

GIFT-WRAPPED GARBAGE

Luke 11:37-54

The New York Garbage Strike

Jesus says that's what the religious leaders are doing—gift-wrapping garbage.

Although they're observing the prescribed ritual and receiving praise for their acts, they don't love nor submit to God—What's on the inside is contaminated, rotten garbage!

They're just going through the motions.

REJECTION DEVELOPS AS JESUS TRAVELS TOWARD JERUSALEM TO DIE.

Having shown the contrast between those who follow Him and those who reject Him, Jesus addresses the issue of Israel's rejection (11:14-54).

They accuse Him 11:14-16

He does it by Satan's power

It's not convincing enough

Jesus defends Himself 11:17-36

Either Satan is destroying His own program or God is at work and they need to find out about it and get on board.

No further signs will be given.

The light is sufficient

—they have eye trouble: selective seeing—seeing what they want to see.

Jesus' accusation 11:37-54

After defending Himself from their charge and directing their attention to the real issue, which was their rejection of the evidence, **Jesus accuses Israel's leaders.**

Although they're observing prescribed external ritual and receiving praise for their acts, they don't love nor seek to submit to God.

BACKDROP—THE PHARISEE'S CONCERN ABOUT JESUS 11:37-38

This time our Lord sets the trap—He has a message to communicate.

He walks into the Pharisee's house; sits at the table and starts to eat.

He fails to wash His hands first.

Not just a plain washing, but an elaborate, ritual washing.

The man is astounded!

He doesn't fit their mold.

He doesn't play by their rules and fulfill their expectations.

Jesus says, "*What's wrong? That's the way you come to God all the time!*"

They clean up the outside real pretty, but do nothing about the inside!

The inside is corrupt and filthy.

CURSE ON THOSE WHO PUT ON A SHOW

Condemnation of Pharisees 11:37-44

RITUALISM – PRIDE – HYPOCRISY

They look good on the outside; BUT they're rotten to the core.

JESUS' ACCUSATION 11:39-41

His accusation points to ritualism, pride and hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

Cleaning up the inside is more important than a clean exterior.

v. 41 Give charity (alms) from what's within—true charity comes from the heart—not ritual nor show.

Jesus isn't after a petty gift from the wallet—He wants a gift from the heart!

Wiersbe: "The way to clean up a dirty vocabulary is not to brush your teeth but to cleanse your heart."

It's more important for God to cleanse the hatred in their hearts for man and for God, than to clean up the outside.

THREE WOES AGAINST THE PHARISEES:

WOE #1 11:42 They're only interested in the externals

They fulfill the legalistic/ritualistic expectations.

They're careful about tithing even the tiny leaves and seeds from their herbs, but they forgot the important things, like justice and love.

They don't care about what God cares about.

They don't care about justice or love for God.

– Love for **neighbor** – Love for **God**

THEY'RE JUST GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS!

The issue isn't loving God vs. helping neighbors. *They did neither!*

All they want to do is put on a religious show and have people pat them on the back for it! They want power and praise from people.

Jesus makes clear He doesn't mean for them to *stop* what they're doing—that isn't wrong! They're to *start* doing what God really wants!

Mic. 6:7-8: *"Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? ... He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

WOE #2 11:43 They love the seats of honor and bows of respect

They are seeking to exalt themselves.

Wiersbe: "They put *reputation* above *character*"

Robert Redford, walking through hotel lobby. A woman spots him and follows him to the elevator. "Are you the real Robert Redford?" she asks with great excitement. As the doors of the elevator closed, he replies, "Only when I am alone!"

WOE #3 11:44

Num. 19:16—According to the law, they're contaminated if they touch a corpse, or come into physical contact with a grave.

These religious leaders are like a grave that contaminates those who come into contact with them.

They cover up their true nature while contaminating everyone around them.

Contact with a grave is just as contaminating—whether they know it or not.

People are contaminated, but don't know it.

CURSE ON THOSE WHO LAY BURDENS ON OTHERS

Condemnation of the lawyers 11:45-52

The religious lawyers (experts in the law) are hit as well, and they know it!

