

The Woeitudes (and the Quest for the Holy Grail)

Matthew 23:13-38

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[A clip from Monty Python and the Holy Grail is shown...]

King Arthur and his knights are on a journey. Suddenly the clouds part and God appears to them.

God: Arthur, king of the Britains, your knights of the round table shall have a chance to make them an example in these dark times.

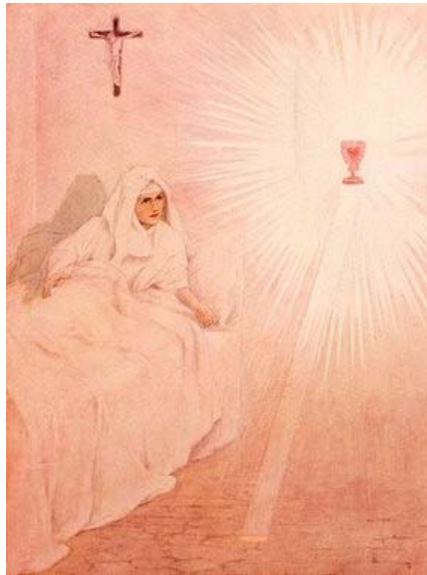
King Arthur: Good idea, oh Lord!

God: [angrily] 'Course it's a good idea. Behold, Arthur, this is the Holy Grail [the grail appears in the clouds]. Look well, Arthur, for it is your sacred task to seek this Grail. That is your purpose, Arthur, the quest for the Holy Grail.

According to legend, the Holy Grail is the platter that held the Passover lamb at the last supper or the cup from which Christ drank and that later was used by Joseph of Arimethea to catch Christ's blood as it ran down the cross.

At times during the Middle Ages, the quest for the grail was considered the highest of spiritual pursuits.

These are various artists' renditions of the grail.





It's very nice, don't you think?

This is the Chalice of Antioch. Some thought it was the Grail. The Grail could supposedly work miracles and render eternal life to the one that possessed it. Imagine possessing the Grail. Obviously, many kings, knights, and clergy did imagine that.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, crusaders from Europe invaded the Holy Land. Their conquest was largely a quest for the holy relics like the Grail.

Several grails were found. The Holy Lance was found in the siege of Antioch. Among other things the crusaders found were:

- Noah's beard.
- The horns of Moses.
- The stone on which Jacob slept.
- Milk from Mary's breasts.
- Two parts of the ass on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem.
- Jesus' coat.
- Some of His blood.
- His navel cord, and even His foreskin.
- They recovered so many pieces of His cross that a legend developed that the cross could multiply itself.

(From Philip Schaff, History of the Christian.)

All these relics were said to work miracles and a pilgrimage to see them could liberate your soul from years of punishment in purgatory. Just visiting the relics of the castle church in Germany (where Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses) was said to relieve a pilgrim of 1,902,202 years and 270 days in purgatory.

So obviously church officials and kings who controlled the relics, controlled the people and controlled the economy. Like the Holy Grail, Jerusalem, herself, was a relic. Hundreds of thousands killed or were killed in order to possess her. It was the religion industry in full stride.

We laugh at all those relics, but the conquest of Jerusalem is not totally unfamiliar, and I think we're still searching for the Holy Grail.

[A clip from Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade is shown...]

Indiana Jones is meeting with a wealthy man about the contents of an ancient manuscript.

Donovan (a wealthy businessman): Can you translate the inscription?

Indiana Jones: [reading from the manuscript] "He who drinks the water I shall give him," says the Lord, "will have a spring inside him welling up for eternal life. Let them bring me to your holy mountain in the place where you dwell across the desert, through the mountain, to the canyon of the crescent moon, to the temple where the cup that... where the cup that holds the blood of Jesus Christ resides forever."

Donovan: The Holy Grail, Dr. Jones. The chalice used by Christ during the Last Supper. The cup that caught His blood of crucifixion and was entrusted to Joseph of Arimethea.

Indiana Jones: The Arthur legend. I've heard this bedtime story before.

Donovan: Eternal life, Dr. Jones! The gift of youth to whoever drinks from the Grail. [Chuckling.] Now that's a bedtime story I'd like to wake up to!

Indiana Jones: An old man's dream.

Donovan: Every man's dream.

