

**Mar. 9 - Scripture:** Luke 11: 29-54

*Observation:* Jesus is addressing the Pharisees as experts of the religious law, specifically their inability to understand the command for them to love God first and let that relationship guide all other aspects of their lives. They do not understand love and grace, rather they hide this part of scripture behind the strict rules and regulations promoting only established works of the law. The Pharisees arrogantly exalt themselves in highly visible places, publicly complying with the checklist of the law so all can observe their obedience and to beat up others who trip and become the outcast "sinners" of society. Jesus attempts to explain that if they would focus on loving God as their primary command, the Pharisees would naturally address social injustice and their works would be the result of love rather than a "have to do" checklist.

Jesus humiliated the Pharisees and their agenda became to discredit him through trickery so that they may have him justly killed. This would restore the religious unrest that was threatening their comfortable world.

*A verse that speaks to you / Application:* Two points in these passages speak to me. First, is Luke 11:34, 'Your eye is the lamp of your body.' When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light; but when it is diseased, the body is full of darkness. As our walk progresses and we learn to live more Christ-like, the dark side of our human condition will be to revisit sinful places of the past (Psalm 26:11). On a good day we still have a foolish side that the enemy will manipulate to lead us to the folly that we all know is a place to avoid. I try hard to get better, but it remains to be a difficult road to travel.

The second point of application deals with the works in my life. I understand the concept of loving Jesus first and performing works out of that love. However, there are times when I do not feel comfortable giving my treasures. I may be irritated by doing things for Jesus because it comes with a degree of inconvenience, and I find myself critical of those who come my way because their needs may disrupt my plans. I recall part a sermon that I try to keep in the forefront of my thoughts. When talking with someone, in fact everyone, imagine Jesus as that individual and our treatment toward that person is also specifically directed toward Jesus. He will remember it on our day of judgment (Matthew 25:45). How does that impact your behavior? This is a powerful statement, one that can be quite embarrassing when recalling how we often casually dismiss others that God brings into our path. How would we feel if Christ were to make the same claims against us that he directed toward the Pharisees, not very good.

*Prayer:* Father, we try hard to please you in this fallen world surrounded by distractions and temptations from the enemy. On our best days we miserably fail to meet your standard. We seek more to be served than to serve, to be understood than to understand, to be loved than to love and to be comforted by you but not commanded by you. However, we are thankful that our God is one full of forgiveness and grace if our relationship with him is of genuine love. In the powerful name of Jesus we pray. .. Amen

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