

05.17.26

Luke

Chapter 11 - A Polarizing Wish

Communion or Confrontation (vs. 37-41)

Luke 11:37-41: Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table. When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal. 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. You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.”

Well, we want to look good, but we don't necessarily want to be good. That's a fundamental problem, isn't it? And strangely enough, as we come to this passage, we come to a passage in which, once again, Jesus is invited to

come eat with a Pharisee. Only Luke really records Jesus accepting any invitation to eat with a Pharisee. And Luke will record three particular events in which different Pharisees invited Him to eat with them, and He does. I think sometimes our thoughts are, "Well, Jesus just didn't like wealthy, prominent, powerful, educated people." That's not true. However, what I would say is that these things make it more difficult for people to humble themselves before the Lord and to come to a point of repentance. And that is being repeated over and over again in the Gospel of Luke. In fact, Luke will record a particular incident in Luke 12 in which a rich man tears down his barns and he builds bigger barns. His perception is, of course, that he's going to live on forever, "But this night, your very soul is going to be required of you."

Luke will give an interesting example in Luke 16 of the rich man and Lazarus. And the rich man dressed in fine purple clothes, and every day he passed by this poor wretch whose name was Lazarus. But then they die, and one goes into Abraham's bosom and the other into hell. What an interesting picture Luke gives of that.

Scripture tells us in Luke 18, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to be saved. And yet, the rich and the prominent and the powerful and the educated and the privileged are saved, especially as you read through the Gospels. And you read things like Nicodemus who comes to Jesus in the middle of the night or Joseph of Arimathea who was once again a prominent Sanhedrin, who is a part of the burial of Christ. Or even in the Gospel of Luke, you have the centurion, which of course is a powerful man over many soldiers who will demonstrate a faith that's far greater than anyone else in Israel, Jesus will proclaim.

You go into the gospel, or you go into the Book of Acts, and Luke will record various individuals like Saul, like Barnabas. Of course, Saul was part of the Sanhedrin. Barnabas was a wealthy individual who had quite a bit of property. Lydia, who had her own business. You have Aquila and Priscilla, who had their own business as well. So, Luke will actually record those particular individuals. And if you read in Luke 8, in which the wealthy women gave some support in ministering to Christ at that time.

The Bible was not against the wealthy, nor the prominent. But it is going to make it more difficult. It's very difficult to humble yourself when you have so many things or to even profess and confess that you have a need. I remember talking to one individual and I said, "Are you wanting to be saved?" He goes, "From what?" And of course, it ultimately comes down to our sin, doesn't it? And so, it's hard for a rich man to be saved.

We've come into a passage of which Jesus will receive an invitation to this Pharisee. And if you look with me in Luke 11:37, it starts off by introducing, as Luke will do, that this is conjoined with the different things that have been said prior to this. In other words, there's kind of a setup. This isn't just an event that happens that would be unattached to the things that he has been talking about. But they all come together in a conglomerate. And in this passage, he's letting us know that Christ has been making reference about the things that are important, what God really wants. And of course, the chapter starts off with prayer.

When you think about prayer, when you first started praying, did you ever stop to think and say to yourself, “Well, I wonder what God wants me to ask for?” I don't think a lot of people think that way. And yet, the disciples will start off that way. They'll go, “So, what are we supposed to say? How do we wish? What do we wish for?” I remember asking my brother, “What would you wish for if you had 3 wishes?” He goes, “Well, I'd wish for this, and I'd wish for this, and on the third wish, I'd wish for 3 more wishes.” And of course, we consume ourselves with the things and the desires that we have of our own heart. But don't you think that what God would have you wish for would be wiser than what you might wish for? Don't you think it would be a greater thing, the things that God would have you wish for, than the things that you would wish for? Now, after saying that, fasten your seatbelts. Because Isaiah is very clear, His ways and His way of thinking is not anything like yours. In fact, our way of thinking is so twisted that there are times that we actually think that we're doing good and we're not at all. We're actually doing the opposite.

