

Luke 11:37 - 41

37 Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table. 38 And 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.

I hear from time to time, in the wind, a little birdie, etc. that the reason visitors don't come back and the reason other folks have left and we don't see them any more is because I'm a little dark. I'm out of step with our culture.

Our culture, even in Tonopah Nevada, wants to be able to feel good. We want church to be upbeat. Comfortable. Friendly. Positive. Youthful. Welcoming. We could keep adding words. And those are all good words, I want that too.

And I want you to know that I'm not blind. I'm painfully aware of the median age of the faithful folks who keep coming regularly. And I might also tell you that all of a sudden, having newly become retired, the generous paycheck that you folks faithfully send each month has become important.

Before, I could have had a take it or leave it attitude, but now that is an important help for our household. The pressure to deliver a product worthy of some value just went up a notch.

I just wanted you to know that those are all things I'm thinking about. I know I wouldn't last 5 minutes in a different market. In the mega church world I'm a dinosaur that most folks don't think exists any more.

I'm committed to teaching this book one verse at a time and it turns out, most of this book is a stern warning to flee from the wrath of God who has pronounced condemnation on every soul that is guilty of sin.

What we who have met the Saviour and had our sins forgiven realize is that the other side of the coin, the stern warnings to sinners, is the warm embrace of a loving Saviour who brings delight and joy to our hearts, filling them with love for Him and all those who love Him.

There aren't that many feel good chapters here to work with. And these words we're committed to study together this morning are some of the sternest and darkest warnings in the whole Bible.

This happy-go-lucky Jesus skipping through the green fields of flowers just being positive and loving everyone in his path along his way is not the Jesus of the Bible. That's a scene from a flower child movie. It's a Beatles song. Love, love, love . . . but it isn't this Jesus.

Folks, we've got 13 more chapters of mostly conflict. These men who have invited Jesus to lunch are plotting His death. This isn't a friendly gathering of well-wishers looking for common ground to build positive relationships. This isn't a bonding session to build some mutual respect for all parties to move forward in their relationship building.

And by the way, while we're at it talking of love and positive things. Jesus is God. And God is love. And what Jesus says to these men is the most loving thing anyone could ever say to them.

These men are steeped in a false religion that is bankrupt and they are on a freight train coming down a mountain that has lost it's brakes headed for destruction. Jesus is pleading with them to re-consider. What He does at this gathering is Love Incarnate in action.

Some time in the late 1980's or early 1990's we started seeing the WWJD bracelets and necklaces and bumper stickers and plaques. The christian book stores were doing a good business in WWJD stuff.

And believe it or not, I have already taken a fair amount of accusatory

language and defamation because I hold to biblical positions which if you do, you're immediately a hater. Jesus was not a hater when He went in to have lunch with these men who were already conspiring to eliminate Him.

Jesus is not a hater when He pronounced woes on these men. That was love in action by Love with a capitol L Incarnate. I think this section of Luke 11 is exactly where we need to go to ask the question WWJD!

Or maybe we should change it up and have another run at the christian bookstores. WWTRJD? *What would the Real Jesus do?* Because I'm getting tired of being called a hater, and we haven't even gotten started on that business yet. So, lets jump in and see what the real Jesus would do.

First though, I need to give you a little more background to understand what it is that Jesus is in combat against with this group of people. The pharisee's as a group.

They were the ruling party in Israel at the time of Jesus. They were actually the most conservative group of Jews. The other party, the liberal party would have been the Saducee's.

And while the Saducee's were the equivalent of modern secularists that think the whole God thing is just a lot of made up religion, the Saducees believed they were a race of people descended from Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, they just didn't believe in the spiritual aspects. No miracles. No revelation from God beyond the books of Moses. No life beyond death. No resurrection. The Saducee's didn't even believe there was a heaven so no big deal.

The pharisee's believed in all of that. They were the literalists who could quote you from scripture. But here is their problem. They were a works righteousness system. They were working their way to heaven by attempting to keep the law.

