

## Introduction

In our passage last week, Jesus had just cast out a demon from a mute man, and the man was now speaking. Some of the crowd was amazed. Another part of the crowd accused Him of doing it by Beelzebul. Still another group asked Jesus for a sign. He had just given them a sign. He healed a mute man, and the man was now speaking.

It is interesting that when we share the kingdom of God with others, there are different responses. People are at different places in their spiritual journey and they respond differently to the gospel. Some embrace the kingdom. Some reject and attack the kingdom. Another group of people want more proof; they are not convinced. Our job is to keep preaching the kingdom of God. We are not responsible for their decisions. Every person is going to come before the judgment seat and give account for how they responded to the gospel. Did they receive Jesus Christ, and His payment for their sins, or did they reject Jesus? Those who vehemently rejected and those who wanted more proof are all in the category of being without Christ. Only those who make a decision to receive Christ, and to follow Christ will enter into heaven.

Our passage today begins by saying, “now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have breakfast or lunch with him. The Greek word is *aristao*, (Strong’s 709), which means to breakfast or to dine. The root word is *eri*, which means early. The Jewish custom was to eat two meals a day. They had a meal in the mid to late morning, but their biggest meal was in the evening. In this account, Luke is specifically referring to that brunch meal. Jesus had been ministering to the crowd that morning, and it is probably between ten and noon when the Pharisee asked Jesus to come dine with him.

Apparently, this Pharisee was in the crowd and had just observed Jesus casting out the demon. We do not know the motive of the Pharisee. We do not know if he is one that is excited about what he has just seen and heard. We do not know if he is one that is a doubter that wants to see another sign, or if he is one that is looking to find fault with Jesus and to use for evidence against Jesus. Because of what transpires at this meal, I believe he was one of the ones looking to find fault with Jesus.

The Pharisee had just heard Jesus give an explanation that no other sign but Jonah would be given. But, he had missed the obvious sign that had just taken place; Jesus had just healed a man that was mute. He had just heard Jesus tell a woman that the people that are blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it. The Pharisees were part of the crowd that were rejecting and wanting more signs. They were not those who heard the word of God and observed it.

(Luke 11:28) “But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

Jesus went and shared a meal with a Pharisee and his friends. The account we are looking at today is not a family get-together at Thanksgiving. It is not filled with joyful sharing with one another. It is not full of laughter about humorous things that happened over the past year. Instead, Jesus calls the Pharisees foolish and gives six woes to them. It was a very tense and heated discussion. It was probably a very uncomfortable occasion. Solomon said that a dry morsel with quietness is better than a feast full of strife. This was a feast full of strife, and if we could join Jesus for a meal, there would be better ones to share than this one. I am glad that I was not there for this meal.

(Pro 17:1) “Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it Than a house full of feasting with strife.”

In John 1:29, John revealed to us that Jesus is the Lamb of God. I think of a lamb as an innocent and gentle animal. Jesus said in Matthew 11:29 that He is “gentle and humble.” These are true characteristics of our Lord Jesus Christ. While it is true, there is another picture of Jesus found in Revelations 19. Here, John reveals Jesus as the captain of a host of armies who is seated on a white horse. Let me read this account to you.

(Rev 19:11-16) “And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. {12} His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. {13} He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. {14} And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. {15} From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. {16} And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

We do not like to think of Jesus judging and waging war. We do not like to think of Jesus having a sharp sword in His mouth and striking down the nations. We do not like to think of Jesus treading the wine press of the fierce wrath of God. But, this is also who Jesus is. He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. In our account today, Jesus is not speaking like the Lamb of God; He is speaking more like the Army Commander. He is giving a strong warning to the Pharisees that they need to humble themselves and repent of their self-righteousness and false religion. If they do not repent now, it will be far worse for them on the judgment day.

The people that Jesus came down hardest on were the religious leaders. Earlier in Luke we saw that those who were well did not need a physician, but those who are sick. Jesus did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The Pharisees and religious leaders did not acknowledge that they were sinners. They were self-righteous, hypocrites that were hindering God’s work, and Jesus came down very hard on them.