That was Indiana Jones and the last Crusade.
 We're still going on crusades,
 if not to capture the Grail,
 to capture something that
 we can possess,
 manipulate,
 and control,
 like a program, activity, insight...
 a magic something
 that we can do
 that will give us life.

We're still thirsty for life. Jesus was thirsty. It's kind of a mini-theme, especially in the Gospel of John.

At the start, He provides drink for the wedding in Canaan.

Then He asks the woman of Samaria for a drink at the well, even implying that God is thirsty... for worshipers.

At the last supper, He talks about drinking with His friends in His Father's kingdom.

Right before He dies on the cross, He cries, "I thirst. I'm thirsty."

Hey, I'm kind of thirsty. Give me a second. I need a drink.

[Peter turns to the table behind him to get a drink. There are two vessels. Clay, the teapot from the two previous sermons and a very large and very ornate pitcher or urn (actually a chamber pot).]



Which one? [Peter chooses the large, beautiful one.]
 Woe! Ooee! I think I'm gonna be sick! I can't drink that! Look at that. [Peter shows the congregation the inside of the ornate pitcher.] It's like full of bones and all manner of uncleanness. Oúai! I can't drink out of that.

Let's read from our text, Matthew 23:13.

But woe...

The Greek word here is *oúai*. It's an onomatopoeic double diphthong. It sounds like what it means, like what

you say when you drink vinegar, “Oúai, this makes me want to barf.”

It’s an interjection of grief and indignation, kind of the opposite of blessing. The Beatitudes teach, “Blessed are the empty.” These Woeitudes teach, “Oúai, are the full... of themselves.”

Let’s say it together... “Oúai.”

Later we’ll have like a responsive reading. So every time I raise my hand, you all say, “Oúai” together. [The congregation practices saying, “Oúai,” every time Peter raises his hand.]

There are seven woes, seven bowls of wrath. Then Jesus, meek and mild, says,

You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

The same Jesus that ate with the prostitutes and tax collectors and complimented the faith of a Roman Centurion and Canaanite woman is now calling the religious leaders snakes and threatening them with hell.

It’s shocking for Bible scholars and so, many question that Jesus actually said these things. Recently, some have questioned that He said it because the more historians unearth the writing of the Pharisees, the more they seem like pretty good guys. That is, the more they seem like us.

They were the popular religious establishment
in their day.

On the outside, with their doctrine, theology, and ethics, they looked a lot like Jesus. Yet on the inside, they were entirely opposite.

In fact, it was they that had Jesus crucified. It wasn't the prostitutes, drug addicts, and thieves that killed Jesus, but the popular religious establishment of His day.

We are the dominant and popular religious establishment
of our day.

What if the really dangerous temptation for us
is not prostitution,
cocaine,
and crime,
but feeling proud
that we aren't prostitutes,
coke-heads,
and criminals.

What if somewhere along the line, Satan switched tactics
no longer tempting you to licentiousness
so much as legalism,

no longer irreligion
as much as religion,
no longer loose living
as much as dead living
(which is pretending like you're living
even when you're not.)

Hypocrisy, "hypokrites."
It was simply the Greek word for actor.
A pretender.

A poser.
 Someone who plays a part.
 Someone who plays at Christianity.

Soren Kierkegaard wrote,

The established Church is far more dangerous to Christianity than any heresy or schism. We play at Christianity. . . . There is something frightful in the fact that the most dangerous thing of all, playing at Christianity, is never included in the list of heresies and schisms.

What if it wasn't included in the list because the people that make the list are playing at Christianity? What if the "Pharisees-R-Us?" We'd be blind.

On the back of the old bulletin it used to say, "We don't want to play church, but be the real church."

I want to put that old phrase back because since we moved into this building, that temptation has only grown. I feel it in my heart, and sometimes I hear it in my ears...

"Look at this building. Look at this budget. Get your act together."

Well, we should always do the best we can with what we have... buildings, budgets, and programs. But to "get your act together" is to learn to be a "hypokrites," an actor, a hypocrite.

All I'm saying is I, Peter Hiatt, need to listen to Jesus, and maybe you do, too. I haven't really been tempted to prostitution and cocaine, but I've been tempted to something far more dangerous... playing church. That is, the quest to possess the Holy Grail.

You know, the law, the sacrificial system, and the temple were kind of like the Holy Grail in Jesus' day. The temple contained the Blood, and the Life, the Fire of God, the Presence of God, and the scribes and the Pharisees were in control.

