

Diagnosing Hypocrisy, Part 2

Luke 11:42-44

You'll want to turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 11. It's the end of the chapter that we're in. There's this confrontation with Jewish spiritual leaders. The Pharisees, their partners, the lawyers. Jesus surveys the guests that are seated at the table. He knows among these men how deeply rooted their hypocrisy is. He knows how their hearts are so full of greed and wickedness. How their hearts are, are so ugly on the inside, so filled with rottenness that he pronounces woes upon them as he's diagnosing their hypocrisy.

He starts in verse 42 with the evidence of their hypocrisy. He moves down to the heart and gets to the heart of their hypocrisy in verse 43. And then in verse 44, he gets to the consequences, the effects of their hypocrisy. So follow along. We'll cover this passage this morning, verses 42 to 44. "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. Woe to you Pharisees! For

you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it.”

Now it’s clear what Jesus meant when he said, “These you ought to have done.” These, he’s referring to what he just said, justice and love of God. But what about that second part about not neglecting the others. What does Jesus mean by the others? It’s tripped a few people up, commentators, scholars alike. If he means here, do justice, love God and then keep on tithing the mint, the rue and every other herb, just make sure you’re doing justice and loving God as well.

You know what Jesus has done? He’s just undermined his own argument. He’s strengthened the legalism of the Pharisees. He’s sanctioning it. If that’s what he meant, he’d, he’d be sanctioning these man-made extrabiblical traditions that the Pharisees were using to promote their false piety. He’d be affirming that. He’d be reinforcing their self-righteousness. He’d been then further, which is really sad, he’d be, all those sheep that are under their influence, he’d be subjecting them to greater burdens, having to go through their cabinets and their spice racks and pull out all their condiments and cut off a tenth and give that to the temple.

I'm pleased to inform you that's not what he meant. You can leave your spice rack alone. Leave the salt in the shaker. What did he mean, though? What did he mean? Turn back to what God actually said and what he actually commanded in, about tithing and there are a number of places we can go. But let's look at Deuteronomy chapter 14. What I'm gonna, about to read to you out of Deuteronomy 14 is consistent with what the other passages teach. But there are a number of texts, Leviticus 27, and other places as well.

But in Deuteronomy 14:22 to 29, this is one of the most expansive, more expansive texts on the subject. And it's clear what God meant when we consider the context. The passage begins in verse 22, Deuteronomy 14:22. He says, "You shall tithe," that is you shall give a tenth of. That's what the word, tithe means, give a tenth of. "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year." Oh, oh, okay. Pharisees say stop right there. Ah ha! Gotcha. Right there it is in black and white. "Tithe all of your seed."

Anything that comes from the seed, seeds itself, everything. Spices, herbs, all of it. Mint, rue, garden herbs. Keep reading though. You see they completely ignored the context. And by ignoring the context of the law, get this, they

not only failed to understand the spirit of the law, they distort the letter of the law, as well, and place a heavy burden upon people. Look at verses 22 to 23. "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of, what? Your grain, and your wine, and your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock," stop there.

If they kept reading, they would see that God intends the tithe, the yield of the seed to be in the form of three things there: grain, wine, and oil. They're to tithe also the firstborn of the animals from the herd or the flock, not their puppies or their kittens or their hamsters or any of those other things that little kids love. They don't tithe those things. They just tithe the firstborn of their herds and their flocks.

Take the same principle back, it's grain and wine and oil. Hendrickson says, "Pharisees were always illegitimately overextending or overstretching the law." That's exactly what's going on here. Was that not exactly what they also did with respect to fasting and hand-rinsing and Sabbath observance, etcetera? So when Jesus said, "These you ought to have done without neglecting the others," he is not sanctioning the

Pharisees' overstretching of the law. He's not sanctioning them turning God's good and gracious law into a burden. Listen, that's what Satan does. Satan tries to discredit God by making his good commandments appear foolish and burdensome and heavy and toilsome.

Satan employed that same strategy when he approached Eve at the very beginning, slithering up to her in the garden, insinuating unfairness and unreasonableness in God. "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" I mean, come on! What kind of a God are you worshiping, Eve? So unreasonable. So unfair. His burd, his commands are so burdensome. That's satanic religion, making God's law out to be burden. So when Jesus said, "These you ought to have done without neglecting the others," he's essentially saying this: Look, make sure you attend to the spirit of the law, the heart of the law. And what is that? Justice toward your fellow man. Loving your neighbor. Because when you love your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind, listen, in that frame of mind when you love God that way, you're gonna understand what tithing is for.

