

# Luke 11:37-54

## Religious Hypocrisy

Image Church // The Gospel of Luke: Inverted Kingdom Wk. 16

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### Introduction

Man, I am really excited about this transition back to **ECMS** this is a huge step forward for us toward normal again!!

I want you to know how excited I am about this and the days ahead in the life of Image Church! And I want to say to you, thank you! Thank you for your faithfulness through an incredible difficult season...

We had a lot of unique obstacles to work through and overcome, and through it all you have been incredibly faithful...

I believe that God has done a work in us and through us as a church, not to mention all of the new folks that have gotten connected during all of this! Be encouraged church family, we have some great days ahead

***For those of you that are new with us-** back in 2020 we had outgrown the space we had launched in as a church and had just moved to ECMS, we were there 1 week and then **COVID** hit, and we were no longer able to gather there- but now we are going back!!*

So, here's the deal, **we're going to be transitioning back to ECMS on June 27<sup>th</sup>!** We are **GOING BACK TO NORMAL!**

And listen, just like before, we're going to be going back to **ONE SERVICE** again, that will be at **10am!** The auditorium at ECMS has individual seating that can hold **450 people** so there's plenty of room for us there!

***I said this last week, but know that this changes nothing as it relates to our search for permanency in the city...***

- This **transition back to EMCS** helps in this process, we want to have a healthy runway to help us get to a sustainable and healthy normal! ECMS gives us the chance to do that together!
- But know we have been on the hunt, and we've been working on a solid lead, and I will be keeping you posted...

So, here's the deal- really quick I need you to get out your phone...

- **Imageatl.com/serve**
- I need **15 ppl.** to sign up for **Image Kids** and **10 ppl** for **FI**

\*Alright, well, **if you have your bibles go ahead and turn to Luke 11...** We're jumping back into our series through the gospel of Luke and we're going to be picking back up in **chapter 11...**

**Chapter 11** has a lot happening...

- Starts with Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray...
- Then there's a controversy over Jesus casting out some demons...
- The leads to Jesus confronting the skeptics in their unbelief as He continues to reveal who He is and challenges people to respond...

And then here at the end of **Ch 11** Jesus gets invited to dinner by a Pharisee ***which is where we're going to be picking up this morning...***

And listen, full disclosure, this is going to be a difficult passage...

- We're about to watch Jesus' strongest rebuke recorded in the gospel of Luke...

It's going to deal with **religious hypocrisy...** Which was a massive problem then and still a massive problem today... This is a claim that is so often associated with the church...

Here's the thing, most people don't reject Christianity because of Jesus- most people are actually pretty cool with Him, they reject it

because of the people who claim affiliation with Him... It is a sad reality...

Here's why, because somewhere along the way, *that which God intended to be a **relationship** got distorted and manufactured into a **religion**...*

And here's what **religion** is- let me define it: most basic sense- **I do; therefore I am accepted**... IOW: My morality determines my acceptance before God...

- Now let me expound on that definition to show you the implications: **Religion is self-justification that leads to self-righteousness that fuels pride, sets an approval-based identity, and it misses Jesus.**

This is what Jesus is going to expose very pointedly in our text today.

It's important to notice who this rebuke is geared to- the religious... Jesus speaks tenderly to those who' lives are in shambles, but he brings the heat when He addresses the religious who try to impose rituals and rules on people, and who try to act like they have it all together...

## Luke 11:37-53

**37** As he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him. So he went in and reclined at the table. **38** When the Pharisee saw this, he was amazed that he did not first perform the ritual washing before dinner.

*OK, so what's going on here...* This is a significant moment that takes place during the mealtime...

The Jews had created a tradition of washing before meals...

- *This is not what you do with your kids... Not about cleanliness...*

It's symbolic for them, and here's the thing, it's not something that's **prescribed** in the OT... This is something they added in, it's something that God asked them to do...

- See, here's what the religious leaders would do, they would take what God prescribed and then they would hedge it with additional rules and rituals...
- And **they would use these rules and rituals to justify themselves and Judge others**...

They saw this ritual that had to do with cleanliness before God, but Jesus saw it as an unnecessary burden which is why He intentionally chooses not to do it...

And the Pharisee is shocked... The **amazement** described here isn't in a good way Jesus is being criticized and looked down on in the mind of this Pharisee...

