

# The Inside and the Outside

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[ 0 : 00 ] There are few things that people hate more than hypocrisy. When people say one thing and yet do another or say another.

! Politicians are a familiar example of this.! So often they make promises of what they will do when they're elected. And then once they're elected, they break those promises.

Or sometimes even worse, they'll get caught doing something completely opposite to what they promised. Well, even worse than the stench of political hypocrisy is that of religious hypocrisy. Many times people who call themselves Christians or even pastors have been caught red-handed in an ongoing pattern of immoral behavior.

Just as an example of this, you might have heard of this guy, Rabbi Zacharias. He was internationally known as a defender of the Christian faith. He wrote books.

[ 1 : 12 ] He spoke all over the place in churches, schools, universities. And then it came out that for at least 10 years leading up to his death, possibly longer, he'd been living in gross sexual immorality and had committed numerous acts of sexual abuse.

Well, he's one of the big stories out there. But on a smaller scale, many people have smelled firsthand the stench of a local Christian hypocrite.

It might look like someone who's always condescending and critical of others. It might look like someone who's super concerned about moral purity or about believing just the right things.

But everybody knows that they have little compassion or concern for anybody but themselves. And it might show up just in the kinds of comments that they make or the things that they say.

And so people have been quick to conclude that Christians are a bunch of hypocrites. Maybe you've heard that said. But what might come as a surprise to many is that Jesus himself had a bone to pick with hypocrites.

[ 2 : 39 ] In our journey through the Gospel of Luke, we've seen how Jesus had a lot of attention from the religious groups. The Pharisees and the religious law teachers.

They tried to label him as a blasphemer. They saw him spending time with the questionable in society. A group of tax collectors and their friends.

And they tried to dirty Jesus' reputation by spreading news that Jesus hangs out with tax collectors and sinners and drunkards. They tried to call into question whether he was really devoted to God.

You know, we Pharisees, we fast and pray often. But we don't see your disciples doing that very much. They accused him of failing to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Working on the Sabbath when he was healing people. They were incensed that he pronounced forgiveness to a repentant prostitute.

[ 3 : 46 ] Who they felt should have been stoned to death. And eventually, this sort of antagonism from the Pharisees just keeps on building.

We've heard just recently about how it came to the point where they accused him of casting out a demon by the power of Satan. Earlier in this chapter.

We read in Luke 6 verse 11 that the Pharisees were furious. And they began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

And it's here in chapter 11 that things really come to a head. Between Jesus and the religious leaders. Jesus is invited over to a Pharisee's house.

And Jesus just unleashes on them. He calls them out for their hypocrisy. Let's read what happened here in Luke 11 starting in verse 37.

[ 4 : 50 ] When Jesus had finished speaking. A Pharisee invited Jesus to eat with him. So he went in and reclined at the table.

Now that might be surprising. If you. Just one moment ago they were saying. Jesus you're in league with Satan. And the next minute they're inviting him over for dinner.

There's something fishy about this. And we know from later on in this passage. That this is not just one Pharisee. But several Pharisees.

And religious. Law teachers. Who are present at this meal. And so with the tensions as high as they are. This is going to be an interesting meal.

Let's keep going. But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed. That Jesus did not first wash. Before the meal. So Jesus hardly even gets to sitting down.

[ 5 : 50 ] And he's already offended them. Now of course we read this from our modern viewpoint. And we might even be surprised ourselves. That Jesus didn't wash his hands.

Before the meal. But this wasn't the same kind of washing. That we're used to. Back then. Mark actually tells us in his gospel. That the Pharisees did not eat.

Unless they gave their hands. A ceremonial washing. Holding to the tradition of the elders. And this ritual washing. They would dip their hands in a bowl of water.

It wasn't about hygiene. It was actually about maintaining ritual purity. Religious purity. As if somehow being out in the marketplace. Could contaminate you.

Because you'd be coming into contact with the unclean. And so just in case. We're going to do this washing before the meal. So that when we put our hands to our mouths.

[ 6 : 47 ] We're not contaminating in here. Well Jesus decides to forgo the ritual. And the Pharisee. And probably all of his guests.

Just sort of express their surprise. And their amazement. Like who does this guy think he is? He doesn't need. To cleanse his hands. After being out among the unclean masses.

