



We have recently had much warmer weather. As well as the sunshine, warmer weather also brings something else – **FLIES**. I have very few bad memories about the smallholding where I grew up as a child, but flies is most certainly one of them. There were always pigs or poultry on our little patch of land and the neighbours' cows usually occupied the adjoining field, so I am sure that the flies would love their surroundings. The back door of our house opened



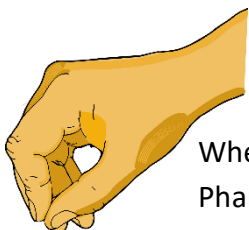
directly into the living room/kitchen and was always wide open giving an open invitation to these little insects, so the room always had dozens and dozens of flies on the ceiling and buzzing around your head when you were sitting there. One of the worst things I recollect was of eating my dinner and flies settling on the edge of my plate. Knowing the nature of their favourite spots near the feet of the cows, I then found it most difficult to continue to eat my meal.

What about people? Do I have a pet hate to do with people? Yes, I do not like folk telling me lies. When a person has lied to you it breaks the trust between you and after that there is often a question mark as to whether or not they are telling you the truth.

What about Jesus? Did He have any pet hates? It is pretty obvious that He did not like people who were boastful and showing off. He was often on collision course with the Pharisees. ('Pharisee' means 'separated one') They belonged to a sect of the Jews that separated themselves from normal life in order to spend most of their time studying about Moses and the prophets. They 'nit-picked' the scriptures and went to the extreme in providing the people with rules and regulations about every little thing that was written. They believed that every Jew should keep all of these rules and regulations, but despite this, they were very popular with the common people and were respected by them.



The Pharisees were not happy with the ministry of Jesus because He did not keep to all of the laws as they expected. Their religion was strictly organized and the actions of Jesus did not always fit into this very restricted control concerning spiritual things. I would think that the Pharisees were sometimes put in a bit of a difficult position because the people would see the rules and regulations being broken, yet at the same time, they were being broken by the fact of the wonderful miracles that were occurring.



There were a number of occasions when Jesus healed someone on the Sabbath day, which was definitely against the strict rules laid down by the Pharisees.

When Jesus healed a man with a withered hand He was really upset that to the Pharisees it was more important to keep a petty rule than to heal the man's hand. That miracle even caused the Pharisees to go away and plan to have Jesus killed.

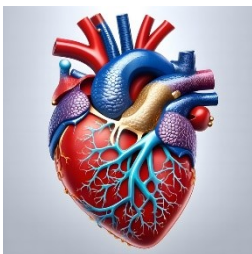


Sometimes Jesus showed His authority by healing on their Sabbath. One such time was when He healed a man who was paralysed. Instead of just telling the man that he was healed, He told him that his sins were forgiven. This was regarded as blasphemy against God but it was Jesus' way of showing who He really was, even though that was not recognized at that time.

It looks as if the Pharisees were rather boastful about their own behaviour and that Jesus deliberately pointed this out to them as being unspiritual. He told them that praying was a private matter between themselves and God, not something that was done in full public view in order to be thought of as holy and pious. If they were fasting, then again it was something for only God to see, not a thing to be showing off about so that everyone was aware of what they were doing.



Jesus told the people to observe what the Pharisees said, but not to do what they were doing. They liked to sit in places of honour at special meals and be noticed in the market place as they walked around; neither of these things showing true humility. They were so finicky as to even tithe on their herbs, but at the same time, were not thoughtful and considerate enough about other people. Jesus said that how they appeared to be on the outside was not how they actually were on the inside of their lives.



Boastfulness and showing off are not limited to the Pharisees. Many of us can be guilty of this at times. God expects us to have humility and not be show-offs about how much we pray or how good our spiritual lives are. I think about that verse in **1 Samuel 16:7** ***'The Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.'*** I know this verse is referring to outward physical appearances, but it can also be applied to our

being boastful or show-offs. God knows not only the physical make-up of our hearts but also the side of our hearts that has to do with our thoughts and feelings. It is the humility aspect of our hearts that God wishes others to see in our lives as we try to please Him.

Bible readings:

Jesus heals the man with a withered hand. Matthew 12: 9 – 14.

Jesus heals the paralysed man. Luke 5: 17 – 26.

'In humility count others better than yourselves.'

Philippians 2:3