And it's kind of revealed in this chapter in which, in the middle of the chapter, you have this woman that cries out, and if you look with me in Luke 11:27,

“While Jesus was saying these things...”

Once again, Luke always tying these things together.

“... one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.”

(Luke 11:28) But He said, “On the contrary...””

Which, of course, is opposite of what you're saying. In other words, “You're perceiving that blessings come because of motherhood. And I'm telling you, that's not where blessings come from.” Now, what's wrong with motherhood? I mean, God invented that. That's a wonderful thing. But that's not the source of blessing. Well, the question is, what is the source of blessing? If you look in the passage, the source of blessing is those who hear the word of God and do what He says. “Oh, wow. I hadn't thought about that.” And that's the point. There are things that you haven't thought about. And

when God says certain things, and tells you certain things in the word of God, which oftentimes may ruffle your feathers because of the fact that you don't want to do that; when He begins to tell you those things, blessing will come when you obey Him and you do the things that He tells you to do. It will oftentimes be very opposite of the way that you think totally. And you think about even the concept of motherhood and how wonderful it is. We always have more people show up on Mother's Day when we have a service. And I know why they're coming, for Mother. And they're thinking, "Well, I'm going to be blessed." And the answer is, yeah, you'll be blessed by your mom. But you're not going to be blessed by God. And so, blessings really come when you do what God tells you to do, when you put Him first. And yet, here again, it seems like such an innocuous thing. It seems like a good thing. Motherhood is such a wonderful thing. But we begin to focus on the wrong thing. And when we focus on the wrong thing, then we can't see the right thing. This is why Jesus will put this in the context of, you have a lamp and your eye lets in the light. Now, you've got to make sure that you're focusing on the right thing. Because if

you focus on the wrong thing, it's just going to be darkness. And Scripture will oftentimes refer to light as being synonymous with truth. Well, that makes sense, doesn't it? And that's why Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." And then He'll say, "I am the Light of the world." So, what we know is that truth is oftentimes obscured by our own way of thinking. And our own way of thinking is obscured because of what we focus on. And usually, what we focus on is selfish ambition or selfish desires, or even more specifically, we have what Scripture will call a "greedy eye." Now, the word is defined as a bad eye, but His point is that you're looking for the wrong things.

In fact, you'll see a better explanation of this if you turn with me to Matthew 6.

It says this in verse 19,

(Matthew 6:19) "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal."

Matthew 6:20) But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

(Matthew 6:21) for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

We're following Him so far.

(Matthew 6:22) “The eye is the lamp of the body...”

Well, that's the same thing you were seeing in Luke 11:34. So, what are we talking about? We're talking about your focus and the light that you're letting in. Are you letting in truth? I mean, clearly you don't want to hide truth, do you? You don't want to put it under a bushel?

“The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear...”

And once again, we emphasize what clarity meant, it just meant single-mindedness, or single devotion. In other words, if you're focused on God and doing His will, this is why when the disciples go, “So, how shall we pray,” Jesus goes, “Well, why don't you call Him your Father, focus on the relationship, and then you ask Him, ‘Can Your

kingdom rule here in my heart, in my life? Because I want Your standards to be #1 in my life.” You should be wishing for that in your life. But once again, usually, we have our own agenda; we have our own list; we check it twice, whatever. And so, we bring these lists before God, and God goes, “Have you ever thought about what's actually better for you? So, you should be asking for My kingdom to come, not yours.”

So, the passage reads this way, “If your eye is good, if it's clear, if it's single-minded, if you come to God, and you go, ‘Your kingdom come. And God, don't give me anything unless it keeps me close to You. So, therefore, give me this day what I need to survive today to stay close to You. And Lord, forgive me, help me to have a mind of forgiveness.’” I mean, are you wishing for the right thing? Is your eye clear? Are you focused on the right thing? More than anything else, do you want what God wants?

The passage reads this way,

(Matthew 6:22) “... if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.”