Well this turns out to be the spark that sets Jesus off. And truthfully. Jesus knows that he hasn't just been invited over.

For a nice meal with the Pharisees. And so. This is where it's just. We're going to cut right to it. And Jesus. Starts to speak. Verse 39.

Then the Lord said to him. Now then. You Pharisees. Clean the outside. Of the cup. And dish. But inside.

[ 7 : 44 ] You are full of greed. And wickedness. You foolish people. Did not the one. Who made. The outside.

Make. The inside. Also. So he just tears into them. You Pharisees. Are a bunch of hypocrites. You're all concerned with. Outward appearances.

While on the inside. You guys are full of greed. And wickedness. He says. You're like a guy. Who just washes the outside of the dish.

So that it looks good. On the outside. To everybody who sees. But then on the inside. Of the bowl. It's filthy. It's nasty. And he calls them fools.

He says. You guys are a bunch of fools. You think God only cares. About the external. How foolish. God. God sees.

[ 8 : 41 ] And cares about. Who you are. On the inside. Just as much as. The outside. You might be able to fool others. Who are looking at you.

Watching you. But you can't fool God. God. Verse 41. Jesus says.

Now as for what is inside you. Be generous to the poor. And everything will be clean for you. Another translation. Says it this way. But give from your heart.

To those in need. And then everything will be clean for you. the Pharisees were known for putting on a show with their gifts they weren't giving from the heart because they actually cared about people Jesus alludes to this another time when he tells his followers not to be like some who when they give to the needy they announce it with trumpets so that they can be seen by others and honored by others Jesus basically saying you give to the needy to look clean and polished and good on the outside well you might fool other people but you can't fool God don't worry about the external and what other people think or see worry about the inside what's in your heart let your gifts your generosity your kindness your compassion come out of your heart give out of that and then everything will be clean for you the externals will be clean because they flow from a good and clean and right heart and then from here Jesus just digs in even more woe to you Pharisees because you give God a tenth of your mint rue and all other kinds of garden herbs but you neglect justice and the love of God you should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone that word woe

basically means warning or tragedy

God's judgment is coming you're in deep trouble with him why? Jesus says because you're so meticulous as to give a tenth not just of your wages but even of your herbs from your herb garden can you imagine that?

[ 11 : 39 ] one mint leave for the Lord nine for me one for the tithe nine for me they're so meticulously focused on that and Jesus says yet you neglect justice you neglect the love of God itself they've missed the whole point again you might be fooling others with this sort of appearance of righteousness but you can't fool God they were doing all kinds of religious things including this hand washing things that have the appearance of righteousness but it wasn't out of a love for God he keeps going woe to you Pharisees because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplace just a warning about pride you love the attention from other people you're proud you're arrogant in your heart it's all about you he keeps going woe to you because you are like unmarked graves which people walk over without knowing it according to Old Testament law touching a dead body made you unclean and God had given a sort of set of purity laws they weren't to touch dead bodies and if they did if they had to they would be unclean and that meant they wouldn't be able to go to the tabernacle or the temple until they'd waited a certain period of time so there was purity laws that God gave but the Pharisees had gone way beyond this they had added all kinds of man-made laws and rules this washing of hands was one of them they would cleanse the dishes and the utensils in their house and go on and on with it but Jesus basically says forget the cleansing of your hands you yourselves are as unclean as a grave or a tomb with dead bodies inside and what's worse he says you're basically infecting and defiling other people who are following you without them even realizing it you guys think you're guides to the blind to lead them to heaven to the path of life but in reality your false religion is leading them into death to the grave then one of the experts in the law answered him teacher when you say these things you insult us also

Jesus replied and you experts in the law woe to you because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them woe to you because you build tombs for the prophets and it was your ancestors who killed them so you testify that you approve of what your ancestors did they killed the prophets and you build their tombs because of this God in his wisdom said I will send them prophets and apostles some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary yes I tell you this generation will be held responsible for it all