But woe [Peter raises his hand, and the congregation says, "Oúai!"] to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.]

The scribes and the Pharisees taught that what God wanted was this... [Peter holds up the ornate pitcher full of bones.] They built an elaborate, religious structure, but they didn't know what for.

Jesus just taught that love fully fills the law. The Law was the form that love was to take in Israelite society.

But law without love was empty,
or worse,
law without love became a lie about love.

For the Pharisees wouldn't confess the law was empty. Instead, they filled it with themselves and pretended that that was love.

Whenever you pretend to be good on the outside but are bad on the inside, you become a lie about love, claiming it's something that it's not. But when you confess that you are empty, yet long to be filled, you profess that there's more and that your faith is in mercy (love poured out).

One of the kids in our youth group, Jared, came to me recently and asked me to pray because he wanted to start a ministry or crusade called, “I’m sorry.” He said, “Peter, I want to make a way for us to say to the world, ‘I’m sorry for the way we, Christians, talk about Jesus but don’t live like Jesus.’”

Wow! Imagine if that was the last crusade, “We’re sorry.” We might get crucified, but at least we’d look like Jesus.

Donald Miller went to Reed College, a bastion of liberal secularism. He always struggled to share his faith until one day his friend, Tony, came up with an idea. It would be for Reed’s annual rave weekend where everyone gets naked, drunk, and stoned.

Tony said, “Let’s build a confessional. But they’re not going to confess to us; we’ll confess to them our lack of love. We’ll apologize for the Crusades, for televangelists, for neglecting the poor and lonely, and we’ll ask them to forgive us for misrepresenting Jesus on our campus, and then we’ll tell them Jesus loves them.”

So they set up a confessional. There wasn’t enough space or time for all their clientele. People wept. People hugged. It was the beginning of several ministries and four different Bible studies, and the beginning of a new love for Jesus in the heart of Donald Miller. He was being filled.

You may say, “Well, yeah, but Paul wrote, ‘Imitate me, join in imitating me.’” Yep, and he also wrote for all the world to read, “I am chief of sinners.” I think that means, “I’m sorry.”

Speak the truth, but speak it truthfully.
Kierkegaard taught,

There are those who tell lies in such a way
that people think they’re telling the truth, but

far more dangerous are those who tell the truth in such a way people think they're telling lies.

That God almighty emptied Himself, took the form of a slave, and humbled Himself to the point of death on a cross for the love of the ones who put Him there is the greatest Truth.

Be mindful of when, where, and how you speak it, Christian, or the world will be convinced it's a lie. Or maybe they'll join your lie, in the name of truth. Then you're not growing the Church, you're growing the anti-Church of the anti-Christ.

Next verse,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte [convert], and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves [child of Gehenna as yourselves].

We can use threats to grow the church
and just grow fear.

We can use manipulation to grow the church
and just grow flesh and control.

We can use competition to grow the church
and just grow pride.

We can use promises of wealth to grow the church
and just grow greed.

For the last twenty years, the American church has been enamored with growth, but lots of things grow or at least get bigger.

Cancer grows.

Wickedness grows.

Islam, the occult, Satanism grows.

A bride grows one of two ways,

1. With more of herself.
2. With the life of her groom (she's pregnant because she's surrendered to her groom and received his love.)

You may not be a bride, but if you're a Christian you are the Bride—the bride of Christ—called to bear fruit, and the fruit is faith, hope, love, justice, mercy. You can't make the fruit; you can only bear the fruit. And you can only bear the fruit if you surrender your empty self to Christ's presence in the temple of your soul saying, "I'm sorry," laying your broken, emptied spirit on the altar and receiving His mercy, His life, His word, His blood.

Woe to you, blind guides, who say, "If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath." You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, "If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath." You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it

and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

The One who sits upon the throne is the Truth and the Oath, whom they will soon strip and crucify.

He reveals that the Pharisees put more value on what adorns the temple than the temple. And they put more value on what gifts are offered on the altar than the fact that they're offered on the altar.

Do you see that we are the temple? Yet we look to what the temple is wearing. We value the gold more than what's inside.

And do you see that your heart is an altar, and the sacrifice God desires is a "broken spirit and a contrite heart," —the sacrifice of confession, surrender to His mercy, and then praise over His mercy.

