

The 3rd Sunday in Lent ~ Sunday, March 23, 2025
“On the Way to Jerusalem ~ Beware and Fear Not”
Luke 11:37-44; 53-54

INTRODUCTION

hypocrite = *hypokrites* =

A hypocrite is someone who wears a _____, who pretends, who puts on the appearance of being something they're not, who, on the surface, looks good and virtuous while behind the scenes is the exact _____. In other words, they don't walk the talk!

A hypocrite is also someone who is critical of, or _____ others, for something that they themselves do—sort of “do as I say, not as I do.”

However, even though it was awkward, this was a very important conversation for us to listen in on because we too can be _____ by the same things that tempted the Pharisees.

What Jesus has to say here isn't just relevant to religious hypocrites that lived two thousand years ago; it's relevant to us today, as we seek to live faithful and _____ lives in our own day. It's also very timely, as we continue our lenten journey which calls us to intentionally examine the motivation of our _____.

TWO INSTRUCTIONS

Instruction #1. _____!

The word Pharisee tends to churn up in us a sort of condescending _____. With the exception of maybe two—Nicodemus and Joseph of Aramathea—the Pharisees were almost always depicted in a _____ light in the gospel accounts.

The Pharisees were old school social _____—their whole purpose and objective was to influence their society and to make an impact on their culture.

They were the _____ in the Law, the Word of God, and all things religious and spiritual. And they were very committed to, and _____, in their cause.

The pharisees sought to call the people of Israel back to the _____, to live by the Book, and not to give in to the cultural _____ of the occupying Romans. As a result, they were revered by the people as being the _____ and most righteous of all those in Israel.

“Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?” (Luke 11:39-40)

It's important to understand that this ritual hand washing wasn't _____ by the Word of God, nor was it part of the ceremonial code of the Old Testament, but rather was an _____ that had been developed by the Pharisees, extending the ceremonial law as a way of honouring it, _____ it, and building a hedge around it so that (a) believers wouldn't accidentally _____ it and (b) could publically _____ their adherence to the law in a more obvious way.

Regardless of their intent, it was still an _____ to God's Word, and adding to God's Word, can make it much easier to take from God's Word. The Pharisees thought they were improving on the Word of God when in fact, they were actually _____ it's power in their lives.

Jesus denounces their hypocrisy, arguing that they cared more about external _____ than they did about internal _____.

“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is their hypocrisy.” (Luke 12:1)

“They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi...” (Matthew 23:5-7)

No matter how perfect they looked, there was a _____ between their external behaviour and the internal motivation of their hearts.

“Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines. You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.’” (Mark 7:6-8)

It's always easier to be _____ busy than to deal with what's going on in our heart, or to observe _____ heart demands of God's Word.

4 DANGERS OF HYPOCRISY

- **Hypocrisy can _____.**
It's quick to grow legs and spread, and when it does, it can _____ the whole.
- **Hypocrisy can lead to the _____ of others for one's own good.**
The hypocrisy of the Pharisees was to get others to act in the way that they held to be right, true and good, which was a form of power and _____ on their part.

• **Hypocrisy breeds a culture of guilt and _____,**
It almost always involves _____ and condemnation that can lead to the mistreatment of others.

• **Hypocrisy _____ the Gospel.**
We need to be honest with unbelievers, and tell them that we still _____ the Gospel; that God _____ us in our mess and that His grace is _____ for us too. We need to preach the Gospel, teach the Gospel, and share the Gospel as those who actually _____ the Gospel.

Although the Pharisees were experts in the law, it had become a purely _____ exercise. They were trapped in the past; they cared about the history and tradition of God's Word, but it didn't _____ them, they actually follow God's Word and do what God had told them to do in the present.

Jesus knows that His mission that's going to be carried out through these disciples—and us—will be _____ by the influence of hypocrisy and the pressure to _____ to what's popular, comfortable, politically correct, and easy.

Jesus is warning them—and us—that hypocrisy is _____. It's toxic. It divides. It kills fellowship. It destroys the _____. It destroys the good news of the Gospel message.

Instruction #2. _____!
To teach and to live in a way that upholds the _____ demands of the law, and that recognizes Jesus as not only the heart of the law, but also the _____ of the law, is going to lead the disciples into danger, opposition, rejection, and _____.

“I tell you my friends, do not fear those who kill the body and after that have nothing more that they can do.” (Luke 12:4)

“Fear not, you are of more value than many sparrows.” (Luke 12:7)

“Do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself.” (Luke 12:11)

In connecting hypocrisy and fear, Jesus is exposing the _____ of hypocrisy. It's all about fear of _____, about what other people _____ about us.

There was _____ and a desire for power at work in their hypocrisy. It was about them looking good in _____ to, and in the eyes of, others. That's the fear of man; that's the fear of what someone else thinks. It's totally _____-centered and human-focused.

Instead of fearing man, we need to fear _____. We need to have a holy _____ for Him, to know our place, and to know that He's God, and we're not.

JESUS' ENCOURAGEMENT

• _____.
“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.” (Luke 12:6-7)

God knows everything about us, including the trouble that will come from going _____ the ways of the world, and from being _____ to Him and His mission. And He promises to never leave, nor forsake us, to watch over us, and take care of us. He promises to even _____ us.

“I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God.” (Luke 12:8)

• _____.
“When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say.” (Luke 12:11-12)

God promises to give _____ and guidance to those who rely on Him and who walk according to the _____, instead of relying on their own strength.

Knowing God cares and depending on the Spirit both come from _____ in Jesus, from looking to Him in His death and His resurrection, and waiting for His vindication on the last day.

That's the Gospel, and it's only in knowing Jesus, and making Him known, that the _____ of hypocrisy can begin to be peeled away in our lives.



It's a lot _____ to recognize and point out the hypocrisy in someone else's life than to see it, and _____ to it, in our own. Hypocrisy isn't something that we're _____ too, and Jesus' words here are just as _____ for us today.

Do I care more about looking religious or looking Christian than I do about having a living relationship with a living God by faith in Jesus Christ?

Does my love for God and my trust in Jesus animate my life above everything else, or is the heartbeat of my life found in something else other than God, the Gospel, and His Son Jesus?