(Luke 5:31-32) “And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. {32} "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”

In our passage today, Jesus addresses seven different areas with the Pharisees. These include:

1. Concern about being clean on the inside.
2. Concern about weightier matters.
3. Concern about honor of God.
4. Concern about life.
5. Concern about burdens.
6. Concern about God’s messengers.
7. Concern about true knowledge.

Let’s read our text together.

(Luke 11:37-54) "Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee \*asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table. {38} When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal. {39} But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness. {40} "You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? {41} "But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you. {42} "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. {43} "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places. {44} "Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it." {45} One of the lawyers \*said to Him in reply, "Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too." {46} But He said, "Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers. {47} "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. {48} "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. {49} "For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, {50} so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, {51} from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.' {52} "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering." {53} When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, {54} plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say."

### 1. Concern about being clean on the inside.

The scene begins with Jesus coming in and reclining at the table. The Pharisees had instituted hundreds of laws, including ones about washing before the meal. Jesus had not gone over to the wash basin and dipped his hands and forearms in. The Greek word for washed that is used is baptizo, which means to dip or immerse. Their law required them to have at least two inches of water and to wash and dip their hands in it before eating. The Pharisee must have either said something verbally or with his body language to Jesus about not washing before He sat down to eat. This was not a new battle front. He and His disciples had been repeatedly questioned about this.

In Mark 7:4-8, we find that the Pharisees would cleanse themselves after being in public places. They would also wash (baptismos) their cups, pitchers, and copper pots. Mark records that the Pharisees questioned Jesus about why His disciples did not walk according to the traditions of the elders and ate with impure hands. Jesus answered by saying, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, as the washing (baptismos) of pots and cups, and many other such things you do.'" **God is more concerned about our hearts being cleansed than our hands.** In this passage, Jesus also spoke about the heart. He said they honored God with their lips, but their heart was far away. I don't think God wants us to throw away cleanliness and hygiene; He is just letting us know the priority. We need to prioritize the cleansing of our hearts.

(Mark 7:1-8) “The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, {2} and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. {3} (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; {4} and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) {5} The Pharisees and the scribes \*asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" {6} And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. {7} 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.' {8} "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."

We also see in our passage this morning that **Jesus was not too concerned about following the teachings or traditions of men.** The ceremonial washing was a teaching of man, not a commandment from Scripture. We know from Scripture that Jesus was tempted in all things, and yet without sin. Jesus kept the commandments of God, and did not follow the teachings of men.

(Luke 11:37-38) “Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee \*asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table. {38} When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.”

There are a lot of teachings of men that have come into the church at large. When Karen and I first moved to Orlando, some of our friends were going to First Baptist of Orlando. Karen wanted to join, and they made her get baptized in order to join. I was opposed to their teaching, that we are baptized into their local body, before we could join. I had already been baptized as a believer, and did not need to get rebaptized. The Ethiopian Eunuch was not taken to Jerusalem so that he could join a church. He was baptized into the body of Christ. We are commanded to get baptized. To disregard someone's baptism and require them to get re-baptized into their church is just a teaching of men. This is the kind of thing that Jesus refused to follow.

Many churches have instituted rules about who can become a pastor at their church. For example, many denominations require a Masters of Divinity. Last year at a church in Albuquerque, their pastor left to take another position. Their Associate Pastor was very well liked. He had served as a civil engineer for many years before answering the call to ministry. In fact, he was the one that designed the “Big I” in Albuquerque. This pastor is an excellent teacher, has a great personality, is a man of integrity, and would have made a fantastic Senior Pastor. Only one thing was wrong; he did not have a Master's of Divinity. Therefore, he was overlooked and they brought in an outsider that had the proper credentials. The Scriptures give the proper credentials in Titus 1:5-8 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Pastors must be above reproach, in their character, in their home, and outside the home. They must be good managers, and they must be able to teach the Word of God. There is no mention of having a Masters of Divinity. That is a teaching of man, not a commandment of God. As I look at the twelve apostles of the Lamb, none of them would have been qualified to pastor at that church, or in many churches today. The Apostle Paul had theological training, and God used his education. Paul wrote thirteen of the books of the New Testament. I am thankful for his higher education. But, we have to be careful about following the teachings of men, particularly if they violate God's commands.