They had developed a system, over time, that completely discounted the weightier things in God's law like justice and love and greed, and they had

tripled down on the showy trappings of religion that avoid the deep seated problem of indwelling sin.

They had replaced the law of Moses with thousands of rules concerning so-called sabbath keeping and tithing. It was 100% outward form. False religion in all of it's trappings. The traditions of the elders. Form, form form, nothing inside.

I have a confession to make. I often listen to christian music you tube's while I'm out working in my darkroom fiddling with my camera stuff or whatever it is I'm fiddling with, I'm a big time fiddler and tinkerer.

And the source of the you tubes is a church in the midwest that is totally liberal. I'm not talking in political terms when I say liberal. They are christian in name only. They don't believe the bible is authoritative. They don't believe in anything. But they have some incredible talent and the music they post is really beautiful.

I forwarded one piece I particularly liked to my daughter and she commented, that guy playing the piano looks like nothing could make him mad. I wrote her back, he's married to a man. I'll bet I could make him mad.

Anyways all that to say, the music is wonderful but it's talent coming from false religion. And all false religion has something in common. Since there is no real relationship with the real God in heaven, there is all this parading around. I like to listen, but on the occasions that I'm in the room where the Ipad is and see the pictures, it's always the same.

Always long colorful robing and marching around with ornaments and flags and pots of magic water and who knows what. It's a visual parade of people doing religious stuff dressed up in religious robes going through their religious rote's.

When the gay music leader is finished with the beautiful music, the woman preacher stands up and says nothing to nobody as far as heaven is concerned.

But the music is beautiful. It's false religion. Their god is not the God of the Bible. And so it goes.

All false religion is the same. Trappings and marching around and noise coming from people's mouths and bobbing up and down and genuflecting and robes and processions and gobbly de gook. All very religious. All disconnected from the God who is the creator who revealed Himself to us in His word.

There's nothing new under the sun. That's what these guys that asked Jesus to lunch were doing then, the same as the folks with the beautiful music are doing now. Lots of colorful religion. No relation to the God of heaven.

But here's the most frightening problem. These folks think God is up in heaven just as pleased as punch with them because of all the religiosity. That's the danger of false religious systems. You jump through hoops and perform your gobble-de-gook and parade around and mumble the right words in the right order and you think it makes it so you're OK. It doesn't.

The most dangerous place and the thing Satan spends the most time on is false religion that makes people think they're OK.

God in heaven has one formula for things being OK when you face Him one day. Recognition that sin dwells in your members and begging for His forgiveness and cleansing through His Messiah, the Lord, Jesus.

All of the worlds religions revolve around human achievement. God's religion revolves around divine accomplishment for helpless sinners.

So we circle back now to WWTRJD. What does divine love for these frighteningly lost religious people look like. Is it the squishy stuff that the world calls love these days? I'm OK, You're OK. Don't tell me I'm not OK and I won't tell you you're not OK. Is that what real love does? Let's find out.

37 Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with

him; and He went in, and reclined at the table.

We could guess all day about motives. Luke simply doesn't tell us. All he tells us is that this man is a card holding member of the party of the pharisee's. That's probably enough.

A man who belongs to a false religious system that is in direct and fierce conflict with Jesus of Nazareth who is able to surround Himself with multitudes of ordinary folks who previously were under the control of this party or group has asked Jesus to lunch.

Make no mistake folks. This is very political. The people, the ones that Bill O'Reilly likes to call "the folks". The ordinary unwashed masses, people like you and me, the regular folks of Israel want to make Jesus King.

He comes with health benefits and free food. They are plotting to force Jesus to be King. And this group that has invited Him to lunch are in direct conflict with Him. That much we know. Their power over the masses is under direct threat.

Was this a G8 summit of sorts? Something's up. I think we can surmise they didn't invite Jesus out of respect or any desire to learn from Him. The situation is charged *politically* and *religiously*. The two things we don't discuss at family gatherings so we don't scratch each others eyes out, right. Religion and politics.