It can take a million forms—rock music, Bach, gold coins, mission projects, church buildings, flat screen TV's—but the altar makes the gift sacred, the heart in which the gift is given.

Verse 23,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

The Law required that crops be tithed to the Levites. It was just merciful and faithful. The Pharisees argued over whether that included aromatic spices like mint.

They tithed little pinches of mint, dill, and cumin. Yet they neglected (literally) “the justice the mercy and the faith,” or “the justice that is the mercy that is the faith.”

Jesus is the “krisis.” He is the justice and the judgment. Matthew 12:20, “He will lead [krisis] justice to victory.”

Jesus is the “eleos.” He is the revelation of mercy—hesed, covenant love. Matthew 9 and 12, He says, “Learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy not sacrifice.’”

Jesus is the object of our faith, and He is the substance of our faith. To live faithfully in this world with justice and mercy means you’ll be crucified. That is, you’ll be forced to forgive and bear the pain.

You see, it’s far easier to tithe mint, dill, and cumin... minutia.

So we focus on minutia. We even invent laws. We make lists of which potty words or fornication words are okay and which are cursing (which really has nothing to do with cursing). Then we turn to our neighbor and say, “So and so is a fool, on my mother’s grave, I could never forgive her.”

That is cursing and swearing and tantamount to saying, “I’m not a believer and liable to hell.”

We swallow camels while we strain gnats.

The Pharisees strained gnats because of Leviticus 11 which states that swarming things are unclean, and if one falls into an earthen vessel, the vessel is unclean. (It’s the inside of the vessel that makes it unclean.) Once the vessel is unclean, it must be broken inside and out.

According to the prophets, Jerusalem is like an earthen vessel. So if she's unclean, will she have to be broken?

Verse 25,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

The inside is full of self-indulgence—self, clay, and greed... literally plunder. The Pharisees competed at goodness. So their goodness was based on another's badness.

The Pharisees couldn't desire mercy for all
and couldn't hope that all might be saved,
for they needed someone to lose
in order that they would win.

Whenever we compete at goodness,
we plunder another's dignity
and declare our own depravity.

Verse 27,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful,

but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

In the spring, the Jews would whitewash the tombs so that pilgrims to Jerusalem wouldn't accidentally touch them and become ritually unclean. Jesus says, "You're like that, beautiful on the outside, full of death and decay on the inside."

Verse 29,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets." Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

Maybe you say, "If I'd have been around, I would've treated Jesus differently." Yet every time we sin, we nail Jesus to the tree for He chooses to die in our place.

And by saying we're innocent, we prove that we're not only guilty but blind.

These Pharisees would soon shed the blood of the greatest prophet and the King of kings for they would only see the outside and so could not believe that the blood of the Messiah filled the veins of a common carpenter, a common Nazarene, a common earthen vessel in the form of a slave.

*Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.
 You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are
 you to escape being sentenced to hell?
 [Literally, “the crisis of Gehenna,” “the
 justice and judgment of the fire.”]*

In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, “I judge no one”
 (John 8:15), and He says, “All judgment has been given to
 the Son” (John 5:22).

Jesus doesn’t judge for He is the judgment.
 The Light is judgment.
 The Word is judgment.
 His cross is judgment.
 His blood is judgment
 and at the cross
 God’s judgment is revealed.

At the cross, His righteous blood flows, and He
 sends us His Spirit. That is fire.

Surrender to the fire, and it feels like Pentecost
 as you’re filled with His Spirit.
 Resist the fire, and it burns like hell
 as you’re devoured in Gehenna.

Christ crucified is the love of God poured out.
 The blood of the covenant is the crisis.
 Verse 34,

*Therefore I send you prophets and wise men
 and scribes...*

In Luke He says, “Wisdom sends you.” In the Old Testament only God sent prophets, wise men, and scribes. He’s talking like He’s God and the manifest Wisdom of God.

I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that [in order that] on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth. .

All the righteous blood shed on earth is His blood from His body for “whatever you do to the least of them you do to Him.” This world is a blood bath.

. . . From the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

He’s sending His blood and His fire. I suppose it will either destroy them or burn the hell out of them, that is, burn a hole in their hearts where the hell used to be.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! See, your house is left to you desolate.