Jesus responded to the Pharisee by telling him that they clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but inside they are full of robbery and wickedness. What a nice way to start your meal. The host looks down haughtily in disbelief and surprise at the guest. The guest gives a strong rebuke to the host. What a way to start a meal.

(Luke 11:39-41) “But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness. {40} "You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? {41} "But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.

Jesus tells him that he should be more concerned about having a pure heart than looking good outwardly. Then, he calls the Pharisees foolish ones, and asks a question, “did not He who made the outside make the inside also?” Jesus was more concerned about our heart condition. He wants us to be pure in heart.

Then, Jesus tells the Pharisee to give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you. This was a reference to Deuteronomy 26. It was there that the Lord commanded Israel to pay all their tithes and give it to the Levite, stranger, orphan, and to the widow. The tithes were first to support the workers, the Priests and Levites. Next, a portion of the tithes was to take care of the poor. Jesus was telling this Pharisee to stop robbing the poor of their portion of the tithes and to get their hearts right before God. If they will cleanse their hearts, and show love for their neighbor, all things will be clean for them. He is telling them that they need to be more concerned about keeping their heart clean and pure than worrying about various ceremonial washings.

(Deut 26:12-14) “When you have finished paying all the tithes of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. {13} "You shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion from my house, and also have given it to the Levite and the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed or forgotten any of Your commandments. {14} 'I have not eaten of it while mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor offered any of it to the dead. I have listened to the voice of the LORD my God; I have done according to all that You have commanded me.”

## 2. Concern about weightier matters.

Next, Jesus gives a woe to the Pharisees about weightier matters. He said that they tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet they disregard justice and the love of God. God tells us that the tithe belongs to Him. That is the tithe of our crops, the tithe of our herds, the tithe of all our income. The Pharisees had taken that to include the tithe of their personal garden. Jesus does not tell them to stop doing this. In fact, He said they should have done that. Malachi tells us to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse. The majority of Christians do not tithe. A tithe is 10%. Most Christians do not tithe ten percent of all their income, whether it is a welfare check or a paycheck.

(Luke 11:42) “But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.”

But, Jesus' point is not about the tithe. God is concerned about the weightier matters of the kingdom. He was more concerned about justice and the love of God. God has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He is still more concerned about justice and the love of God.

Consider this, that in the sermon on the mount, Jesus said that if we are presenting our offering and remember that our brother has something against us, we are to lay down our offering, go get reconciled, and then present our offering. **God is more concerned about us walking in love with one another than our offering.**

(Matt 5:23-24) "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, {24} leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."

I love what the Lord tells us in Micah 6:8. He says that the Lord has showed us what He requires of us. What is it? He wants us to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with Him. These are the weightier things that Jesus is speaking to the Pharisee about.

(Micah 6:8) He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"

Our vision at East Mountain Vineyard is to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus was asked by a lawyer in Matthew 22, "which is the great commandment in the Law?" This lawyer wanted to know about the weightier things, the most important things. Jesus tells him, "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment." Then, Jesus tells him, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." Jesus gave him the weightier matters that all of us need to focus on. We should not neglect our tithes or other commands in Scripture, but we should be focused on the greater commands.

(Matt 22:36-40) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" {37} And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' {38} "This is the great and foremost commandment. {39} "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' {40} "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

When we planted this church, I was sharing our vision with a man, and after I got done, I asked him what he thought. He said he didn't care anything about our vision. His heart was to get everyone in the church to use their gifts. That is a good thing. I teach that the body will not come to maturity until every joint supplies. I want people to use their gifts in the church. But, the weightier matter is to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Paul makes this very clear in 1 Corinthians. **Without love, the various gifts do not profit us.**

(1 Cor 13:1-3) "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. {2} If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. {3} And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."

One of the leading seminaries in the United States requires that everyone that is going to attend must believe in pre-tribulation. The question should not be about when you believe the Lord is coming back. Jesus said it has been determined by the Father and no one knows that time. The question for a seminarian should be, do you love God with all your heart? Do you love your neighbor as yourself. This is the weightier matter that we must keep in front of us.