Jesus just lets them have it his denunciation could hardly be stronger maybe the religious lawyers thought that they were kind of separate from the Pharisees but they were taking offense at the things Jesus was saying to the Pharisees and Jesus just turns it right on them as well you think it's just them in danger of God's judgment woe to you too all your extra rules and laws and traditions they haven't helped people obey God the people look to you for spiritual wisdom and guidance but all you're doing is loading them down with a burden that they can't carry you don't even care about them you're not even willing to lift one finger to help them with this you guys are just like your fathers who rejected the word of God who killed the prophets sent to them you kind of just finish and endorse what they did by building places of burial for them he says you will be responsible for the blood of all the prophets that have been killed from the first one to the last one scathing remarks from Jesus but maybe verse 52 is one of the hardest things for them to hear woe to you experts in the law because you have taken away the key to knowledge you yourselves have not entered and you have hindered those who were entering like imagine hearing this when it comes to the door to knowledge

I mean these guys are considered the experts in the law Jesus says you haven't given people the key you've taken it away from them you guys are ignorant you haven't entered and even worse you're making it more difficult for those who are trying to when Jesus went outside the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions waiting to catch him in something he might say so now they're really mad Jesus just called them out on this he put his finger on their hypocrisy their pride their arrogance he spoke the truth when he accused them of misleading people and hindering them leading them astray he says you guys are in deeper trouble than you even know

God's fed up with this and he's got it coming for you so maybe this morning if you are here and you've ever felt fed up with religious hypocrisy you're not the only one God hates it Jesus was fed up with it too I love how Jesus just sort of tells it like it is fearlessly to these guys I mean this is in part what will lead to his death saying these sorts of things to them and you know it's pretty easy for us to hear some of these words and sort of cheer for Jesus yeah go you tell them but I hope that [ 19 : 53 ] Jesus words to them make you squirm a little as well and unsettle you a little bit those of us who call ourselves Christians and have a good reputation and go to church and hang out with the religious crowd we're especially vulnerable to hypocrisy and I think we've all done it haven't we it's easy to pretend it's easy to sort of put on the show for others to do the things we do to be seen by others the things that will make others think well of us or compliment us and so as much as we should cheer that Jesus put the religious hypocrites in their place I hope that we also take a moment to think about whether any of these words of rebuke are for us and if we're not willing even to go there even to consider if we're like the

Pharisees then maybe it's because we are proud maybe it's because we are self righteous like they were one of the central messages of Jesus here is that the inside of us matters just as much as the outside if not more when it comes to the externals the outside our behavior the things that we say we might be able to fool other people but we can't fool God it's foolish to even think that we can he sees and knows the very feelings and thoughts of our hearts he knows why we really do and say the things that we do and so I think the first thing Jesus would have us ask ourselves as we consider these words to the

Pharisees is what about me am I guilty of these things have I been doing these things what does the inside of my dish look like and have I been seeking purity and cleanliness in here in my heart in my thoughts or have I been neglecting love for God in here and just polishing the dish on the outside some of my favorite words are those of David Psalm 139 this was his prayer to the Lord he said search me God and know my heart trust me and know my anxious thoughts see if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting it's an awesome prayer an invitation and I hope that we can make that our invitation again today Lord look into my heart is there anything in me that needs cleansing and come and cleanse it and wash it the truth is that the inside of all of us is like a dirty dish hypocrisy!

is when we try to hide that and ignore that and spend all that time and attention just polishing the outside Jesus warns us doing that is spiritually dangerous woe to you but on the flip side spiritual integrity happens when we bring the dish of our hearts to God and we ask him to cleanse it clean it wash it scour it and then when someone else comes along and says my your dish looks good what should we do we should give the credit to God and we should be honest about the dirtiness that remains inside at the end of the day you might be able to fool others but you can't fool

[ 24 : 39 ] God there's only one who can make the inside of our dish clean and beautiful and that's Jesus and so we have to give our time and attention to seeking his cleansing work inside of us and if we do that just as Jesus said what comes out will be clean it will be good it will be right let's pray father in heaven thank you for these words they are sharp words and words we may not like to hear especially thinking about ourselves but we thank you that you already know that we are all sinners and that didn't stop you from sending your son to save us thank you for your forgiveness and your cleansing thank you that with you we really can be clean and righteous in your sight despite our many sins continue to cleanse us of pride let us not live as hypocrites let us not neglect our relationship with you be at work in our hearts we ask and pray for your name's sake amen