

Pre-Sermon: This is to help you prepare for hearing from God's Word.

- Read Luke 11:37-54
- What are some reasons it is surprising the Pharisees and scribes rejected Jesus?
- What questions would it have raised that they were rejecting Jesus?

Sermon Questions: These will help you evaluate how well you were listening.

- What are we talking about today?
- How does this passage end? What does that tell us about the Pharisees and scribes?
- What was the question we wanted to consider in this message?
- What were the two reasons we said we needed to answer that question?
- What is the part of 1 Corinthians 15:3ff that we often miss and what does the gospel of Luke have to do with that?
- What do 11:35 and 12:1 have to do with this particular passage?
- What is the reason the Pharisees and scribes did not benefit when they listened to Jesus and how is that illustrated in this passage?
- What are some contrasts in the gospel of Luke with the Pharisee's attitude toward Jesus?
- What does proud hypocritical religion look like? What does it result in?

Sermon Synopsis: This is a short summary that will help you reflect on the message.

We are going to look at Luke 11:37-54 and talk about a group of people we meet in the gospels, who you really would expect to hear Jesus and benefit but aren't and we are going to talk about why. That's what this message is about. *Why did these people who were interested in the Bible, who studied the Bible, who looked like they were doing what the Bible said, miss the main point of the Bible so badly?*

The reason the Pharisees missed Jesus even though he's standing there right in front of them was pride. Of course it's pride. But it is pride covered with politeness and an external religiousness. In Luke, the difference between people who hear Jesus and benefit from His Word and those who don't is not intellectual capability or status in society or even necessarily being a Jew, it's who is sitting at Jesus' feet as a learner, who sees Jesus as Lord and themselves as his servant, and who is standing there, thinking of themselves as Jesus' equal or superior? The Pharisees and scribes didn't reject Jesus because He wasn't fulfilling the Old Testament. They weren't reading the Old Testament accurately because they were so proud, which is why they didn't see Jesus.

And that's a big warning!

It's possible to be very religious and very proud. Religious activity is important. The Bible is a very religious book. It's teaching us how to worship God. But there is a way of doing religion that masks pride. That's dangerous! One reason spiritual pride is dangerous is because you are using what should humble you to make you proud. This makes it especially difficult to see spiritual pride. But, studying this passage helps, because in these verses Jesus gives us some characteristics of what proud, hypocritical religion looks like and what it does.

Here's what it looks like.

- The number one characteristic is that it doesn't address the heart.
- Two, it involves smart and complicated ways of ignoring and distorting fairly straightforward biblical truths.
- Three, it puts a big emphasis on the application of certain specific biblical commands while ignoring very clear and important biblical principles which enables people to look like they are serious about obedience, while really just doing what they want.

- Four, the people practicing this kind of religious activity are motivated by a desire for their own glory.

Here's what it does:

- It leads people away from God without them knowing it.
- It puts burdens on people's backs and makes their lives harder without giving them any hope or help to change
- It pretends to take God's Word seriously but hates it and attacks it.
- It makes it very, very difficult for people to understand the truth.

No matter how much time you spend reading the Bible, if that's what your religion looks like, it's going to make it very difficult for you to understand anything and it's going to make you dangerous to others. The Bible is not just one big burden. The law says yeah you are a sinner. Your problem is worse than you think it is. But the gospel is the good news of how God saves sinners. The gospel is the good news of what God is doing through Jesus, it's an announcement about how God sent His own Son into this world to live a perfect life on man's behalf and to die a death He did not deserve to die so that He could be a substitute for those who put their faith in him, taking the punishment for their sins and providing a perfect righteousness for them to enjoy so that they might have peace with God and might be made into as new people and given the Spirit of God so that they can obey the Word of God and live for the glory of God.

If you come to Cornerstone Bible Church and you don't come to as a learner, a preacher can work as hard as he can at being clear, and you won't hear what's being said, which is that we're not here to just help you look good to others, while ignoring the sin that's going on in your heart. We want something better for you. We want you to know God. The God of the Bible. The Creator of the Universe. We want you to have a relationship with Him. And there's only way that's possible. His name is Jesus. There is salvation in no one else. There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. And if you are going to enjoy that salvation, you need to humble yourself, stop trusting in your own efforts, repent of your sins and believe in Him. And if you have, I hope this passage is an encouragement. The reason the religious leaders didn't get it wasn't because they really understood the Old Testament, it's because they really loved themselves. And of course, that's also a warning. Because we are Christians, and we've turned from proud, hypocritical religion. But we are also humans, and as long as we live in this world, we need to be careful and we need to watch out that we don't fall into the same trap as the Pharisees and the lawyers.

Application Questions: These are some questions that may help put the message into practice.

- What would it look like for you to approach Scripture as a learner?
- What would it look like if you approached it as someone who didn't have much to learn?
- Why is spiritual pride especially dangerous?
- How are you benefiting from God's Word and the preaching of God's Word lately?
- Do you come as a critic or as someone who desperately needs to hear from Jesus?
- Look at the characteristics of a spiritually proud person. What stands out to you? Look at your own life. Are you more concerned about the outside than what's going on in your heart? Are there ways you may be overemphasizing your particular application of Scripture while missing the point of Scripture?
- How did this message impact you? How can this passage help you see the beauty of Jesus and the gospel?
- What are you going to do as a result of our study of God's Word?