

Jesus Criticizes the Religious Leaders Luke 11:37-54

by David Servant

Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for their focus on outward cleanliness and neglect of inward cleanliness, and warns that unless they repent, they will spend eternity in hell.

Scripture: Matthew 23:25

Topics: "Hypocrisy Exposed", "Genuine Faith"

Description

David Servant preaches about the Pharisees' hypocrisy, focusing on their outward show of religion while neglecting inward cleanliness and true repentance. Jesus exposes their greed, love for honor, and neglect of important matters like sharing God's love and defending the oppressed. He warns that unless they repent and believe in Him, they will face eternal consequences. The sermon emphasizes the danger of becoming Pharisaical, stressing the importance of genuine faith, living for Christ daily, and serving others with love and justice.

Transcript

Although the Pharisee we first read about today may have wanted to appear as if he was a hospitable person, you can be sure he wasn't being motivated by kindness when he invited Jesus to share a meal at his house. Rather, he was hoping to find fault with Jesus in order to report it to his fellow Pharisees. And it didn't take him long. He was amazed to see that Jesus "sat down to eat without first performing the ceremonial washing required by Jewish custom" (Luke 11:38).

Knowing the Pharisee's thoughts, Jesus used the occasion to illustrate the basic flaw of all the Pharisees. They were primarily concerned with outward cleanliness at the neglect of inward cleanliness, making themselves hypocrites. Jesus said that God made both inside and outside, so both were important, but the Pharisees' insides were full of greed and wickedness. The only way for them to become inwardly clean was to repent, and Jesus said that the way to repent of greed was to give to the needy what the Pharisees greedily possessed.

Also, for the sake of outward appearance, the Pharisees majored in minors. That is, they emphasized the least important things and neglected what was most important. For example, when they picked some of their garden herbs, they would be careful to take a tenth of them and give them to the priests, because the Law of Moses required the Israelites to tithe on their increase. Jesus endorsed their tithing, but criticized

them for neglecting other much more important things, like teaching people about and sharing God's love, or defending those who were treated unjustly.

The final proof of the outward show of the Pharisees' religion was their love of the seats of honor at the synagogue and the respectful greetings they received from people in the marketplace. They were not the kind of people who gave secretly to the poor or who prayed behind closed doors. Everything they did was a show so that people would see how holy they supposedly were. They loved it when they were honored by others for putting on their act!

In the same category were the religious teachers who considered themselves experts in the Law of Moses. They taught the common people their own strict interpretations of what God required, putting burdens on them that God never intended for them to carry. They made it next to impossible for people to please God. Jesus said they were no different than the evil religious leaders of the Old Testament who persecuted and killed the prophets whom God sent. In fact, Jesus predicted that they would persecute and kill future prophets and apostles whom God would send, one of them, of course, being Himself. Both Pharisees and religious teachers were very religious people who, unless they repented and believed in Jesus, would spend eternity in hell.

Q. Why do you suppose Jesus said that the generation of His day would be held responsible for the murder of all God's prophets from the creation of the world, from Abel to Zechariah? Is that fair? Will He not hold responsible the actual murderers?

A. Jesus knew that His generation would be responsible for His own death, and certainly, as God's only Son, Jesus was much more valuable than all the former prophets combined. They were men created in God's image and sent by God, but Jesus was God! So perhaps He meant that His generation would lay up more guilt by killing Him than if they had been responsible for the death of every prophet God had sent since the creation of the world.

Application: All of us, and especially Christian leaders, can become guilty of being Pharisaical. Here are some healthy questions that we need to ask ourselves from time to time: Does my religion consist mainly of outward conformity to a few aspects of the Christian faith, such as going to church once a week and paying my tithes? Am I living for Christ every hour of every day, spreading God's love, giving to the needy and defending those who are treated unjustly? Do I act more holy when I'm in church than I do at home? Do I do any good deeds privately, proving that my Christianity is not just an act to gain the praise of others?

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/jesus-criticizes-the-religious-leaders-luke-1137-54/>

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