Now you all know I have a great imagination and my special version where I can read between the lines. I can just see Peter and John watching this whole thing from outside, and John elbows Peter and says; He sat down before He did the ceremonial cleansing! And Peter is like, Oh boy. Here we go.

38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.

More background. The ceremonial cleansing that this false religion is

carrying out is not from any biblical requirement. Here's what drove it. They were convinced that they were 99.9% righteous, but what about if we were walking around somewhere and we inadvertently walked over some ancient grave we didn't even know was below our feet?

We could be unclean and we don't even know it. We're good on the 99.9% but we're gonna do this one more ceremonial cleansing just to be 100% righteous about whatever it is that we don't know about.

Jesus isn't playing their religious game. He sits down at the table and waits for the fun to begin. This incident is almost the same as the Matthew 15 deal where the disciples are enjoying a sandwich and this same religious group accuses them of being ceremonially unclean. Identical situation.

Mt. 15:1 Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, 2 "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 And He answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

The traditions of the elders is not the Law of God as given by Moses. It's the religious gobbly-de-gook of false religion. And Jesus tells them they set the important stuff aside and break God's real law in order to keep the phony stuff.

10 And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, "Hear, and understand. 11 "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."

15 And Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain the parable to us." 16 And He said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also? 17 "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? 18 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 20

“These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.”

Clean hands do not get you to heaven. Clean hearts are required and only God can accomplish that. It's humorous this morning that we are in a passage about washing hands when we have just doubled down on washing hands.

We don't do it to be spiritually clean. We understand there's no connection between cleansed hands and pure hearts. Keep washing your hands! It won't help you get to heaven, but it may spare you a serious disease that could kill you.

So back to our passage, this same group is at it again, accusing Jesus of being unclean because He doesn't do the religious baloney.

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.

External religion. False righteousness. As far as the onlooking folks can see these men are fastidiously religious. Incredibly religious. They just bristle with cleansings. Sparkling clean on the outside. But inside they are full of robbery and wickedness.

To covet what your neighbor has that you do not have is just as equivalent to robbery as lusting after his wife is equivalent to adultery. Clean on the outside, filthy on the inside. Nobody else can see the filth. Jesus can. He can look inside every heart.

This is far more dangerous than prostitutes and thieves that aren't trying to hide anything. Wide open and they know they're in trouble with a moral God. But these men have convinced themselves that God is pleased with them and accepts them as righteous.

Yet God through Isaiah says their righteousness is equivalent to open sewage. Soiled rags. Filthy soiled vile sewage.

Is. 64:6 *For all of us have become like one who is unclean,
And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;
And all of us wither like a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*

When you think God is accepting your effort and God says, no it's sewage, you're in a frighteningly dangerous place.

40 *“You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also?”*

Here is love in action. You fools! You idiots! Jesus takes the direct approach. He didn't read Dale Carnegie's book: how to win friends and influence people.

Our culture today has triggers. You have to tip-toe around and be incredibly careful in your speech so that you don't trigger someone by saying something that causes offense and harm.

Jesus walked in, sat down, didn't jump through their religious hoopla, and when they are triggered, Love Incarnate says, rather loudly I would imagine; You fools! You idiots. You moron's. *did not He who made the outside make the inside also?*

God looks at your inside. He isn't impressed with your sparkling clean hands when inside of you is murder and robbery and every kind of vile filth. They were guilty. We are guilty.

41 *“But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.*

How do you wake these guys up. Jesus tells them Clean on the outside only doesn't cut it. And then he chooses a single sin that is common to every one of these guys, as well as it is of me and you. *“But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.*

Charity is the greek word eleémosuné (el-eh-ay-mos-oo'-nay) translated as mercy sometimes, and alms in other places. It's a heart matter. It's as deep on the inside of a person as you can get. Inner motive. Are you a grasping materialist in order to spend every drop you can get on yourself.