You're going to understand the meaning of it. You're not gonna, neg, neglect the other command either because they put

justice and love for God into practical daily use. All these other commands that come from the two greatest commandments: love God, love your neighbor. All those other commands are an unfolding and a manifesting and a demonstrating of justice and love for God. Do 'em all. That's what he's saying. Notice at the end of verse 23, Deuteronomy 14. Pharisees had completely missed the purpose of tithing. "That you may learn to fear the Lord your God always." That's the point. To learn reverence, to learn respect, to learn regard for God. And as we'll see, to turn, to learn his ways, and enjoy his blessings and share them with others.

Look at the rest of this. Deuteronomy 14:20, 24. "If the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the Lord your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the Lord your God chooses to set his name there, then you shall turn it into money," okay, so turn your product into cash, which is lighter to carry. You don't need to haul a bunch of bulls on your back or goats or anything else. Turn it into cash. So turn it into money and verse 25, "and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the Lord your God chooses and spend the money for whatever you desire: oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, or whatever you apt to, your appetite craves. And you shall eat it there before

the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household. You shall not neglect the Levite who's within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.

"At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with your, and the sojourner, the fatherless, the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be satisfied, be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do." You see God not adding burdens but lifting burdens in this text. Look, if it's too hard for you, just, it's okay. Sell, gather up cash, save it for three years and then bring this company of those in need with you. Bring 'em with you. And you celebrate together. You provide a feast for them and just rejoice before God. Isn't that great?

God says, I want you to plan, and I want you to make provisions for future joy, for future celebration and you have, you have a clock on it. Every three years. Here's what you do; gather the tenth of grain, wine, and oil. Store it up, sell it, save the money for later. When the time comes, I want you to go to the festal celebration. I want you to eat and drink. I want you to be merry. I want you to satisfy your appetite. Add to

your rejoicing by doing this, add to your rejoicing, multiply your rejoicing by doing this: share it.

Share the abundance of food and drink with other people starting with your spiritual leaders because I didn't give them a portion in the land. I gave you the portion and for you to provide for them. Store up for them and then provide also for those who have less due to their station life that I have assigned, to teach you to share, to teach you to be generous. Those who are less privileged, those who are disadvantaged. The foreigner sojourning in your midst. The orphan who's lost his parents. The widow who's lost her husband, has no means to provide. Let them come. Let them eat. Let them be filled. And all together, you can rejoice as God's people.

Man, folks, that's the point of the tithe. That is why we bring offerings here. It's not a burden, it's a blessing. It's not an obligation to be loathed. It's a joyful opportunity to be celebrated. God has provided and we get to enjoy that together by sharing it with each other through the practice of tithing and giving and feasting and enjoying. Can you imagine, just backing up for a bit, seeing all the unrest that's going on in our nation?



Pharisees just didn't get this at all. They're unconverted men, that's why. They're not regenerate. They don't have any internal change and so there's no actual outward change either. They've just learned to mask their controlling greed. They've just masked their pride and their wickedness. They're self-centered. They care little for their neighbors and nothing for God. When they gave, it is in measured out increments. Weighed out precisely, tithed reluctantly and fastidiously. They had no appreciation for the joy of doing justice and loving mercy and loving God.

Folks, let's just take a few minutes to apply this. First, you need to know your leaders well enough that you can see their lives and their ministries and see whether or not they're consistent with what the Bible actually teaches. We don't go to a church that we just project an image on a screen and that's good enough. You can't get to know a screen. You can't get to know a person in two dimensions. You need to know their life. You need to know their family. You need to know their way.

So please pray for your leaders. And when necessary, when appropriate, hold them accountable by bringing any pattern of inconsistency to their attention. A godly leader will thank you for it. And he'll either help you see how his actions and

decisions, the, more, he'll help you see those more clearly, help to resolve any apparent discrepancy. Or he'll repent and change. Either way, it's a win/win. You get to love him, and he gets to show humility and meekness.

Listen, we don't want any leader guilty of practicing hypocrisy here. So much is at stake. Not just for the leader, but for the entire church. Second thing in applying this is just think about your own life for a moment. Any evidence of hypocrisy in your own life? You don't want to start confronting your leaders for the speck in their eye until you've removed the log from your own, right? Have you ever stopped to ask yourself, why do I live the way I live? Why do I do the things I do? What do you practice in your life by rote? Because of learned tradition, just habit that you kind of follow on autopilot? How concerned are you with what other people think about you? Are you a performer? Do you play to the crowd on the outside, but you don't own the truth actually on the inside? Can you draw a line from what you practice on the outside down to a deep internal conviction in the truth?

