

Luke's Gospel: Son of Man, Seeker of Men.

“Avoiding Bad Religion”

Luke 11:37-54 (NKJV); **Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers**

³⁷ And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. ³⁸ When the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner.

³⁹ Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰ Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹ But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.

⁴² "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. ⁴³ Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over *them* are not aware of *them*."

⁴⁵ Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."

⁴⁶ And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ⁴⁷ Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. ⁴⁸ In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹ Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and persecute,' ⁵⁰ that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.

⁵² "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

⁵³ And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, ⁵⁴ lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.

A Case of "Bad Religion." You might have bad religion if...

1. You look good on the o_____, but you are full of g_____ and wickedness on the i_____ (v. 37-39).
2. You focus more on r_____ and r_____ than your personal relationship with God (v. 42).
3. You care more about personal p_____ than you do about i_____ (v. 43).
4. People are left _____ after meeting you than before they met you (v. 44).
5. You are _____ on _____ than you are on yourself (v. 46).
6. You are part of the _____ and not the _____ (v. 47-51).
7. You hold back _____ that could _____ the people in your life (v. 52).

Scripture Insight: "key to knowledge. The very persons who should have opened the people's minds concerning the law obscured their understanding by faulty interpretation and an erroneous system of theology. They kept themselves and the people in ignorance of the way of salvation, or, as Matthew's account puts it, they "shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces" ([Mt 23:13](#))."¹

The Cure...How to avoid bad religion:

1. Spend more time working on the _____ you and less time on the _____ you (v. 40).
2. Get your _____ right and then allow your good deeds to flow from the inside out (v. 41).

¹ Quote from NIV Study Bible.

3. Let _____ and justice inspire all that you do (v. 42).

Christ Connection: Jesus is the only One who can keep our hearts pure, our motives right, and keep us on the right path in our relationship with God and others.

Sermon in a Sentence: Avoiding bad religion means that I live from the inside out—getting my heart right first and then allowing God to live His life through me.

Preview for next Sunday: A life that pleases God from Luke 12:1-12.



Action Steps:

1. Faith-make sure that my faith is based upon Jesus changing me from the inside out.
2. Live-show others what it means to have "good religion." Others should be better off after meeting me because of the difference Jesus has made in my life.

Make a decision this week? Please let us know on your Connection Card.