

A Word to the Wise (Luke 11:37-54)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. To avoid judgment, we must not overlook the obvious work of Jesus.
2. Avoiding judgment requires a heart that focuses on the important.
3. Avoiding judgment requires a priority on one's inside condition not his or her appearance.
4. To avoid judgment we must handle God's Word accurately.
5. Avoiding God's judgment may bring persecution by man.

Question: What did Jesus mean when He spoke of the kingdom of God and when He talked about keeping God's Word?

B. In Luke 11:14-36, Jesus continued to speak to the crowd after His conversation about prayer.

1. Luke 11:20 says, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."
 - a. Kingdom of God (*basileia*) - royal power, kingship, dominion, rule, not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom.
 - b. Jesus showed the people His authority and deity (omnipotence) by casting out demons.
 - c. Jesus showed His deity by knowing the peoples' thoughts in verse 17. They were questioning to themselves how Jesus could cast out demons, and they were incorrectly associating His works with something bad (Satan).
 - d. By referring to the kingdom of God, He was showing His power, position, and authority. He was claiming to be the Son of God.
2. Luke 11:28 says, "But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."
 - a. Blessed (*makarios*) - happy, happier
 - b. Hear (*akouo*) - to understand, perceive the sense of what is said
 - c. Keep (*phulasso*) - to guard or watch, have an eye upon: lest he escape
 - d. Mark 4:3-9 records the parable of the sower (stony ground, thorns, and good ground). Blessed is the person that is a fertile place for God's Word.
3. In verses 29-32, He indicated that the queen of the south and the people of Nineveh would cast judgment on His generation because of their failure to repent. What would those people say about the U.S.A. in 2008?

A Word to the Wise (Luke 11:37-54)

Question: How did Jesus handle the Pharisee? Did He let Himself be pushed around? Did He let Himself be tricked into saying the wrong thing?

- II. After the above events occurred, a Pharisee invited Jesus to breakfast (or a meal) at his home (verse 37), **but not merely to eat (verses 53-54)**.
- A. Luke 11:53-54 says, "And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him."
1. Vehemently (**deinos**) - terribly, grievously, the same word as in Matthew 8:6, translated "grievously tormented."
 - a. The Pharisees were obsessed with trapping Jesus in His own words.
 - b. People sometimes try to catch a preacher in the same way, **but is that bad or good?**
 - c. Remember that preachers are human and that they can make mistakes. Jesus was and is God. While individuals have to carefully listen to those that preach the Bible, the Pharisees should have repented when Jesus spoke.
 2. Provoke (**apostomatizo**) - to ply with questions, to catechise, and so to entice to answers.
 3. Laying wait (**enedreuo**) - to lie in wait for, to lay wait for, prepare a trap for
 4. Accuse (**kategoreo**) - to accuse before a judge: to make an accusation.
 5. People will sometimes try to examine our lives or our words to trap us. How can we best handle such situations?
 - a. Remember the meaning of importunity from last week's lessons.
 - b. God keeps a close reign on us and meets our needs because others are watching our lives.
 - 1) They will quickly accuse Him if we become destitute as a result of our following Him.
 - 2) They will quickly accuse us if our lives do not match up to what they consider to be heavenly standards.
 - 3) We need to guard our lives for at least two reasons.
 - a) So that the hope we have in Christ can become contagious.
 - b) So that we will not give others opportunity to accuse either the Lord or us.
 - c. He also keeps an eye on our lifestyle to make sure that we do not stray too far or stray too often.
- B. Beginning in verse 38, Jesus showed His authority. The Pharisee was surprised that Jesus did not wash before eating, but Jesus did not tremble or back down from the Pharisee.

A Word to the Wise (Luke 11:37-54)

1. Washed (***baptizo***) - to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe. The word is normally translated "baptized."
2. Jesus was approached about ceremonial washing on another occasion in Matthew 15:1-6 and Mark 7:1-13. Matthew 15:2-3 says, "Why do thy disciples transgress **the tradition of the elders**? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress **the commandment of God** by your tradition?"
 - a. The Pharisees were criticizing His disciples based on a tradition of the elders.
 - b. Jesus responded by saying that they had transgressed the commandment of God.
 - c. According to Dr. J. Vernon McGee, the Pharisees had a tradition that allowed them to donate their money instead to the temple instead of caring for the financial needs of their parents (a commandment of God). It made them look important to others and got them around using their money to help their family.
 - d. They did not have an answer to justify their actions, so the matter was dropped.
3. Ceremonial washing was a religious rite that was intended to show a person's closeness to God.
 - a. Luke 11:39 says, "And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; **but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.**"
 - b. Mark 7:6 says, "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Question: Would Jesus have similar criticism for some of today's modern religions?