Even more pertinent, ask yourself how much of your life is consumed on yourself? And how much is lived for the sake of doing justice and loving mercy and living out a deep sincere

love for God? Is Christianity, for you, play? Or is it warfare? Is it warfare with the flesh? Is it warfare with the systems of this world and it's, all of its ungodliness? Do you do what you do out of a sincere deep practiced love for God? Do you truly love God, love others, or is that just what you talk about because that's what we all talk about?

Because of the blinding nature of hypocrisy, and our tendency to self-deception, which is very real, don't just ask yourself and leave it at there. Ask others. Ask people who are godly mature Christians, who are trustworthy. Listen, this is not about image protection. This is not about brand protection. This about truth piety. And listen, image protection is gonna fade away and burn away. The source of true joy in the Lord is in loving God and loving other people.

Jesus said in verse 42 that you bypass the love of God, you don't love God, which raises a question. Well, if the Pharisees don't love God, what occupies that space in their hearts? What do they love? Look at verse 43, "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love," excuse me. "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces." Okay, so when Jesus gets to the heart of the matter, he uses a single verb. Love. What do you love? And the essence of the Pharisees'

hypocrisy, it comes down to what they love, to what captures their affections.

And listen, they're lovers of notoriety. They are lovers of praise. "Best seat in the synagogues," singular, refers to one seat. This refers to the highest seat among the seats of the front of the congregation in the synagogue. In any given synagogue, there was a raised platform, kind of like what we have here. And there was an ark at the front. And don't think Ark of the Covenant, just think box. Okay, it was like a big box, but it was called, you don't just dare call it a box, that was actually tantamount to sin in their minds. You called it the holy chest and the holy chest was important because inside it contained the scrolls of the law and the prophets. That was in every synagogue, had a holy chest, had the scrolls of the law and the prophets inside.

And Edersheim says, that "right before the ark, facing the people, are seats of honor, thrones. For the rulers of the synagogue and for the honorable." Pharisees weren't content just to sit up front on the platform, sit on one of the thrones. They wanted not just one seat of honor to occupy, they wanted the very best seat. They wanted the highest seat, the place of greatest honor in the eyes of the people. Anyone sitting up

there in the highest, most prominent seat, oh, a man of great distinction, great piety, great holiness. It was a show.

When they went out of the synagogue and walking around in public in the marketplace, the agora, it's like a huge outdoor mall, picture this middle eastern market called a *shuk*, a bizarre. Imagine how busy that place is, packed with people. The Pharisees don't just simply want to be treated kindly in a greeting, in a friendly manner. No, no, no, no, they want an appropriate greeting. That's what's talked about here. They want a greeting that's due their station. They want a fitting salutation, one that acknowledges their greatness in the community.

One commentator said it this way, "They don't want a mere cheery 'Hello', but a demonstration of respect, an elaborate verbal recognition of their prominence." This is what false lead, leadership is after. The, the money is one thing, sure, there are many people who love money, lovers of money and that's a clear sign of false spiritual leadership. There are others that are content with poverty because sometimes poverty gives them praise. It gives them spiritual credibility, clout with other people and they feed off of that. They want to people to make over them, to fawn over them, flatter them, appreciate

them, make a big deal out of them, recognize all their contributions.

Jesus said the same thing of the scribes later on in Luke 20:46. He said, "Beware of the scribes. They like to walk around in long robes." Why long robes? Because everybody can see what they are, right? Vestments, ministerial vestments, collars and all the rest, big hats, all that stuff. All the trappings of false religion. They love greetings in the marketplace, best seats in the synagogues, places of honor at the feast. Oh, but they devour widows' houses. For a pretense, they make long prayers. Jesus says, "They'll receive a greater condemnation."

Pandering after praise. Doesn't that seem rather childish, petty? These are grown men doing this. Grown men. Aren't they above such things? Beloved, examine your own heart and see that no, none of us are above such things. We like to be. Some of us pretend to be above such things. Nobody is. Jesus's identifying sins that we all struggle with. But these guys, the Pharisees, they live this way. They're characterized by this all the time. They're not struggling. They've given themselves over to it. They're massively concerned about their public image. They're concerned mostly about what people think about them. John 12:43

says, "They love the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God."

That's not just a first century malady, folks, that is present-day. I've seen it in our own as well. And this is why they had no concern for justice, no love for God. Huge weighty matters like justice and love for God. These issues of gravitas, insignificance, they were crowded out of the tiny little space in their hearts reserved for a tiny itsy, bitsy, finite, little idol called the self. Is this not the worst form of idolatry? It's even uglier because they put that little, tiny self on the pedestal. They long for others, they invite others to come and worship and praise. They're outward behavior is basically a call to worship all the time. They're greedy from praise, of, of praise from, from other creatures. They want to be worshiped by other people.