In other words, everything you do is going to be wonderful, joyful. God's going to bring good out of this. It may be difficult when you first start, but God is going to bring joy and goodness out of this. But you kind of think of Psalm 1, if you meditate on the word day and night, you'll be like a tree firmly planted by the waters, and you'll bring forth fruit in a season; whatever you do will prosper. And what he's talking about, prosperity comes from doing things God's way. Your life's going to be happier. You want to get out of depression? Then start doing things God's way. See? You want to get rid of your anxiety, you want to get rid of your anger, then do things God's way. See, you start doing things God's way, then the whole body is not only feeling good, but doing the right things. It affects the way that you live.

It then goes on and says in verse 23,

(Matthew 6:23) “But if your eye is bad...”

Now, in this setting, this particular word is actually going to be translated “greedy”. But if your eye is bad or greedy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is

the darkness? In other words, if you're just thinking about what you want and about what you want to get, how depressing is that? And once again, I just want to emphasize one of the reasons why people are so depressed, and not only depressed, but unable to see what is good because their focus is only on “me, me, me”. And the more you do “me, me, me,” the more miserable you are.

“But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

And then, if you look at verse 24, He ties in,

(Matthew 6:24) “No one can serve two masters...”

Well, now what is He talking about? Once again, the eye is greedy. So, what is He talking about? Riches, money.

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

(Matthew 6:25) For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life...”

Now, what does He mean by that?

“... as to what you will eat...”

Your clothing, the roof over your head, don't be anxious about those things. Why? Because it turns your focus to money, and you begin to get greedy. You say, “Well, what's wrong with that?” Well, the biggest problem is you stop loving people because you love money. And it's impossible for you to love God and to love money at the same time. And if you don't love God, you're not loving others.

I mean, this is one of the reasons why you turn in the Gospel of Luke, and He'll make mention of things such as this in which, well, strangely enough, if you look with me in Luke 16, this same phrase is going to be mentioned in verse 13.

(Luke 16:13) “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

Of course, materialism or money are selfish ambition.

If you look in verse 14,

(Luke 16:14) “Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money...”

And so, we have this kind of mentality.

And if you look in Luke as well, you have the example of the young man that comes to Christ. If you drop on down to Luke 12:13, it gives us this interesting incident in which one in the crowd cries out to the Lord. He says, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.”

Oh, okay. So, we're having like a family feud over money. Stop and just let this one sink in just a minute. Have you ever been upset somebody in your family over money? Your eye was bad. You were looking at the wrong thing. You weren't looking at God, and you weren't looking at the relationship that He focuses on. You were looking at darkness. And because of that, you became greedy.

Watch how it reads,

“Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.”

Luke 12:14) But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?”

(Luke 12:15) Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.””

Then He goes on and He tells this parable of a certain rich man.

It's hard to understand just how many times this whole thing of money comes into play. You know, I've oftentimes told people 1 Corinthians 6, “Why not rather be wrong? Let it go.” You have two people fighting over money. You go talk to one, you say, “Let it go.” “I can't let it go.” You go talk to the other, “I can't let it go.” Well, that's the reason why. But what they're saying is that they love money more than the relationship. The relationship's just not worth it, and that's the darkness that comes in. See? That infiltrates every decision that we make. That selfish mentality will literally come into your life and cause you to see things in an obscure way. “Do you see that wonderful person?” “No, I didn't see him. All I can

see is, they charged me too much on this bill.” What are you looking at? They can't see it.