### 3. Concern about honor.

The third concern was about honoring God. He said, “woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places.” The Pharisees were more concerned about being honored in the synagogues and in the market places. They wanted public recognition and praise. They wanted the honor of men.

(Luke 11:43) “Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places.”

A number of years ago, I was asked to preach at an all black church Baptist church. This church was started before the civil war. They initially shared a facility with an all black Methodist church, but sometime in the late 1800's they got their own facility. They are still meeting in that old facility. It has a red brick exterior and is painted white on the inside. It has wooden floors, wooden pews, stained-glass windows, and it also has chief seats in the front on the stage. As the guest speaker that day, I sat with the Senior Pastor in the chief seats. One nice thing about those seats is you can see everything that is going on in the service. Where I sit, I cannot see what is going on in the congregation. I appreciate the purpose of the chief seats, which is to watch over and preside over the service.

But, the Pharisees were not concerned about watching over the congregation to see how the Spirit is moving in the service. They were concerned about being noticed and seen. They were concerned about being shown respect. That was not the purpose of the chief seats.

I like Paul’s attitude in 1 Corinthians 4. There was strife and division in the church, and they had been choosing sides. Some were for Paul and others were for Apollos. Paul tells them that he and Apollos were just mere men who had been given an opportunity by the Lord. He had planted the church and Apollos had watered, but it was God who was causing the growth. Personally, God could have raised up someone else to plant this church. I feel honored that He chose me and gave me the opportunity to plant this church. He has plans for this church. He has plans for the people in the East Mountains, and I am grateful to be part of His plans.

(1 Cor 3:4-6) “For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? {5} What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. {6} I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”

Then, in chapter four, he says, “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” We miss some of the impact of what he says because we do not speak Greek. The word for servants that he uses is *huperetes*, which literally means an under-oarsman. The under-oarsmen were the lowest slaves in society. They were usually men condemned to die, but were

working as oarsmen on the ships. They were human rowing machines. They ate, rowed in dark, damp, conditions, and got a little sleep. Paul tells them that he and Apollos were to be considered as the lowest oarsmen or slaves on earth.

The second word that Paul uses is steward. The Greek word is oikonomos, which means a servant who took care of a household. A steward or house servant made sure that everyone was properly fed and cared for. Paul tells the Corinthians to regard him as a slave and a servant of the household, who gave them their spiritual rations. He is not the master of the house, just the faithful servant in the house. This is quite different than the Pharisees. They were not there to serve the congregation. They were there to be seen, and to be respected.

(1 Cor 4:1) “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

What about you and I? Are we here to serve, or to be seen? Are we here to serve or are we here for position? Are we here to serve, or are we here to be honored. **God calls each one of us to serve.**

#### 4. Concern about life.

The next woe that Jesus gives the Pharisee is that he is like a concealed tomb that people walk over and are unaware of it. A tomb is a place for the dead. A concealed tomb is one that is hidden. He was telling the Pharisee that their teachings and practices were dead. Their legalism and works brought death. The Jewish people came to their religious leaders to find life, and they were unaware that what they were putting their trust in were actually concealed tombs. They did not know that the teaching of the Pharisees brought death. They were unaware that the Pharisees were concealed tombs.

(Luke 11:44) “Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.”

**Jesus came that we might have life.** In John 3:36, Jesus tells them that those who believe in Him have eternal life. In John 10:10, He says that He came that we might have life, and have it abundantly. He said that those who believed in him would have eternal life. In John 14:6, Jesus said that He was “the way, the truth, and the life.” He promised life because He is the life. He can promise life, because He is the life.

(John 3:36) “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

(John 10:10) “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

(John 14:6) “Jesus \*said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

The question for us today is where are we searching for life? The beer advertisements tell us that we will find refreshment and life by using their products. Those advertisements are like the Pharisees. They are concealed tombs. They bring death to those that partake. Alcoholism and drug addiction



ruin marriages. They ruin lives, and bring death to the people that use them and to those around them. The world promises life to the fullest, but it is a concealed tomb that brings death.