See, He loves Jerusalem. She is His bride. He loves these scribes and Pharisees. He longs for them to be filled with His love, but they're already full of themselves.

They see no need for His justice and mercy, the gift of His blood.

They're not emptied, so they won't be filled. So God can't have His drink.

On the cross, just before He dies, Jesus cries, "I thirst," and they gave Him sour wine, vinegar. Oúai.

Israel was God's vineyard,
 but the vine was sour.
 Jerusalem was God's vessel,
 and the vessel was unclean from the inside out.

Six hundred years earlier, God told Jeremiah to buy a potter's vessel, go to the Valley of Gehenna, declare the city unclean, and then break the earthen vessel saying, "So will I break this people, this people and this city as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended."

Did you remember that Judas took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them back in the temple? So the priests used the money to buy the potter's field in which to bury unclean gentiles.

Well, Jesus cried from the cross, "I thirst," but the vessel was unclean and the wine was sour. He then cried, "It is finished," and gave up His Spirit, His Fire, His Life, His Blood.

An unclean gentile was watching. The Roman Centurion was watching. Christ's enemy was watching. Then he broke out in praise saying, "Surely this man was the Son of God."

I believe it was then that God got His first drink,
His own Spirit from an emptied vessel which returned to
Him in praise of His mercy, as if that Roman Centurion
was a cup that caught the blood of Christ running down the
cross.

Matthew 23:38,

But see your house is left to you desolate
[says Jesus].

In two verses, He leaves the temple and prophecies
its utter destruction and the annihilation of Jerusalem. In 70
A.D., exactly one generation from Christ's prophecy, the
temple is demolished. The city is besieged.

The Holy Grail of the scribes and the Pharisees
is utterly smashed to bits.

Where they felt full,
they were utterly empty.
The bride was empty,
empty of the life of her groom
and so unable to bear fruit.
She was desolate, barren...
Emptied.

Well, along about then, the most notorious Pharisee
wrote a letter and quoted Isaiah,

“Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and shout,
you who are not in travail!
For the children of the desolate one are many more
than the children of her that is married.”
(Galatians 4:27)

“And the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.” (Galatians 4:26)

The name of the Pharisee is Paul. His letter is called Galatians, and you, yourself, are fruit born of his labor and the Word.

He was a “Pharisee of Pharisees,” but the fire descended as he journeyed to Damascus to persecute Christians.

The fire descended and burned a hole in his heart and filled it with His love, filled it in the very place it had been filled with hatred and for the very One he had so earnestly hated.

From that earthen vessel of mercy, the Fire returned to God in praise and spread to the world in evangelism.

God is the potter. We’re the clay. He can do amazing things with clay. Paul was destroyed yet lived, “No longer I but Christ.”

Jerusalem is utterly destroyed. Yet, the Bible ends with Jerusalem descending from Heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. We are that New Jerusalem.

Yet we’re still looking for the Holy Grail, like God in a box or life in a cup. Where’s the cup?

Mother Teresa told about a young woman, well to do and well educated, on a quest for eternal life, the life of Christ. She came to Calcutta and prepared to go to the house for the dying. Before she went, Teresa instructed her regarding the lepers, “Just as the priest handles the body and blood of Christ, make sure you do the same when you go to the house for the dying.”

After three hours, she came back with a beautiful smile across her face. She said, “For three hours, I have been touching the body of Christ.”

You see... she'd found the Holy Grail.

My father was a relic. He died last year. He was a Holy Grail. I sat with his body before he died and immediately after. He was a Holy Grail before, but afterwards, just bones. It was so obvious then.

So we didn't venerate his bones, fight a war over them, or use them to fund a cathedral, because they were just bones. The holy one was gone.

You see, it's not the grail that makes the drink holy.

It's the drink that makes the grail holy.

It's not the temple that makes God holy.

It's God that makes His temple holy.

A Roman Centurion,
an old Pharisee,
a leper,
my dad...

They are the Holy Grail.

Surrender your heart, and you are too.

For on the night He was betrayed, He took bread and broke it saying, “This is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And in the same way after supper, He took the cup, and He said, “This is the cup of the New Covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me.”

He took the cup...

Any old grail will do, as long as it's empty [Peter pours wine into a plain earthen vessel]. When you're thirsty, that's all that matters.

Jesus fills us with His love, and "we love because He first loved us."