This is the context, as you come into the passage, if you look with me in Luke 11:37, that we have a Pharisee that invited Jesus to the meal. Now, when we think of somebody inviting somebody to a meal, that's a pretty magnanimous thing, and how nice that is that they invited him to the meal. And let me just say this, this is probably why you don't want to invite your pastor over, because he might just tell the truth. So, don't invite the pastor to butter him up. It's not going to do any good. But what we see with Christ, what's very interesting to me, is He accepts the invitation; we know that He ate with tax gatherers and sitters too. (He seems to have a better time with them.) But every time He's invited to a Pharisee's house, which is a religious leader, Pharisee just means “separate ones”; so they saw themselves as separate in the world. They're so wonderful, they're so righteous; they kind of walk on a holy cloud. So, they're the ones that come and they see themselves as, “Well, I don't want to, you know, even come close to a Samaritan because

they're half-breeds and they aren't righteous like me.” So, these are the righteous people. These are the ones that wear the long robes and say the long prayers and do all these things to be seen by man, as Matthew 6 tells us. We come to this, and these Pharisees asking Jesus to dinner, your thought is, “Well, what an altruistic, magnanimous thing.” I mean, is it out of altruism and adoration, or is it out of manipulation and exploitation? And Jesus is going to nail it. They're using this to manipulate Him. He knows it. And it happens every time. Now, what's also interesting to me is, and I know that people perceive that if somebody invites you over, you're the guest. So, you need to acquiesce to whatever they're saying. That's not true. And you say, “Well, Pastor, how can you say that's not true?” Because Jesus didn't do it. So, we're to follow Him, right? Every time He's invited to a Pharisee's house, He corrects them. He rebukes them. And in some cases, He embarrasses them. And you would think, “You're the guest. You can't do that at somebody else's house.” And Jesus goes, “I just did.”

So, look at a passage with me in Luke 7. I'll just show you the three places in which this occurs. And once again, only Luke records these, which is very interesting to me. But Luke 7, if you look there with me, and you remember the particular instance because we went actually through the study. But in Luke 7, you have Him being invited to a Pharisee's house.

If you look at verse 36,

(Luke 7:36) “Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at the table.”

(Luke 7:37) And there was a woman in the city...”

Remember in this particular passage, the woman of the city comes and she begins to wipe His feet. And the Pharisee goes, “If You were really a prophet, you would know what kind of woman this was.” And Jesus goes, “Let Me tell you something. This woman hasn't stopped showing Me love from the moment that I walked in. You didn't wash My feet. You haven't helped Me at all.” I mean, He's rebuking the guy at his dinner table. Think about that. And then He turned and He said, “This woman

is loved more than you because she loves God more.” And you don't tell Pharisees that a woman on the street loves God more than them. You don't tell a Pharisee that. And yet, that's the way that He'll respond.

In Luke 11, He'll respond to them. And in Chapter 14, you'll have another one.

(Luke 14:1) “It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread...”

There's a certain man suffering from an illness, and the Pharisees are going, “Oh, let's see what He's going to do on the Sabbath.” And Jesus goes, “Let Me tell you something.” And it goes into the correction, the rebuke. He says, “If you had an ox that fell in the Sabbath, you would go rescue the ox, right?” “Jesus, you're being confrontational.” Everybody's afraid of being confrontational. Stop it. You have an obligation to point these people to truth. And their eyes are dark. I get it. Their eyes are dark, but yours aren't. And we proclaim the truth. Now, you shouldn't be mean. Why was Christ proclaiming the truth? Because He loved them. He cared

for these Pharisees. He wanted to see them coming to know the truth. But you don't demonstrate love by hiding the truth. No man lights the lamps and hides it. See?

So, Luke 11, we come into a point in which the Pharisees ask Him for lunch, and He goes in, He reclines at the table. And boy, I hope this is going to be amiable because the other two weren't.

(Luke 11:38) “When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.”

Now, the Scripture doesn't say anything about the Pharisee saying something, but I can just imagine the Pharisee gasped because it doesn't say that he said anything. But it just says that he was surprised. He wondered, “Why would He not do it? I mean, He's a rabbi; He's supposed to do our traditions that we do.”

(Luke 11:39) “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.”

Well, that's not very nice to say.

(Luke 11:40) “You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also?”

(Luke 11:41) But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.”