What is it that brings refreshment in our lives? The Scriptures tell us what will bring life. When we repent and turn from our sins, we will have times of refreshing. We are led to think that the worldly pleasures give life, but **life comes from repenting of sin and worldly things in our lives.**

(Acts 3:19) “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wipe away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;”

**The Scriptures tell us that those who lose their life for Christ will find life.** Living life to the fullest is not found through indulging in worldly pleasures; it is found in losing your life for Jesus’ sake. Give your life to Christ. Give Him your mornings. Give Him your afternoons. Give Him your evenings. Give Him your weekends. Live your life for Christ. He promises to give you life when you lose your life for His sake. On the other hand, we could gain the whole world, and forfeit our soul. The world and the world system promises life and happiness, but it is a concealed tomb.

(Mark 8:35-36) “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. {36} For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?”

## 5. Concern about burdens.

The fifth concern that Jesus shares is directed towards the lawyers and is about weighing people down with burdens. The lawyers were the scribes. In some Scriptures, the Pharisees and scribes are mentioned; this is the same as the Pharisees and lawyers. The scribes are the ones that wrote many of the Pharisaical laws. Jesus had been giving woes to the Pharisees up until now, and the lawyers that were present were also feeling the sting of His words. The lawyers were feeling insulted because they had played a significant part in writing all these laws that weighed people down. They said to Him, “when You say this, You insult us too.” Now, Jesus says, “woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.”

(Luke 11:45-46) “One of the lawyers \*said to Him in reply, "Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too." {46} But He said, "Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.”

**There are many types of burdens mentioned in the Scriptures.** There are financial burdens. Paul said that he worked day and night so that he would not be a burden to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:9, 2 Thess 3:8). Families are told to take care of their own widows so that they will not be a burden to the church (1 Tim 5:16). The preaching of the Word or the word of the Lord is called a burden in Zech 9:1 and Zech 12:1.

There is also the burden of sin. In Galatians 6, Paul talks about restoring one who is caught in a trespass. He tells us to bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. It is a clear reference to the burden of sin.

(Gal 6:1-2) “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. {2} Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”

The Law was called a burden. In Acts 15, we find that there were Jews who were trying to get the Gentiles to come back under the Law. Paul and Barnabas went to the apostles in Jerusalem and to get things straightened out.

(Acts 15:10-11) “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? {11} "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”

After the apostles and elders hashed things out, they stated, “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication...” They did not want the Gentiles being burdened with trying to keep the Law.

(Acts 15:28-29) “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: {29} that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.”

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus tells those who are weary and heavy laden to come to Him, and He will give them rest. He says to take His yoke and learn from Him, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. The burden of the law was very heavy, and people were weary and heavy-laden. Jesus came to fulfill the Law. In Hebrews 4, God tells us that there is a Sabbath rest.

(Matt 11:28-30) “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. {29} "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. {30} "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

(Heb 4:9-10) “So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. {10} For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

The Pharisees were not concerned about placing a burden on the people. God is concerned about relieving our burdens. What kind of burden do you have this morning? Is it the burden of sin; confess your sin to the Lord and let Him take the burden from you. If you are struggling with ongoing sin, confess your sins to one another. Let someone else in the body bear that burden with you. Let them help you fight the battle with you, and help you gain victory in this area of your life. This morning, God wants to set you free from burden. If you have never received Christ and entered into the spiritual rest, let me encourage you to place your trust in Christ. Psalms 68:19 says to bless the Lord because he daily bears our burden, the God who is our salvation. **God wants to bear the burden of our sins and give us rest.**

(Ps 68:19) “Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God who is our salvation. Selah.”

## 6. Concern about God's messengers.

The next woe that Jesus gives is about the blood of the prophets and apostles. He tells them that their fathers killed the prophets, and they built their tombs. For that reason, God was going to send them both prophets and apostles, and they were going to kill some of them and persecute them so that the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world would be charged against them. He mentions a span beginning with the blood of Abel and ending with Zechariah.

(Luke 11:47-51) "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. {48} "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. {49} "For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, {50} so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, {51} from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.'"