This is a tense and awkward moment... *Let's look at what happens next...*

**39** But the Lord said to him, "**Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and evil.**

**Don't miss this:** the Pharisee never said anything about his disgust in Jesus not washing up... *Jesus read his mind...*

And He says: *You got a problem with me not going through your cleaning ritual, you want to talk about clean and unclean...*

You go through this ritual, you clean the cup and dish, to look right on the **outside**, but **inside** you're not clean at all...

You're all concerned with the cleanliness of things but you're not at all concerned with your heart and how wicked it is...

You don't even see it so let me point it out for you... You're full of **Greed** and **evil**... strong words that hit hard... Jesus is showing them scope and scale of their heart and motives...

He's saying to them, you've created these rituals, practice them, hold it over people's heads, and yet the irony is that their missing the reality of the fact that their hearts are disgusting!!

*And then Jesus says:*

**40 Fools! Didn't he who made the outside make the inside too?**

Jesus is saying when God made you He didn't divide you in two parts and **internal** part and an **external** part...

You do one thing on the outside, but what's happening on the inside is the opposite... You're inconsistent!

The deficit between your heart and your actions, is a an affront to God who created you as one person and not two!!

*Then He says here's how it should really look:*

**41 But give from what is within to the poor, and then everything is clean for you.**

**Your heart is the problem**... Your actions are not a result of your heart- your actions are a result of your pride...

If your giving, and your actions came from an **overflow** of your heart then you would be consistent... But that's not the case for you!

- **You have to see the thing Jesus is after is our heart first not our actions**... You can have right actions and a bad heart which means your actions mean nothing...

On the flip side when you have the right heart that's centered on God and not on you and your pride, and your appearance, and the approval of others you will have the ability to produce the right actions making you consistent...

And here's the thing, when your heart is in the right place you will actually step outside yourself and consider others and you will do things like give to the poor because you genuinely care, not to earn

God's favor, not out of obligation, not out of guilt or out of pity, but out of **compassion**... Because God's showed you **compassion**...

You will show **mercy** because of the **mercy** you've been shown by God...

See, the gospel is completely different than religion, the gospel is something that works from the inside out...

- GOSPEL

**The gospel is: I am accepted therefore I do.**

The gospel is not conforming to rules is following a person, the gospel is not about how you look by how your portray and embody Jesus... It's identity that you've been given not one you try and achieve... It's not laws that you hold up, it's your life that you lay down for the sake of others...

Christianity isn't a status you try to obtain, it's a life of servanthood that you live out!

The Pharisees missed that, and my fear is many of us do too...

**Verse 42** "But woe to you Pharisees! You give a tenth of mint, rue, and every kind of herb, and you bypass justice and love for God. These things you should have done without neglecting the others."

So, what Jesus is saying here again externally you make it look good with the tithe, but the reality is you have no real love for people and no real love for God...

So, here Jesus condemns the Pharisees because of their inconsistency and how selective they are in what standards they chose to follow- ignoring important matters...

- When your foundation aint right you will never be consistent...

- When your driven by works and self-image then you will always be selective in that you chose to do...
- Because the goal isn't wholistic surrender it's a tally system where you have the ability to forgo certain principals...

By the way I just want to point this out here... Jesus doesn't disapprove of them tithing- ***tithe means a tenth***, Jesus says that tithing is important- tithe is ten percent... *I just want to throw that out there- just want to be faithful to the text! I'll just leave that there...*

So we have another discrepancy as a result of their heart where they tithe but ***blatantly*** fail to practice ***justice*** and ***love for God***...

They were focused on a specific practice, but they were not focused on justice or love for God...

Let's talk about the word ***justice*** that Jesus holds up here...

The word ***Justice (mishpat)*** is found more than 200 times in the OT... *And what we see is that not only is it an activity of God but it's a call for his people...*

And almost every time it's used in the OT it's associated with either the ***orphan, the widow, the foreigner, and the poor***. Scholars call it the "quartet of the vulnerable" ...

*Let me show you a few examples:*

**Deuteronomy 10:18** [God] executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving him food and clothing.

In **Psalm 68:5** the Psalmist would call God *a father of the fatherless and a champion of widows*.

**Proverbs 31:8-9**: Speak up for those who have no voice, for the justice of all who are dispossessed. **9** Speak up, judge righteously, and defend the cause of the oppressed and needy.