What is He talking about? He’s talking about a greedy eye. What's the greed? Well, be careful of all kinds of greed. There're all kinds of greed. And one of the ways that we demonstrate greed is by wanting recognition, by wanting position. These are things, of course, like Matthew 6:1 says, the Pharisees did all that they did to be seen by men. He says, “You don't want to do that.” In fact, Scripture would actually call that the leaven of the Pharisees because they were just about facade.

Look with me in Luke 12,

(Luke 12:1) “Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all...”

Now, you have all these people all around you. He turns to His disciples in Luke 12:1, and He says, “Above

everything else, I want to make sure that you understand something, that there's this thing called leaven of the Pharisees, which means that it spreads really fast and really easy. And that's this hypocrisy that comes up.”

Now, where does hypocrisy come from? And the answer is, hypocrisy comes up when you're faking things to get something. So, you're putting a mask up.

And so, in this particular passage, He says,

“... “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.””

Paul will say to Timothy that many literally sear their own conscience by means of hypocrisy. What does he mean by that? He means the more you fake it, the less you can be real. And after a while, right and wrong are no longer an issue. It's just about looking a certain way. I mean, you literally harden your heart by virtue of just playing a role. Why is it so important that you be real about the things that you do? Because not being real creates hardness. And you're only thinking about somehow gaining an advantage by virtue of doing what you're doing; you don't ever really do anything because you actually care for the

person. God forbid that you should care for them. God forbid that you should ask somebody over to dinner just because you love them. No, we're trying to get something out of this guy.

There's an interesting Proverbs, if you look with me, in Proverbs 23.

It says this,

(Proverbs 23:1) “When you sit down to dine with a ruler, Consider carefully what is before you,

(Proverbs 23:2) And put a knife to your throat If you are a man of great appetite.

(Proverbs 23:3) Do not desire his delicacies, For it is deceptive food.

(Proverbs 23:4) Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it.

(Proverbs 23:5) When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.”

Scripture is giving an interesting picture here.

And it goes on and says in verse 6,

(Proverbs 23:6) “Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, Or desire his delicacies;

(Proverbs 23:7) For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, “Eat and drink!” But his heart is not with you.”

Do you think that's the way the Pharisees are thinking? The very fact that they reacted the way that they reacted, because Jesus wasn't doing the superficial, was a sign that they are superficial.

There's a passage in Mark that probably defines this better, if you'll turn me to Mark 7.

It reads this way,

(Mark 7:1) “The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem,

(Mark 7:2) and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.”

I was listening to one Rabbi, and to put it bluntly, he said, “The Jewish washing of hands has nothing to do with getting the dirt off your hands.” He said, “The washing of

your hands is ceremonial and traditional, and it's a sign of reverence that we give to God.” That's what he said.

So, it says in verse 3,

(Mark 7:3) “(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders.”

It's a traditional thing. And it's a thing to be accepted.

There are stages in this washing. It's a pretty interesting program that you get involved in with the washing of your hands. I think in the Hebrew it's called “Netilat Yadayim.” That particular phrase is basically saying the cleansing by virtue of washing of hands or acceptance that you're lifting up... Paul will use the phrase to Timothy, “lifting up holy hands,” but he'll describe it as hands that aren't full of wrath and dissension. Of course, they'll lift up holy hands; they're clean before God. And because they washed a certain way, they come before God and they go, “They're clean.” And they actually would hold their hands before their faces after it's all done. They have a particular pot, and it's called a two-hand pot. So, the pot that they use has to be a designated kind of pot. In fact,

even the washing and the cleansing of the pot has to be done in a certain way. Then when you pick it up, you pick it up with your right hand, and you give it to your left hand because the left hand is subservient. So, the left hand is the one that pours over the right hand first, and the right hand gets washed first. And then you wash it 3 times, and you turn your hand around every time you wash. You do that 3 times. Then you do it with your left hand. You do that 3 times. And as you do, you begin to say a prayer.