In Genesis 4, we have the account of Cain killing his brother, Abel. Both brought an offering to the Lord. Cain brought an offering from the fruit of the ground, but Abel brought his firstlings of the flock and the fat portions. In other words, it was not a token offering. He brought the first, and he brought the very best that he had, and the Lord had regard for it. But, the Lord had no regard for Cain's offering, and Cain became angry. Then, he rose up against Abel and killed him. Abel had done nothing wrong. He had given the Lord his very best, and because it pleased the Lord, Cain slew him. It does not say in the account in Genesis that Abel was a prophet, but in our account in Luke, Jesus refers to Abel as a prophet.

(Gen 4:3-10) "So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. {4} Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; {5} but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell... {8b} And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. {9} Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" {10} He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground."

What was the message of Abel, the prophet? **Abel's message was that we should give God our very best.** He gave the Lord his firstlings, and the fat portion. Cain did not receive that message. Cain's countenance fell, and he became angry, just as many do not receive the message on giving today. Abel was slain and his blood cried out from the ground to the Lord.

The final prophet that Jesus mentions is Zechariah. That account is found in 2 Chronicles 24. When Jehoiada was king, they collected money in a box at the temple. They used the money to repair the temple, and to pay the workers. Then, they began to offer sin and burnt offerings. However, when Jehoiada died, the officials of Judah abandoned the house of the Lord. They stopped receiving the offerings. They stopped the burnt offerings. Zechariah rebuked them, saying, "why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord and do not prosper?" The officials conspired against him and went to Joash the king, and they put him to death.

(2 Chr 24:20-22) “Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.'" {21} So they conspired against him and at the command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. {22} Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which his father Jehoiada had shown him, but he murdered his son. And as he died he said, "May the LORD see and avenge!"

Jesus told the Pharisees that God was going to give prophets and apostles, and that they would kill them so that the blood of all the prophets would be upon them. The stoning of Stephen brought a severe persecution against the church. Historical documents record the death of over two thousand believers in that persecution. Eleven of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb were martyred. John was sent to Rome to be martyred, where it is affirmed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle, without injury. Domitian afterwards banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death.

## 7. Concern about true knowledge.

The last woe that Jesus issued was about the key of knowledge. He uses the picture of a locked door. He tells the lawyers or scribes that they have taken away the key of knowledge. Furthermore, He tells them that they did not enter and they hindered those who were entering.

(Luke 11:52) “Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering.”

**The Scribes and Pharisees had misinterpreted the Scriptures and the prophecies of the Old Testament, particularly those related to the Messiah.** Their misinterpretation kept them from entering the kingdom, and their teachings kept others from entering the kingdom.

**In order to have the right interpretation, we must understand God’s plan of redemption.** We find in Acts 2:23 that God had a predetermined plan to send His Son to die for our sins. Everything in the Old Testament points to the coming of the Messiah. The various feasts all pertain to Christ. Jesus is the Passover Lamb. He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. The feast of first fruits is about Jesus. He is the first fruit. The feasts were not just feasts; they were prophetic pictures of what Jesus the Messiah was going to do. The Pharisees and Scribes missed this. Their teachings and emphasis on works and keeping the Law was keeping them from the grace of God, and it was keeping others from the grace of God.

(Acts 2:23) “this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.”

(John 1:29 The next day he \*saw Jesus coming to him and \*said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

**Jesus is the door.** In John 10:7-9, Jesus tells us that He is the door. If anyone enters through Christ, he will be saved. The Pharisees and Scribes had rejected Christ, and they were keeping others from believing in Christ.

(John 10:7-9) “So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. {8} All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. {9} I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

## Conclusion

As we end this morning, the Scribes and Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects. They were plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.

(Luke 11:53-54) “When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, {54} plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.”

We saw in the beginning that there are various responses. Some people were excited to see a mute man healed. There were others that were blind to the miracle that had just happened, and demanded a sign. There were others that were hostile and looked for ways to discredit Jesus.

