



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

A Story of Warning!

Luke 11:37-54

Message #38 of 50 – S818

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Sunday Morning Service

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A Story of Warning!

Luke 11:37-54

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 11**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- One of my responsibilities as a parent is to warn my children of dangers or risks, they may not be aware of
- I do that because I love them – I want to spare them some of the pain I experienced in my life by warning them of the mistakes that I have made
- If you have ever tried to do that you know that warnings are not always received very well
- In fact, even a well-meaning, heart-felt warning can result in a broken or strained relationship
- But I would rather risk a relationship than allow someone I love go blindly ahead into danger
- I can't sit back quietly and watch them do something that will lead to suffering
- Jesus is going to give six warnings in the text we have before us today
- They are given to people who didn't think they needed to be warned
- They thought everything was great
- But Jesus could see something they could not
- As I studied and prepared this message, I found myself checking the quality of my faith and character
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us hear any of these warnings that apply to us
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **A Story of Warning!**
- Back in verse 34 Jesus said, 'The lamp of the body is the eye'
- We choose how we want to see things in this world

- If you are looking for evil, that is what you will see
- If you are looking for good in people and things, that is what you will see
- We get an example of someone with ‘bad eyes’ right after Jesus said that
- **Luke 11:37-38**
- Religious guys like the Pharisees performed a ritual before they ate a meal, that included rinsing their hands in a certain way
- It wasn’t about being sanitary – it was ceremonial – symbolically cleansed them of the spiritual defilement they picked up while moving through this world
- It was a tradition – not commanded by God
- Our modern equivalent is saying grace before eating a meal
- Jesus knows what the Pharisee is thinking
- **Luke 11:39-40**
- The Pharisees and people like them focus on the externals – those things that other people can see
- They act as if they just look religious, holy, and righteous that somehow they are
- Jesus says, God knows what is inside of you **Psalm 44:21**
...**He knows the secrets of the heart.**
- He is saying, quit trying to fool God – He knows who you really are
- You may be fooling the people around you, but you are not fooling God
- Jesus then expresses six warnings in the form of six ‘woes’
- The word woe can be used a couple of ways
- It is often used to express God’s displeasure and includes a proclamation of impending judgment
- It can also be used as an expression of sadness or grief
- Both apply in this context – it saddens God when people choose to go their own way, and so, He warns them of the danger
- The first warning – **Partial Obedience**
- **Luke 11:41-42**
- The Pharisees prided themselves on obeying the Law of God given to Moses back in Exodus

- To help them obey the Law, rules, regulations, and traditions were established
- Unfortunately, the rules, regulations, and traditions eventually became more important to them than the Law they were meant to help them to keep
- Tithing was one of the areas that Pharisees were meticulous – because it was something people could see them doing
- Justice and loving God were not obvious
- Jesus is warning them and us – partial obedience is not really obedience at all – quasi-obedience = disobedience
- The second warning – **Religious Pride**
- **Luke 11:43**
- The best seats were those in the front that faced the congregation
- That way everyone can watch them being spiritual as the service is going on
- They were prioritizing reputation over character – listen to this quote from: **Warren Wiersbe**
Reputation is what people think we are; character is what God knows we are.
- Religious pride will prevent real faith – that’s a problem because Hebrews tells us that it takes real faith to please God
- In the next warning Jesus includes another group – the scribes – aka lawyers or experts in the Law
- Both of these groups believed they were the most righteous people in all of Israel
- Jesus is about to crush that view
- Third warning – **Defiling Hypocrisy**
- **Luke 11:44**
- Pharisees wouldn’t let common people touch them for fear of being defiled by unclean people
- They believed they were righteous (right with God) and holy
- And because common people didn’t do the things they did, the common people were unclean
- In Numbers 19 – the Jews are warned about touching a dead person, or bones, or walking on a grave – made them ritually unclean for seven days

- All of the Law was meant to teach them and us of the absolute holiness of God, and help us to see our need for a Savior
- Jesus is saying that because of their hypocrisy, saying one thing, but actually being something else, that they are a greater source of spiritual contamination than the people they are trying to avoid
- The second set of three ‘woes’ is triggered by a quip from one of the lawyers sitting there
- **Luke 11:45**
- The lawyers were experts in the Law – they were the ones who studied the Scriptures and then created all the rules that the Pharisees followed
- They considered themselves as more holy than the common people because of their knowledge
- Fourth warning – **Burdensome Legalism**
- **Luke 11:46**
- All the rules the lawyers came up with ended up in a resource called the Mishna – contained more than 6,000 rules – some were very complex and difficult to obey – some were ridiculous
- May be the context for **Matthew 11:28-30**
Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
- Walking with Jesus should not be a burden – not if you are doing it right
- May not always be easy, but it is not a burden
- Religion has a dark history of making walking with Jesus a burden
- The church exists to help people to love God and others, and to grow in faith
- Fifth warning – **False Righteousness**
- **Luke 11:47-51**
- Jesus is saying, you are as bad as those men who killed the prophets of old
- Throughout history, anyone who spoke on behalf of God experienced persecution
- They would build the tombs for the prophets and say, we wouldn’t have done what our forefathers did

- In reality, they were going to do something far worse
- They would eventually participate in killing the quintessential prophet – the One the prophets predicted – God the Son, the Messiah – Jesus
- Jesus could see right through their false righteousness
- Telling them that they will have to stand before God and give an accounting to Him for what they will do to Him
- Sixth and final warning – **Hindering Faith**
- **Luke 11:52**
- ‘key of knowledge’ = Scriptures
- They had made the Word of God so complex that most people had no hope of figuring out how to love God and obey Him
- Something Pastor Chuck Smith said stuck with me, ‘Simply teach the Bible simply.’
- As a pastor/teacher, my responsibility is to enter into knowledge through faithful, careful study of the Bible and then to invite others to join me in understanding what God wants to say to His people
- The Bible is simple enough that anyone can know how to love, worship, and obey God
- It is no surprise that the Pharisees and scribes would seek to quash this itinerant preacher from Nazareth
- **Luke 11:53-54**
- Jesus never held back – if someone needed to be warned, He warned them – didn’t concern Himself with how they might respond
- That is a good word for all of us – if God gives you a word of warning for someone, give it to them – then trust God with their response
- These six warnings, if heeded can keep us from the quagmire of religious hypocrisy and false righteousness
- The question you may be asking, ‘How do I avoid the dangers Jesus is talking about here?’
- Let’s go through the six things and see
- First – **Partial Obedience** – the answer to this seems obvious, right – obey God fully – not just with what other people can see, but also in the hidden parts of your heart

- Second – **Religious Pride** – remind yourself that all of us come to Jesus on the level ground at the foot of cross – none better, and none worse
- Third – **Defiling Hypocrisy** – Ask God to reveal anything in that is not right – don't try to hide it from Him – you can't
- Fourth – **Burdensome Legalism** – Jesus saved you so that you could be free – free to live the abundant life – walk in that freedom and encourage others to do likewise
- Fifth – **False Righteousness** – don't just try to act right – Let God change your character so that you will be right
- Sixth – **Hindering Faith** – part of your responsibility before God is to grow in faith, and to help others grow in their faith – get connected
- There is a lot more that could be said
- But in closing, the scribes and Pharisees were offended when Jesus told them the truth
- He said it anyway and they were determined to destroy Him as a result
- If you tell people the truth, they may be offended
- That's okay, people have been offended by Jesus and His disciples for two thousand years – you are in good company
- Heed Jesus' warnings and walk in the abundance in His love, grace, and power
- And the story that Jesus will write in your life will be a good story – a true story – a Jesus story
- **Pray!**