1. We love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. We worship, and God gets His drink. [Peter acts like he is drinking.]
2. We love our neighbors as ourselves, and we fulfill the whole law. [Peter pours wine from one cup into another.]

And check out this last verse,

*For I tell you, you will not see me again,
until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in
the name of the Lord."*

Do you ever go anywhere in the "name of the Lord?" Well, Christ goes in you. Billions have seen Him in a repentant old Pharisee named Paul. He was and is a vessel of mercy, and so are you. You are the Holy Grail for a desperately thirsty world.

And so, come to the table saying, "I'm sorry," and drink His mercy.

Believe the Gospel, receive the Gospel, and you'll live the Gospel. Amen.

Thank you, King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus.
Amen.

And now I just need to say that what you're about to see has a high oúai factor to it. So if you want to shut your eyes you can, but it's a great illustration of the sermon.

[Another clip is shown from Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade...]

Indiana Jones and Donovan have made it past many obstacles to the room that holds the Holy Grail. But there are dozens of grails. The grails are guarded by an old knight who has lived a thousand years.

Donovan: "Which one is it?"

Knight: "You must choose, but choose wisely. For as the true Grail will bring you life, the false grail will take it from you."

Donovan: "I'm not a historian. I have no idea what it looks like. Which one is it? [He chooses a cup-a solid gold, emerald encrusted goblet.] It certainly is the cup of the King of kings."

Donovan rushes to the well and fills the goblet with water.

Donovan: "Eternal life!"

Donovan drinks from the goblet. Then, Donovan's entire body starts to convulse. His face contorts in agony. He grabs his

stomach and turns toward Elsa, his accomplice.

Donovan: “What . . . is . . . happening. . . to . . . me. . .?”

He starts to age-fast! His hair grows long and gray and brittle. His face sinks. Fingernails curl back on themselves. Milky cataracts coat his eyes. Elsa gasps and screams.

Donovan: “What. . . is . . . happening. . . ?”

His skin turns brown and leathery and stretches across his bones until it splits. His skeletal hands reach for Elsa's throat, choking her.

Indy rushes forward and pushes Donovan away. As he falls his body breaks into flames, then shatters against the wall. It's just uncleanness and dead man's bones.

Knight: “He chose...poorly.”

Indy studies the array of chalices.

Elsa: “It would not be made out of gold.”

Indy picks up another cup, a simple earthenware jug.

Indy: “That's the cup of a carpenter.”

Indy goes to the well and fills the earthenware jug with water, then pauses. Indy brings the jug to his lips and takes several large swallows. A strange sensation

overcomes him, a feeling of peace and contentment.

Knight: "You have chosen wisely."

The Holy Grail isn't some fancy piece of porcelain that you can distinguish by outward appearance. The Holy Grail is a common cup. Yet, I would guess it was smashed a long time ago.

Actually the Holy Grail isn't a cup at all. However, it is an earthen vessel, made of clay, filled with His blood, and possessing eternal life.

It's hard to believe (which is why there's so much sin, death, and destruction in our world) but the person sitting next to you is the Holy Grail. You are the Holy Grail. If you've been to this table, there's nothing more holy on earth.

You are Christ's body. You are the Holy Grail, sent out into a world that is desperately thirsty.

And so, believing the Gospel, receiving the Gospel, go live the Gospel. In Jesus' name. Amen.

If you'd like prayer, members of the prayer ministry team would love to pray for you. They're in back.

[The worship band plays...]

"Hole Hearted"

Words and Music by Nuno Bettencourt/Gary Cherone

Life's ambition occupy my time
 Priorities confuse the mind
 Happiness one step behind
 This inner peace I've yet to find

Rivers flow into the sea
Yet even the sea is not so full of me
If I'm not blind why can't I see
That a circle can't fit where a square should
be

Chorus:
There's a hole in my heart
That can only be filled by you
And this hole in my heart
Can't be filled with the things I do

This heart of stone is where I hide
These feet of clay keep warm inside
Day by day less satisfied
Not fade away before I die

Rivers flow into the sea
Yet even the sea is not so full of me
If I'm not blind why can't I see
That a circle can't fit where a square should
be

Chorus:
There's a hole in my heart
That can only be filled by you
And this hole in my heart
Can't be filled with the things I do

There's a hole in my heart
That can only be filled by you
Should have known from the start
I'd fall short with the things I do

Hole hearted (x6)
 Hole hearted
 Hole hearted
 Hole hearted
 Hole hearted
 Hole hearted
 Yeah

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Matthew 5:2-11 (ESV)

A Jewish friend of mine who became a Christian said this to me, “If you were to put together a committee whose responsibility it was to take the Beatitudes and create a religion that contradicts every one of them, you’d probably come up with modern Protestantism.”

