commands with made-up traditions. Can you think of any modern-day examples of this?

Thursday: Matthew 23:1-8

Jesus warns his followers not to be hypocrites like the religious leaders. Are there any ways you have let go of the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions? Do you identify with any of the following? If so, how?

- Do you ever try to figure out how close you can get to sin without sinning?
- Do you believe there is a ritual that makes you right with God while removing your responsibility to make things right with others?
- Do you feel guiltier about missing church than mistreating someone at work (or home, school, or in your community)?
- Are you banking on the myth that God has short-term memory loss?

Friday: John 13:34-35; Galatians 6:2

The law of Christ is to love others as God through Christ has loved us. Are there any relationships in your life where you are looking for a religious loophole or workaround so you won't have to do the most loving thing? If you feel that type of tension in a decision you are about to make, ask yourself "What does love require of me?" That is what Jesus followers ask every day.

MOVING FORWARD

Loophole religion is pervasive in our culture, but following Jesus is an invitation to be done with all the games and traditions. We are part of a kingdom of conscience informed by the law of Christ: to love others as God through Christ has loved us. There are no loopholes in that kind of love; no workarounds. In this kingdom, we wake up every day with the question: *What does love require of me?*

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) hypocrites, B) near, C) religion. IIA) oral, B) punishments, IIC) Jesus, D) hurt. IIIA) human, B) follow, C) love.