Or does your heart give your stuff away. Really. Really?! Jesus goes for the throat, doesn't he. You can't look inside my heart and judge my motives, and I can't look inside your heart and judge yours. But Jesus can.

What man out there can withstand this question from Jesus and still say, if he's honest, my heart motive is not me, it's you. Anyone? What Jesus always does is drive us into a corner where we have to actually look at the filth within and cry out, God! If that's your standard, I stand before you guilty and beg for mercy.

That's Jesus formula for these Pharisees. Give everything away to every one who has less than you do, from your heart, from within. Then you're clean. It's an impossible standard. My fallen sinful heart can't do that. The standard is impossible for Adam's sons to meet. And that's the whole point. We are bankrupt. Bankrupt before God's standard. Sold into sin. Guilty.

Leviticus 19:18

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against any of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Jesus didn't even go for the more difficult of the old testament requirements. Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, strength. He goes for the easier. Vertical love and horizontal love. Love God, that's the vertical, and it's impossible for Adam's race to ever do. Love your neighbor. That's horizontal love. Also impossible to meet God's requirement.

Love my neighbors as myself. If I'm honest and look within . . . I'm a fail. I don't love my neighbors like I love myself.

Many of these men were filthy rich because they were doing the opposite of

what Jesus told them is God's requirement. God's standard. They were robbing their neighbors blind. Robbing the poor.

Religion had become big business for these rulers. The party of the pharisees. Big business charging ordinary common folks fees and making profits doing big business in religion. Money changers. Sacrificial animal sellers. Thieves. Robbers. But OH so religious.

And then they would sound the trumpets to bring all attention to themselves when they dropped a pittance coin into the alms coffers.

In Matt. 6:2 in the sermon on the mount, Jesus says; *"So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full."*

It's the same greek word that is translated "give to the poor". And it's the same heart issue that Jesus is charging these pharisee's with. God looks into your heart. If you're blowing trumpets and gaining maximum attention to your phony righteousness, your heart is wrong. God judges hearts. God judges inner motives. No one can withstand that judgement.

God says, yeah, you threw that penny into the bucket. Whoopee. You did it in order to purchase two pennies or 5 pennies worth of public acclaim. Your motive isn't the poor. Your motive is yourself, your own agrandissement.

You purchased \$5 worth of attention for the \$1 you put into the bucket. God knows your motives. That buck you put into the bucket to get 5 back just increased your unpayable debt to the creator. It added to your liability. God judges hearts.

We are born into this grasping sin of me, me, me, first and then maybe you, if I've got more than I need. Then you. Check out the toilet paper aisle.

Put 5 toys and 2 two year olds into a room and just stand back and watch. It

only takes seconds to arrive at the toy with the highest perceived value and a few more seconds for the fight to be on. Where did that come from. It isn't learned behaviour at that age. We're born with this sickness.

Jesus says; All you have to do is reverse that: and then you're clean. I can't reverse that!!

Oh, the brilliance of the Saviour! No man thinks this up. No mere man can look into every heart and say, just change this grasping selfish thing inside you that has been clawing everybody else's eyes out since you were 2 years old and pushed some other kid down and took his toy away. Just change that and you'll be OK. **I CAN'T CHANGE THAT!!!!!!**

Only God can walk into a room, and by not washing His Holy hands, proceed in about two sentences to condemn every other heart in the room. GUILTY!!

Love has at its core the desire to rescue the perishing. And there is no saving of the perishing when they do not understand their problem. Jesus said, I did not come into the world to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance.

In Luke 5:32 when Jesus called Levi, the tax gatherer and these same guys, these religious pharisee's who thought they were righteous were disgusted with Jesus for dining at a sinner's house;

*31 Jesus answered, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.
32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

Love compels Jesus to warn these who have a false righteousness that it's not enough. Love compels us to help people understand that we are all sinners, every one. *There is none righteous, no not one.* Before we can speak of the good news of forgiveness, love compels us to speak of the bad news of sin.

I don't think we can do that without doing some "triggering". WWTRJD?
"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?