You want to hear the prayer? I thought you might. The prayer reads this way, "Blessed are You, Lord, King of all the universe, who sanctifies us by Your commandments and commands us to wash our hands." Thus they lift up their hands, and fundamentally, like Matthew 6 says, it's like the almsgiving; they give alms; they announce their alms. This is why they could tell that He hadn't washed His hands. They didn't look at His hands because once again it has nothing to do with clean; they didn't see Him go through the ceremony. And by virtue of this, then He's not falling in line with the way they think, and they're

greedy for power; they're greedy for control. Beware of all kinds of greed. There's all kinds of greed. So, Jesus begins to deal with this. And of course, it's very interesting in this particular text that what follows this is that their traditions in some way have dishonored their parents. And so, they say, "Why don't You follow our traditions?" And He goes, "Why do you transgress the commandments of God by your traditions? Because you use a tradition to not give your parents money." And of course, He goes into the whole concept of "corban." They pronounce corban over all the possessions and they go, "Well, I've given it to God, so I can't give it to you. Mom and Dad, sorry, I feel so bad that you don't have any money, but I gave it to God." Of course, they can use it for anything they want to. But nevertheless, the point is that their eyes are greedy, and the way that they do things is just for selfish reasons.

So, you come to the passage, and all of this has to do with the outward performance, and why the outward performance? Well, because with outward performance, you don't have to be genuine, you don't have to be real,

you don't have to be concerned for people, and thus you don't even have to be sacrificial to people. You can walk up to somebody, as James will say, and you can say to somebody that's hurting or starving, "Be warm, be filled, be clothed," and walk away, "I just blessed that person." Or you can say, as a woman from the audience, "Blessed is the womb that bore you," but you don't have to do anything good or bad. You just have to be. You just have to say. We live in a world in which people just say things. It's what's called "lip service", and they do outward manifestations. It's just called a facade.

If you look with me in Isaiah 29, this is exactly what Jesus will repeat within this setting as well as many other settings in which He reveals that the children of Israel were blind, and they couldn't understand what God was talking about. You ever open up the word of God, and you go, "That's just too hard to read." And God says, "Because you don't have the Light in you." Because this isn't an academic book. It's a spiritual book. And the Spirit of God reveals these things to us. That's what 1 Corinthians 2

says so clearly to us. It's the Spirit of God that reveals these things.

If you look in Isaiah 29, it reads this way,

(Isaiah 29:13) “Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their words

And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me,

And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

(Isaiah 29:14) Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people...”

Obviously, this is a people without discernment.

If you look in verse 11,

(Isaiah 29:11) “The entire vision will be to you like the words of a sealed book, which when they give it to the one who is literate, saying, “Please read this,” he will say, “I cannot, for it is sealed.”

(Isaiah 29:12) Then the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying, “Please read this.” And he will say, “I cannot read.””

The point of the matter is that you're not going to be able to understand the things of God if you're looking for the wrong things. You open up the word of God, and you go, "Well, I want it to say something like I can have a lot of money and I can keep it. Where's that text where I can keep all my money? Where's that text that says I don't have to share? What's that text that says that I can take my brother to court and sue him? Where's that text that says..." No, that's the text that says you can't. But you can't find that one because it's like a closed book to you. Because all the things that God wants you to know, you don't want to read because your eye is focused on other things. The only thing you can think about is, "Tell my brother to give me my inheritance." That's the only thing you can think of. And the more you focus on that, the darker everything gets. Everything's obscured. I've tried to share truth with people that are focused on the wrong thing. You can't. It's like Scripture says, it's like talking to a drunk man. They're just not sober enough to see the things that are there. And all the way through, what we understand is that people have ulterior motives, they

have ways of thinking, and you've got to change your way of thinking. This is called repentance.

Go back to Luke within the passage, of course, as Jesus then tells them, strangely enough,

(Luke 11:40) "You foolish ones..."

What a strange word to use in verse 40, "foolish". It's basically saying, "You without a mind." And His point is that "You do not have the ability to understand the things that are there." And His focus is really giving the differentiation between that which is outside and that which is inside.

