

Luke 11F

- As we have been marching through Chapter 11 of Luke, we're watching as Jesus confirms His rejection and moves to the next stage of his ministry
 - There are consequences to this rejection – immediate consequences and long term consequences
 - The long-term consequences are probably obvious to us all
 - When the Pharisees rejected the work of the Holy Spirit through Christ and blasphemed Him, they were assuring themselves judgment
 - And not just them, but anyone from that generation who followed their example, their leadership
- The short-term consequences, however, are a bit more subtle.
 - First, Jesus alters His teaching style
 - This is more difficult to see in Luke's gospel, but it's very obvious in Matt's gospel
 - In Matt's gospel, the rejection of Christ occurs in Chap 13 (vs Chap 11 of Luke)
 - In the chapters of Matt's gospel leading up to Chap 13, Jesus teaches in a very open style
 - He sent His disciples out proclaiming the arrival of the kingdom of God (Luke 9)
 - When Jesus teaches the crowds, He says things like:

[Matt. 11:27](#) "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*."

[Matt. 11:28](#) ¶ "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

[Matt. 11:29](#) "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."

- But after the Pharisees reject Jesus in Chap 13 of Matt, from that point forward, Jesus only teaches in parables

- He begins to hide his teaching from the Pharisees and crowds, choosing to teach the apostles only
- So the first short term consequence of the rejection is Jesus veils the Message of the Gospel from the nation of Israel, thus confirming their rejection
 - A second short-term consequence can be seen in today's teaching
 - Jesus rejects the leadership of the Pharisees and lawyers and declares them to be illegitimate spiritual leaders
 - We'll see this in today's scriptures

[Luke 11:37](#) ¶ Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee *asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined *at the table*.

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

[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.

[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.

[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.

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

[Luke 11:44](#) "Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over *them* are unaware *of it*."

- At the conclusion of Jesus statements to the crowd, He's invited to eat with a Pharisee
 - This was a very crafty move by these leaders
 - To the crowd, it appeared they were showing Jesus respect by inviting Him into their homes and sharing a meal with him
 - But in reality they were really just trying to figure out what made Jesus tick and how to either bring Him down or bring Him to their side
- Luke tells us that the Pharisees were immediately bothered by the fact that Jesus didn't bother to wash ceremonially before the meal
 - What was this ceremonially washing all about anyway?

- Well, as the name implies it was a ceremony
 - It was not merely washing hands to remove germs – they didn't even know about germs or the transmission of disease
- The custom that had grown up in the Jewish culture was to engage in a ceremonial washing procedure before eating
- Mark describes it this way in his gospel

[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;

[Mark 7:4](#) 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.)

- Notice that Mark says this was the tradition of the elders
 - This was not a part of the law – meaning this was not God's rule
 - Like most of the Pharisees rules, it was a man made rule
 - It's purpose was to demonstrate piety
 - But more specifically, it was a symbolic way to demonstrate that the person was sinful and required cleansing
 - In fact, the word used here for washing is baptizo in the Greek
 - It reflects the same sense of washing away spiritual impurities
 - This was something the elders had established because it offered them an opportunity to demonstrate righteousness through their works
 - It had become an act of piety, a work of the flesh that was not accompanied by any true repentance or desire to appeal to God
- So when the Jewish religious leaders invited Jesus to eat with them, they naturally Jesus to follow the customs of the day
 - Jesus promptly ignores the ceremonial washing and proceeds to recline at the table

- The Pharisees look upon him in amazement and wonder why He didn't wash
 - So, why didn't Jesus wash?
 - Was He just trying to provoke the Pharisees?
 - Perhaps Jesus avoided participating in the washing merely to bait the Pharisees into accusing Him?
- The answer would be no, that's not the reason
- The reason has to do first with the fact that the practice is a rule of men, not of God, and as such held no value spiritually
 - God provided ceremonial cleansing under the Law at various times and for various reasons
 - For example:

[Ex. 30:17](#) ¶ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

[Ex. 30:18](#) "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it.

[Ex. 30:19](#) "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it;

[Ex. 30:20](#) when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire *sacrifice* to the LORD.

[Ex. 30:21](#) "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations."

- The primary reason ceremonial washing exists in the Law is to remind men that they stand before God unclean and in need of purification for their sin
- But the washing the Pharisees are doing here in Luke 11 was not one prescribed by God,
 - This practice had originated by elders, we're told, and for self-serving reasons
 - It was not being used by the Pharisees to remind themselves of their impurities, but rather they were using it demonstrate to others their piety

- It was an gratuitous act – it was an effort to look pious outwardly without actually being pious inwardly
 - The Pharisees were famous for this kind of superficial practice (praying on street corners)
- So Jesus properly ignored this custom, because it was not honoring to God
 - The practice actually stood in opposition to God in that it glorified works over faith
- But there is a second reason Jesus would ignore this ritual in this particularly situation
 - As the text demonstrates Jesus is about enter into a discourse with the Pharisees over the issue of outward appearances of a man versus the inward reality
 - And in this context, Jesus sends a clear message to this group by His actions
 - Unlike them, His outward actions are a perfect mirror of His inward nature
- What do I mean?
 - Well, remember why God instituted the idea of ceremonial washing
 - It was a symbolic reminder of the need for sin to be removed
 - It didn't actually remove the person's sin, but it stood as an outward sign of repentance on the part of the person
 - And it was an acknowledgement that they were unworthy to approach God apart from His power to forgive – to cleanse – sin
 - Now take Jesus

[2Cor. 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

[1John 3:5](#) You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is **no sin**.