Folks, that's the essence of hypocrisy. It's idolatry in the rawest, least refined form, it is the idolatry of the self. The application here is simple for this point. First, do your leaders call attention to themselves? Whether overtly as, or subtly, do they point out themselves and their own accomplishment. Are they the hero of all their own stories? Or did they prefer to point to Christ? Whether in public or in

private, are they seeking glory from men or are they loving to see God glorified, Christ honored, Christ lifted up? Are they humble men? Do they avert attention from themselves and call everyone else to worship God and God alone? Because those are telltale signs of what they love and what they worship.

Second way to apply this is ask these hard questions about your own heart. What do I love? I mean what do I really love when it comes down to it? If I say, li, I love God more than anything, does your life reflect that? Can other people see by the way you live, how you spend your time, what you do, what you don't do, what you talk about, what you will not talk about? Do they see that you love God? Well Jesus has given concrete evidence for the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, verse 42. He's identified the essence of their hypocrisy. They love and worship themselves, that's verse 43.

Third point, this is somewhat ironic, but the effect of hypocrisy. The effect of hypocrisy. Look at verse 44. See if you can spot the irony considering the context here. Jesus says, "Woe to you! For you're like unmarked graves, people walk over them without knowing it." Unmarked graves, what's the big deal about that? Numbers 19:16 says that "whoever in the open field touches someone who was killed with the sword or who died



naturally, or who touches a human bone, or grave shall be unclean for seven days.” Seven days of ritual impurity. If that happened on the way to Jerusalem, they made all this effort to get there. Touch an unmarked grave, impure seven days, can’t participate in the feast. It’s all null and void. So a custom arose in Judea among those living in Jerusalem just before one of the grace, great feasts, the graves were whitewashed, freshly painted with bright white paint to make those graves as visible and prominent as possible. Why? So pilgrims could avoid walking over the grave, avoid the ceremonial impurity, defilement, the result from doing so.

So that’s what’s so ironic about this. Why Jesus has been so strong so straight forward in his rebuke. They, they’re practicing this handwashing ritual before sitting down to eat a meal to avoid ritual impurity, but they have no idea, nor did the people who admired them, who glammed on to them, they, themselves are as full of contagion as a grave. They’re a hole in ground to these people containing a rotten corpse of dead religion.

Pharisees pretended to be holy with all their outward show, all their pomposity, seats of honor, flattering greetings in the public, but in reality, they’re more deadly than a virus.

They're more infectious than a disease. They infect whoever's around them, causing them to become spiritually defiled. They had been like unmarked graves. Not only to each other, not only sharing the corruption, but common people who looked, looked up to them and followed their teaching, tried to follow their ways.

Jesus has here in a manner of speaking, walked into this luncheon, as it were, with a five-gallon bucket of whitewash. And he's applying it liberally all over these Pharisees. He's becoming the grave-marker, marking hidden graves so that no one comes into contact with the contagion of their presence. No one comes, becomes under the influence of the infection and the leaven of their teaching.

Beloved, it is so important that you yourselves discern true and false spiritual leadership. And that you pray for your spiritual leaders. Hold them accountable because they're in a position of influence. If they go bad, everybody goes bad. Their teaching, their example, their preaching, their conduct, it effects the way people see God. It effects the way they learn to practice religion. I feel that weight. And I pray that every elder, every leader here feels that weight heavily and, and the burden is shared more and more and more. It's weighty responsibility. And beloved, we need your prayers. May the Lord

protect us from becoming like a, an infectious disease to you, like a spiritual contagion, spreading a virus of bad religion, hypocrisy to other people. We don't want to defile the unwary. We don't want to spread corruption, death. Instead, pray for us and you practice this as well. May we all together be sincere Christians, no evidence of hypocrisy among us. But always motivated by love for God, love for neighbor. So that God will, through us, spread the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ in every place.

Bow with me for a word of prayer. We do pray, Father, that you would protect us from all hypocrisy and all the sins that spiritual, hypocrisy is meant, are meant to hide. We pray that you would help us to be constantly attending to our souls and examining ourselves before you, before your Word. May we look and be careful, consider our steps, be attendant to our hearts. Help us to be those who practice repentance often. May we never think of ourselves as above any sin. But always be on guard for every sin.

Please be gracious to point out the evidence of hypocrisy in our lives, the sins that lead to it. Help us to care for one another in that way, practicing Matthew 18:15 as a matter of course. Please help us to be gracious with each other, merciful,



compassionate. Help us to be people who do, do love justice and mercy. And at the very heart of it, that we love and worship you. It's in Jesus' name we pray and for his sake, amen.