When one of them protests that Jesus is insulting them also,

He accuses them of traditionalism, persecution of the faithful, and jealousy. **11:45**

THEY PLACE BURDENS ON OTHERS

– **DON'T FULFILL THEIR OWN OBLIGATIONS**

They're glad to make rules for everybody else

BUT won't lift a finger to obey God themselves.

THREE WOES AGAINST THE INTERPRETERS OF THE LAW:

WOE #1 11:46 They place burdens on everybody else.

They don't lift a finger to carry the prescribed burdens themselves.

They don't obey what they themselves know they ought to do.

"Do as I say, not as I do!"

Wiersbe: "The most important requirements for Bible study are a yielded heart and an obedient will."

A little girl stayed for dinner at home of a first-grade friend. The mother asked if she liked broccoli; child replies politely, "Oh, yes, I love it." When the bowl was passed she declined to take any. The hostess said, "I thought you loved broccoli." The girl replied, "Oh, yes ma'am, I do, but not enough to eat it!"

WOE #2 11:47-51

They build monuments for God's deceased spokesmen.

They are the "sons of the prophet killers"

They are their descendants—"chips off the old block"

They admire the prophets—but only DEAD ONES.

Whenever they meet a live one, with a message for them, they kill him.

THAT'S JUST WHAT THEIR FATHERS HAD DONE!

While testifying to the legitimacy of the slain prophets, they treat God's *living* spokesmen the same way their murderous ancestors did!

Their respect for past prophets, doesn't make them accept the present ones.

They're just as murderous as their fathers, in fact, worse.

He holds them guilty of all murdered for religious reasons in Scripture from Abel (Gen. 4) to Zechariah (2 Chron. 24:20-27—last book in Hebrew Bible).

This climactic generation is about to commit the ultimate murderous crime!

"Washington is full of peace monuments. We build one after every war."

WOE #3 11:52 They're not interested in finding the truth.

Instead of opening the treasures of knowledge, they're closing them.

They make truth so obscure no one can *understand* it, much less *obey* it!

They're not interested in obeying God.

In fact, **they stand in the way of those who wish to obey God.**

REACTION TO THE CONDEMNATION 11:53-54

They plot to destroy Him.

This rejection of Jesus directs the reader's attention back to the two alternatives.

The reader may follow those who reject Christ or those who accept Him.

All, however, must make a choice.

Hypocritical leaders don't want their sins exposed; it hurts their reputation.

What about us?

This is one of those passages everybody likes to point at *somebody else!*

Everyone but me is Pharisaical!

Our religion-saturated society

We walk around looking all cleaned up—on the outside!

FOUR OUT OF FIVE AMERICANS CLAIM TO BE "CHRISTIAN"

HALF DON'T REGULARLY PARTICIPATE IN ANY RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.

George Gallup: "Never have more people claimed to be Christian—AND NEVER HAS IT MADE LESS DIFFERENCE!"

Scratch a little beneath the surface and you'll find we're a sick people,
living in a sick nation. [Isa. 6:3 => 6:5]

The sores and infections run deep—CORRUPTION AND ABUSE

5-6 children in a typical schoolroom of 30 has been sexually abused.

1 out of 10 wives are physically abused by their spouse.

Statistics on children physically abused run as high as 1 in 3 or 4!

{In church it may be less,—but NOT as much as we'd like to think!—look around you!}

While lots of people walk around *looking* religious,
few are pursuing God in Spirit and in truth.

Jesus came to deal with the evil inside of us!

He came to stir up our love for God.

He came to stir up our love for one another.

It's not enough to be regular in church attendance.

– to read our Bible everyday

– to give regular offerings to the church

IF, we're really living for self, rather than for God

IF, we're cheating our employer

mistreating our employees

and beating, or just neglecting, our wife and kids.

We can look real good on the outside, and be rotten to the core on the inside.

That kind of religion is meaningless and empty. Jesus says God condemns it!

It's time to knock off that kind of religion and get serious about loving God and justice!

It's time to get serious about what it means to love God first, and neighbor as ourselves!

Are WE real about our love for God and for each other?

What difference does it make? –in OUR life?