- Jesus was without sin of his own

- And having no sin, there would be no point for Jesus to wash ceremonially in this way
- If Jesus did wash, it would be a contradiction
 - His outward actions of washing away sin ceremonially would stand in contradiction to the inward truth that He in fact had no sin to wash away
- Instead, Jesus chose to act in a consistent manner
 - Since He had no sin inwardly, there was no point in washing away sin outwardly
- Now consider the Pharisees
 - They wash outwardly but without a contrite and repentant heart
 - They wash with a prideful expectation that their self-righteousness would be acknowledged by men
 - They are communicating to the world that they are sinful and in need of God's forgiveness
 - Because if that was truly what was on their hearts, their actions would reflect that belief

[Luke 6:45](#) "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks **from** that which fills his **heart**."

- And the Pharisees are consistently seen in scripture demonstrating evil thoughts and intentions, revealing the nature of their hearts
- And yet while their hearts remain evil and unrepentant, they scrupulously engage in outward washing
- It's a completely hypocritical practice, and Jesus refuses to join them in their hypocrisy
- In verse 39-44, Jesus responds to their hypocrisy
 - It's especially noteworthy that He uses the word Woe, and specifically they Jesus uses it three times against the Pharisees
 - The number 3 in Scripture is the number of the Godhead

- It always represents the person of God or His divine action
 - And Woes are by definition divine judgment
- So Jesus is declaring God's divine judgment on these men, not only for their personal rejection of Jesus
 - But also for how they have brought down a generation of men and women with themselves
- He calls them hypocrites
- He accuses them of worrying about tithing to the point they measured out a tenth of their garden herbs, while neglecting charity and the needs of others
- He says they love the honor they get from the people for their outward acts of righteousness
- And He calls them tombs that people unknowingly walk over
 - What Jesus means is that coming in contact with a tomb defiled a Jew
 - And yet these men were so corrupting in their influence, that they were defiling unsuspecting crowds who followed their teaching
 - And in that, they were like hidden graves that defiled people who came into contact with them
- Most insightful of all is the ridiculous picture Jesus paints of their hypocrisy using cups
 - Imagine young people that you have volunteered to do the dishes after dinner
 - And after you finish, you invite the parents to come inspect your work
 - As the parents return to the kitchen they immediately notice all the dishes from dinner sitting on the counter, stacked neatly and ready to be put away
 - They sparkle they're so clean
 - And they begin to praise the work of the children

- But as the parents approach the stacks of dishes to help put them away, they are surprised to notice that inside every bowl and cup are the remnants of the meal
 - There's uneaten food inside every bowl, there's a swallow of milk in the bottom of every glass
 - What would the reaction of the parents be to this discovery?
- What holds true for cups and dishes is also true for human beings spiritually
 - Its possible for men in their own effort and by their own hand clean up the outside
 - We can make ourselves look righteous to the world
 - When viewed from a distance, we can give others the illusion of righteousness
 - When they don't know us very well
 - When we never let down our guard
 - We can act well enough to fool anyone if it's important to us
 - But the best we can hope to achieve is an outward type of cleanliness
 - It's an act, it's merely useless works
 - It gains the praise of men, but the praises of men can't gain us anything on the day we stand before our creator and give account for our life spent on earth
 - Lipstick on a pig
- But unlike the cups, we can't gain access to our inside
 - And the Pharisees had never experienced this inward change
 - They were still filthy inside – full of robbery and wickedness
 - Likewise, I can't clean up myself spiritually
 - I can't change my own nature without the work of the Holy Spirit in my heart

- The only way to clean up a dirty vocabulary is not to brush your teeth but to cleanse your heart
- I will forever be a pig until the day that God, by faith, changes my nature
- I become a new creation in Christ

- And the old has been put to death and the new has arrived,

[2Cor. 5:17](#) Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

- Clean people before saving them...resist the urge

- In response to Jesus' cutting comments, the lawyers seated around the table pipe in

[Luke 11:45](#) ¶ One of the lawyers *said to Him in reply, "Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too."

[Luke 11:46](#) 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.

[Luke 11:47](#) "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and *it was* your fathers *who* killed them.

[Luke 11:48](#) "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build *their tombs*.