4. Some modern religions practice outward rituals that are supposed to have special significance with God. But do they?
 - a. Catholics, for example, have seven sacraments, such as communion, baptism, and last rites.
 - 1) Constantine did not get baptized until he was on his deathbed because he believed that baptism would wash away his sins.
 - 2) Augustine defined sacrament as "the visible form of an invisible grace" (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, volume IV, page 2636).
 - 3) They believe that the individual receives a special blessing from the Lord by doing those things.

A Word to the Wise (Luke 11:37-54)

- 4) The problem is that someone can practice an outward act even while their heart is far from the Lord. In those instances, the individual has wasted his or her time.
 - b. Methodists and other Protestant Faiths baptize or sprinkle babies.
 - c. Some churches, including this one, have baby dedication services.
 - d. Some eastern religions pray toward Mecca several times each day.
 - e. **When a person's outward acts towards the Lord are for outward show "ONLY" without any genuine inward motivation for Him, then the action is no different than the ceremonial washing practiced by the Pharisees.**
 - f. The Protestant Church has two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, but they are not viewed as sacraments.
 - 1) These actions do not make us more holy or righteous before the Lord.
 - 2) We do them because we **ARE** close to the Lord and because we want to keep the ordinances that He gave us.
5. The Lord does not need, care about, or want our artificial forms of worship, those things that are designed for other people to see but without any real love for or devotion to God.
6. As the Quarterly indicated, "It's a Heart Thing!" Matthew 22:37-39 says, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
- C. In verses 40-41, Jesus criticized the Pharisees for having false values (Dr. J. Vernon McGee).
 1. They boasted of their giving to the synagogue, but their hearts were far from the Lord (Luke 18:11-12).
 2. Jesus was not rebuking them for their giving to the synagogue.
 - a. He was rebuking them because they thought that their giving made them more spiritual and more worthy.
 - b. Dr. Walter L. Liefeld ("Luke", The Expositor's Bible Commentary) wrote that Jesus was implying that the Pharisees were quick to tithe but that they had failed to help the needy around them.
 3. The Pharisees thought that they were close to God, but their attitude towards Jesus showed everyone how wrong they were.
- D. In verses 42-45, Jesus pronounced woes upon the Pharisees because of their hypocrisy. The Pharisees were a distinct group from the scribes.
 1. They were quick to tithe (for show) but slow to show God's love to those around them.
 2. They liked to take the most important seats in the synagogue so that they could be seen and glorified by others. They were not interested in giving praise, honor, and glory to the Lord.

A Word to the Wise (Luke 11:37-54)

3. In general, the Pharisees were a bad influence before the people that looked to them for leadership.
- E. In verses 46-48, Jesus also had negative comments for the scribes.
 1. Dr. McGee wrote that the Pharisees were concerned with outward show (externalities), and the scribes were guilty of being insincere.
 2. The scribes did not care that they imposed heavy burdens on people.
 3. They did it by adding to the Law, when they should not have, and their additions placed greater burdens on the people.
 4. They were hypocritical in that they built sepulchres for the prophets that their fathers had killed. A sepulchre was a memorial.

Question: Jesus made His remarks to the religious leaders of that day. How do the leaders of our church compare? How do the religious leaders of this country compare? Is their greed upon church leaders? Do they place heavy burdens on their people?

- III. Jesus made His comments to religious leaders that should have known better. But they did not because they did not know the Lord in a personal way.
 - A. The Pharisees did not understand John 3:16. Of course, that verse had not yet been written, but they would not have understood if it had.
 - B. How do John 3:16, Acts 16:41, and I Corinthians 12:13 teach the truth about salvation?
 1. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - a. The key word in this verse is "in" (*eis*).
 - b. *Eis* means "into" and is the word used to express the action of a person moving through a door. Salvation is passing through the Door (John 10:7) and entering into a personal relationship with Him.
 2. Acts 16:31 says, "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
 - a. The key word in this verse is "on" (*epi*).
 - b. The illustration is that one trusts Jesus just like the chair that they sit on.
 3. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
 - a. When we get saved, we are baptized into the one Body.
 - b. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

IV. Next week's lesson: "Fearful, Yet Not Afraid" (Luke 12:4-12)