Remember 1 Samuel 16:7, where God reminds Samuel, "Man looks at the outward appearance; God looks at the heart." At what point did we ever forget that? Because, let me just put this in a very simple way. You come and you get baptized, but just because you got baptized doesn't mean that you followed Christ. You did something outward. But if you didn't do that with the heart, if the inside wasn't clean, you weren't washed. There wasn't a cleansing that took place. I mean, it doesn't matter how

many times you get dipped or how long we hold you underwater. It's not going to get any better.

John 7:24, Jesus says, "Don't judge according to appearance."

Paul writes this in 2 Corinthians 5:12, "You take pride in appearance and not in heart."

Every time you walk into these doors, what we're asking you to do is to get your heart right. And I know I've shared with you probably 1,000 times, to me, that's the biggest battle of my life. Because I know that God is going to judge the motives and intent of my heart. I mean, the deeds, He can do. He can do all that. He wants your heart. The eyes of God are searching to and fro. And I have people coming up to me all the time telling me something about something that they're doing or something that they want me to know. And I just say it in my head, "You don't have to convince me. I'm not the judge." You have to convince God. And the only way that you can convince Him is you've got to have a genuine and sincere heart. And look, I wrestle with this. I mean, how many times have I told my wife? I said, "I have no problem doing the

right thing. But my heart in doing it, that's the thing I wrestle with." And that's the very thing that God wants. If we concentrate on the external appearance, if we focus on all those things, that's a heart of greed. Because we're only concerned about how we look, and we're only concerned about status. And that's a dark place to go. You'll never be real. And quite frankly, all your relationships will never be real. You wonder, "Why don't I have deep relationships?" I can tell you why you don't have deep relationships, because you've obscured the relationship and caused the callousness to come in because you only did everything by fakery. And look, don't think for one moment that people can't tell. I mean, you might be able to fake them for a while. But after a while, I mean, there are certain people that come and say, "Pastor, you're so wonderful, you're so wonderful." Then I watch what they do, and I go, "I don't care if I'm wonderful. It doesn't help that person." You know? Besides the fact, I know I'm not wonderful. But the blessing comes when you're sincere and you do what God says, and you do it with a real heart. Let the Light come in. Let it reveal the secrets. It's one of the reasons why we so

embrace the woman in the well. You want to know why we love her so much? Because she's honest. And this is the reason why Jesus comes to her. I mean, here's this Samaritan woman. She doesn't even know where to worship, for crying out loud. She's not even worshiping in the right place. She's worshiping up in the Samaritan mountains instead of in Jerusalem. And she's even arguing with Jesus about it. But Jesus is not concerned about that. When He begins to tell her, "Look, you've had five husbands and the guy you're living with is not your husband," she goes, "Wow, that's really cool." And instead of getting angry, you know, a lot of us would be defensive, and we'd just put up these walls, and we'd go, "How terrible, He's revealed all my sins." And He just goes, "Yeah, that's what I do." Every time He walks in the room, that's what He does, He reveals your sins. But when you go, "Thank You for revealing my sin," He goes, "Come. You can be forgiven. Go and sin no more." And how wonderful that is.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You, and we give You thanks for Your word and for the realization that we play these games in our lives. We try to look a certain way, and it really is a kind of greediness that sets in that is only concerned about how we look and how we can in some way impress people rather than how we can actually care for people and help them. We have not the heart of our Savior, Who came to die for the lost, but the heart of the greedy. Lord, change the way that we think, change our hearts, as only You can do.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, we're asking you, if you've never received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, it is upon doing that His Spirit comes within you and literally changes your want-to's. But He does far more than that. He changes the way you see things. And truth is that which is embraced above all else. And the evidence of sin and the exposure of sin in your life is no longer a bad thing, but a thing that you embrace and are thankful for, because now that's something that can be gotten out of your life, and now you can go on living. With your heads bowed, just talk to God about these things,

and be real with God. Don't let hypocrisy harden your heart, cause you to be callous and indifferent towards the truth.