[Luke 11:49](#) "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,

[Luke 11:50](#) so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation,

[Luke 11:51](#) 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.'

[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."

[Luke 11:53](#) ¶ When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects,

[Luke 11:54](#) plotting against Him to catch *Him* in something He might say.

- My guess is that that lawyer is wishing he had just kept quiet, don't you?

- Actually, the lawyer's comment was intended to distance himself from the Pharisees

- Though the two groups were distinct, they often acted alike
 - And Jesus doesn't let the lawyer disassociate himself from the criticism
- This section is actually the culmination of Jesus' condemnation of the religious leaders in Luke following the official rejection of Jesus ministry
 - In fact, if you were to scan your eyes ahead in the Bible to Chap 12, beginning in verse 1 and continuing verse 10, you'll notice that Jesus begins to go over the heads of the Pharisees and speak directly to the crowds
 - Warning them that they must believe in Him or they will answer for their unbelief
- So here in Chap 11 Jesus is completely His statement of condemnation of the leaders
 - Like with Pharisees, Jesus pronounces three woes on the lawyers
- The first woe Jesus pronounces comes because the lawyers placed burdens on the people
 - In how they interpreted the Law of Moses, the lawyers created countless rules
 - Needless, senseless rules that had no spiritual value whatsoever
 - More importantly, they had the opposite effect
 - They discouraged people, they gave a sense of helplessness
 - They created guilt leading to hopelessness
 - And to make matters worse, the lawyers never even attempted to keep the very rules they lay on others
- There is an important lessons in this for every Christian
 - As believers, we aren't like these lawyers – who were not faithful men
 - But we can make a similar kind of mistake in dealing with our Brothers and Sisters in the Lord
 - We can create rules that have no value for righteousness

- We can make the mistake of hearing God speak to us about something He wants us to do in obedience to Him
- But then we go too far and assume God wants everyone to do the same thing
- If we continue down that road trying to take away another Christian's liberty according to our own rules, we are acting like these lawyers
 - Burdening men needlessly
 - We need to take great care anytime we declare a rule for living that is not specifically given to us in scripture
 - And that includes taking the OT law and applying it selectively to Christians, since we know the Law of Moses no longer applies to those in Christ – we have died to the law (Rom 7:4)
- Jesus' second Woe on the lawyers credits them with persecuting the prophets to their deaths
 - In past centuries, God sent prophets to the nation of Israel to point out their sin and chastise them back to the path of obedience
 - And in their day, the prophets were persecuted and murdered by the same kind of men as the modern-day lawyers of Jesus day
 - And yet it was the lawyers who took great pride and public praise for maintaining the prophets tombs
 - How ironic that the lawyers would take it upon themselves to preserve the prophets' tombs even though they were exactly the kind of men who would turn their backs on the prophets were they alive today
 - In fact, they are turning their backs on Jesus even now
- To prove their hearts to be false, Jesus foretells how God will send new prophets in their day
 - And just like their fathers did in earlier generations, these lawyers are going to persecute these coming prophets – which we know to be the apostles

- And in their hypocrisy and hatred of the truth, they will bring judgment on their own heads,
 - In fact, we are told they will be charged with the death of all the prophets from the first martyred prophet, Abel to the last martyred prophet, Zechariahs
 - In past generations as the nation had persecuted and murdered the prophets, God had withheld his judgment against the nation for those sins
 - But now at the rejection of His Son, God would bring his stored wrath down upon this generation for the death of all prophets
 - A wrath that culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70
- And if we're tempted to think we can't fall into this mistake, think again
 - We may not be murdering prophets, but don't we engage in character assassination of men who speak God's truth
 - Do we always respect what they say and do it?
 - Do we receive their correction with a teachable heart?
 - Or do we shut our ears and stick to our pointless rules?
- Finally the sixth and last woe is the climax
 - It is the chief sin
 - The lawyers (and the Pharisees as well) took away the key of knowledge
 - What is the key Jesus is talking about?
 - The knowledge Jesus is referring to is the knowledge of the truth
 - The knowledge of the Messiah, and of Jesus specifically
 - And so what is the key to that knowledge?
 - Well, considering the role of the lawyer – to interpret the law and Torah generally
 - Yet they distorted the truth of the Word
 - They turned it into a burden that weighed men down

- So the key that the lawyers took away was the true meaning of the Torah – of God's word given to Israel
 - By robbing the Jewish people of the truth of their scriptures, they have taken away the key of knowledge
 - After all, God had given the nation of Israel the scriptures so that they might know of a Messiah and know Who he was
 - And in taking away that key, they doomed their generation
- Jesus adds that they never entered into that knowledge themselves and they hindered those who were entering
- There is nothing more important to God than His word
 - And what we do with it, what we believe about it will determine everything for each of us in eternity
 - Rather than hinder ourselves and others in how we see and use the Word, let's make sure we always place it above anything else we devote ourselves to in ministry and in our Christian walk