Tony Campolo

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but

within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

Matthew 23:13-38 (ESV)

The stone that the builders rejected
 has become the cornerstone.
 This is the LORD’s doing;
 it is marvelous in our eyes.
 This is the day that the LORD has made;
 let us rejoice and be glad in it.
 Save us, we pray, O LORD!
 O LORD, we pray, give us success!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!

We bless you from the house of the LORD.

Psalm 118:22-26 (ESV)

Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, “Who is this?”

Matthew 21:8-10 (ESV)

He has always been in us. He is in you. He is in those to whom you must return. From time to time, He will appear to you again, but you must know that when you do not see Him as He appears, you can better recognize Him where He dwells—in His people. He is Wisdom. He knows how, when, and through whom to speak to you. The ones through whom He speaks to you are a part of the message. Remember what He said when He wept over Jerusalem: “From now on you shall not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” You will not see Him unless you can see Him in those whom He sends to you.

Rick Joyner, The Call

These are unclean to you among all that swarm. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening. . . . And if any of them falls into any earthenware vessel, all that is in it shall be unclean, and you shall break it.

Leviticus 11:31, 33 (ESV)

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: “Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was

making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. Then the word of the LORD came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done?" declares the LORD. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel." . . . Thus says the LORD, "Go, buy a potter's earthenware flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, and go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom at the entry of the Potsherd Gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you. . . . And I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at. Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its wounds. And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his neighbor in the siege and in the distress, with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them. Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, and shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, so that it can never be mended. Men shall bury in Topheth [Gehenna] because there will be no place else to bury.'"

Jeremiah 18:1-6, 19:1-2, 19:8-11 (ESV)

So I said, "I will not be your shepherd. What is to die, let it die. What is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed. And let those who are left devour the flesh of one another." And I took my staff Favor, and I broke it, annulling the covenant that I had made with all the peoples. So it was annulled on that day, and the sheep traders, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the LORD. Then I said to them, "If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not,

keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”— the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.

Zechariah 11:9-13 (ESV)

Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus^x was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money.” So they took counsel and bought with them the potter’s field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me.”

Matthew 27:3-10 (ESV)

The established Church is far more dangerous to Christianity than any heresy or schism. We play at Christianity. . . . There is something frightful in the fact that the most dangerous thing of all, playing at Christianity, is never included in the list of heresies and schisms.

Soren Kierkegaard

This is like old times. Hold it beneath your nostrils for a moment, gentle devils. Hold it up to the light. Look at those

fiery streaks that writhe and tangle in its dark heart, as if they were contending. And so they are. You know how this wine is blended? Different types of Pharisee have been harvested, trodden, and fermented together to produce its subtle flavor. . . . [They] had in common their self-righteousness and the almost infinite distance between their actual outlook and anything the Enemy [God] really is or commands. The wickedness of other religions was the really live doctrine in the religion of each; slander was its gospel and denigration its litany. How they hated each other up there where the sun shone! How much more they hate each other now that they are forever conjoined but not reconciled. Their astonishment, their resentment, at the combination, the festering of their eternally impenitent spite, passing into our spiritual digestion, will work like fire. Dark fire. All said and done, my friends, it will be an ill day for us if what most humans mean by “religion” ever vanishes from the Earth. It can still send us the truly delicious sins. The fine flower of unholiness can grow only in the close neighborhood of the Holy. Nowhere do we tempt so successfully as on the very steps of the altar.

C. S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters

Since the primary motive of the evil is disguise, one of the places evil people are most likely to be found is within the church. What better way to conceal one’s evil from oneself, as well as from others, than to be a deacon or some other highly visible form of Christian within our culture? . . . I mean only that evil people tend to gravitate toward piety for the disguise and concealment it can offer them.

M. Scott Peck, The People of the Lie

Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law/blameless. But whatever gain I

had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Philippians 3:5-9 (ESV)

Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written,

“Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband.”

Galatians 4:25-27 (ESV)

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