**Isaiah 1:17**: Learn to do what is good. Pursue justice. Correct the oppressor. Defend the rights of the fatherless. Plead the widow's cause.

**Micah 6:8** Mankind, he has told each of you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God.

What we see is that **Justice (or mishpat), is treating all people equitably, it is moral rightness. It is giving people what they are due either in punishment, protection or care.**<sup>1</sup>

We have to understand that God cares about Justice, because justice is rooted in the character of God... That's very clearly painted in the OT, but it would culminate into God's greatest display of justice that would come through the crucifixion of Jesus...

God cared so much about justice, and justice is so much a part of His perfect character and nature that Jesus was killed in our place so that justice would be served...

In the crucifixion Jesus took what we deserved for our sin on the cross so that perfect justice could be perfectly executed...

Here's what you have to see in all of this, ***if justice is rooted in the character and nature of God then justice should be an outworking of the people of God***...

Jesus already showed us this in the story of the good Samaritan...

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Keller, *What it Biblical Justice*.

Where he shows us that our neighbor is any one in need, and our call is to be neighborly to anyone in need, and one of the ways that looks is by showing compassion and intentionality for those treated unjustly like the man lying on the side of the road.

The problem is the Pharisees had completely missed the call to practice justice... And I think the reason they missed it is right here in the text...

***They were missing love for God***... See, if you have a love for God then you will love the things He loves... Why starting at the heart is so important...

But they didn't have a love for God, they had a love for themselves... So, the things that they did were to fuel their own image, rather to be transformed into God's image!

***My question is, are we in the same place??***

- Does our love for God lead us to love justice by *treating all people equitably, it is moral rightness. It is giving people what they are due either in punishment, protection or care.*
- This is a big deal to God is it a big deal to us?? Are we active in our pursuits of this? Do we advocate for this, do we champion this??

**Verse 43...**

**43** "Woe to you Pharisees! You love the front seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces."

He's saying you want to be seen, you love attention, it fuels your pride... Again we see it's about their image...

**Verse 44** "Woe to you! You are like unmarked graves; the people who walk over them don't know it."

This is probably the heaviest rebuke of them all... See, back then dead people were considered unclean, so an unmarked grave would

be a bad thing because you might walk on a dead person and become unclean...

Jesus is saying you're so corrupt on the inside and fooling people on the outside that you're like an unmarked grave- people don't see it but you are unclean, and you defile them because of your wickedness...

Jesus has laid the hammer down- and don't miss this, He's not laying the hammer down on the "***worldly people***" but on the ***religious people!***

**Here's the question:** *Are we two faced in our approach to Christianity?*

Do we say and do certain moral and religious things to lead people to believe that we are a Christian, but then live most of our lives inconsistent with the heart of Christianity that Jesus calls us to?

Are we part of inadvertently luring people away from the call of the Christianity life because of our inconsistencies?

- Jesus came to expose this reality, and it still serves to expose that same reality in us...

Ok now what's about to happen next is absurd, watch this... **verse 45:** **45** One of the experts in the law (represents another *branch* of the religious leaders) answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things you insult us too." So, here's how crazy this is... After hearing all of what Jesus said, this dude has the audacity to say come on Jesus when you say things like that so broadly it insults us to...

- **AS IF** they are completely outside of everything Jesus just said...

*Press in here... There are some of you that are assuming that same thing this morning that this isn't about you, to you or for you because you have it figured out...*

**Verse 46** Then he said, “Woe also to you experts in the law! You load people with burdens that are hard to carry, and yet you yourselves don’t touch these burdens with one of your fingers.

Laying out what people should be doing and stepping off to the side...

*Example:* grounds crew Coach leaning on a shovel.

***Is this us??***

- Flesh out...

*Let’s keep going Verse 47:*

**47** “Woe to you! You build tombs for the prophets, and your fathers killed them. **48** Therefore, you are witnesses that you approve the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their monuments. **49** Because of this, the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,’ **50** so that this generation may be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world—**51** from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. “Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible.

**52** “Woe to you experts in the law! You have taken away the key to knowledge. You didn’t go in yourselves, and you hindered those who were trying to go in.”

**53** When he left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to oppose him fiercely and to cross-examine him about many things; **54** they were lying in wait for him to trap him in something he said.

**Conclusion [VAMP]**

Religion vs Gospel... Appeal...

Call to reflect and respond... Address those hurt...

Pray...