Where are you this morning? Has God been speaking to you about receiving Jesus Christ and entering into the kingdom of God? If you have never entered through the door of Jesus Christ, if you have never confessed Him as Lord, let me encourage you to receive Him this morning. You will never regret making this all important decision to follow Christ. He is the way, the life, and the truth. There is no other plan to enter the kingdom of God. This was the pre-determined plan of God to redeem us. Let me encourage you to make that commitment to Christ this morning.

Jesus wants us clean on the inside. That happens through the Christ. The Scriptures tell us that “He who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Do you want to be made clean on the inside? Receive Christ this morning.

(2 Cor 5:21) “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Do you want freedom in your life this morning from burdens? Jesus came to set us free. He came to set us free from the burden of sin. He came to set us free from the burden of legalism and works? The Scripture says that “if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” If you want freedom this morning, His yoke is easy and is load is light. Come to Him this morning, and He will give you rest.

(John 8:36) “So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

Do you want life this morning? Jesus is the way, the life, and the truth. Give your life to Him, and you will find life. You will find true purpose and meaning. You will find fulfillment. If this is your desire, I am going to ask you to pray with me this morning.

*Father, I recognize that I need cleaning on the inside. I believe that You are the Lamb of God that takes away the sins and burdens of the world. I believe that You are the way, the life, and the truth. I ask You to forgive me of my sins. I open up the door of my heart and ask You to come in this morning. I confess You as Lord this morning. Take my life and use me however You wish. I confess You as Lord of my life. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

If you prayed that this morning, raise your hand this morning and let us know. We want to pray with you and help you as you begin your walk with Christ.

If there are others of you with needs this morning, raise your hands. Church, if you can gather around those with their hands raised, let's pray for one another.

There are others here that may have been coming for a while trying to sense God's direction about joining. If you want to become a part of this church family, I am going to ask you to come forward and speak with me.

Let's pray.

**Introduction** (Luke 11:28, Pr 17:1, John 1:29, Matt 11:29, Rev 19:11-16, Luke 5:31-32, 11:37-54)

**1. Concern about being clean on the inside.** (Mark 7:4-8, Deut 26:12-14)

- God is more concerned about our \_\_\_\_\_ being cleansed than our hands.
- Jesus was not too concerned about following the \_\_\_\_\_ of men. (Luke 11:37-38)

**2. Concern about weightier matters.** (Luke 11:42, Micah 6:8, Matt 22:36-40)

- God is more concerned about us walking in \_\_\_\_\_ with one another than our offering. (Matt 5:23-24)
- Without love, the various gifts do not \_\_\_\_\_ us. (1 Cor 13:1-3)

**3. Concern about honor of God.** (Luke 11:43, 1 Cor 3:4-6, 4:1)  
God calls each one of us to \_\_\_\_\_.

**4. Concern about life. (Luke 11:44)**

- Jesus came that we might have \_\_\_\_\_. (John 3:36, 10:10, 14:6)
- Life comes from \_\_\_\_\_ of sin and worldly things in our lives. (Acts 3:19)
- The Scriptures tell us that those who \_\_\_\_\_ their life for Christ will \_\_\_\_\_ life. (Mark 8:35-36)

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**5. Concern about burdens. (Luke 11:45-46)**

- There are many types of \_\_\_\_\_ mentioned in the Scriptures. (1 Thess 2:9, 2 Thess 3:8, 1 Tim 5:16, Zech 9:1, 12:1, Gal 6:1-2, Acts 15:10-11, 15:28-29, Matt 11:28-30)
- God wants to \_\_\_\_\_ the burden of our sins and give us rest. (Heb 4:9-10, Ps 68:19)

**6. Concern about God's messengers. (Luke 11:47-51, 2 Chron 24:20-22)**

Abel's message was that we should give God our very \_\_\_\_\_ . (Gen 4:3-10)

**7. Concern about true knowledge. (Luke 11:52)**

- The Scribes and Pharisees had \_\_\_\_\_ the Scriptures and the prophecies of the Old Testament, particularly those related to the Messiah.
- In order to have the right interpretation, we must understand God's plan of \_\_\_\_\_ . (Acts 2:23, John 1:29)
- Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_ (John 10:7-9)

**Conclusion** (Luke 11:53-54, 2 Cor 5:21, John 8:36)

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