

# Weaving the Word

## *Give From the Inside*

Part 60 – March 6, 2016

Welcome to where we're learning to discern between religion and Good News!



Do you do the right thing?

“What thing? When?” All things. Always.

**That's what religion is consumed with: doing the right thing.**

The more right things you do, the more you score ... *with religion*.



But, religion asks an incomplete question; **do you do the right thing ... for the right reason? That's what Jesus is concerned with.**

And, not just *mostly* for the right reason, but *totally*.



I've realized I'm a *huge hypocrite*: I'll quickly excuse myself for doing a wrong thing with right motive; but, rarely will I accuse myself for doing a right thing with a wrong motive.

If someone disapproves, I'm likely to say: “Well, *my intention* was ...”

But, when someone *approves*, I'm highly *unlikely* to say: “Well, *my intention* was ...”

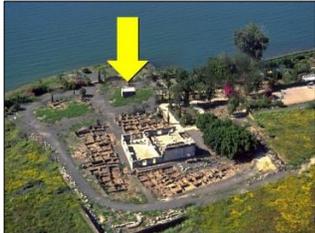


**So, if we want to *not be hypocrites*, we got'a stop excusing or start accusing our actions.**

Let's set the stage: Jesus is at His home office in Capernaum, healing the sick, the diseased and the demon possessed, about a year-and-a-half into His public ministry.



The religious rulers, fearing for *their power*, came from Jerusalem to denounce Him; while, His family, fearing for *His health* and *safety*, came from Nazareth to bring Him back by *force*.



But, just before Mary arrives, Jesus calls out and denounces the *religious rulers, publically* and *scathingly*, as blasphemous hypocrites.

He's comparing 'em to a tidy but empty house, overrun with wicked spirits, when He's disrupted and forced to address His family's intervention.



They were stuck outside, in the massive crowd.

So, He's got this contemptuous gang of Pharisees *inside*, **doing all the right religious things, with the worst of wicked motives.**

And, He's got His concerned mother and brothers *outside*, **doing the worst thing, but with the best motive** (*we'll give 'em the benefit*).



And, for everyone's sake, He leaves 'em out there, and makes it quite clear that **you're not part of the family till God's will is your goal.**

Remember how Mark's Gospel begins this dramatic day by reporting how this sea of people was pressed in so *thick* ...

... that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. – Mark 3:20b NIV

That seems an odd expression ... until you see how Luke now picks up the baton, from where we are, and carries on the story.

When Jesus had finished speaking, [regarding His family who interrupted His rebuking of the Pharisees] a Pharisee [seeing that Jesus couldn't eat, and figuring He must be getting hungry, and knowing that His mother is concerned about His welfare] invited him [alone, all by himself] to eat with him; [and his seething, murderous, publically rebuked, religious gang] so [...] he went in and reclined at the table. ["Tell my mom not to worry; I'm getting something to eat ... with my pals."] – Luke 11:37 NIV

Possibly reducing, for the moment, *both* of her chief concerns.

Jesus is concerned with our motivation because, **our inspiration to grow in true Christlikeness can only come from deep within a genuine heart of gratitude for who He is and all He's done.**

**Gratefulness is the inexhaustible, exponential, fuel of faith.**



And, **gratitude only comes to the degree that we assess and confess our inner sin and utter need.**

**Otherwise, we'll just try to please that voice in our head that says you must do better, while simultaneously saying you'll never measure up.**

**That's the voice of religion devoid of Jesus.**



How many of you have heard *that* voice before?

*I hate that voice! Jesus hates it even more.*

And, Jesus is having *lunch* with that voice!



Why would this Pharisee invite Him to lunch?

To get Him alone. Away from the crowd and His disciples. And, on their own turf.

*“Could we continue this in private? My house? I’ll have a meal prepared. Perhaps a watermelon, mint, and feta salad; and, a nice dish of herbed vegetable ragout.”*



Why would Jesus agree to go? Well, the *ragout!*

But also, this is where He delivers His famous “Woe to you Pharisees” speech, which picks up right where He was interrupted.

But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, [before reclining at the table and preparing to eat] was surprised. [As in: dumbfounded]



This is the *only record* of Jesus eating without washing. And yet, neither He nor the Pharisees comment on it.

Something’s going on here. Why is the Pharisee so *dumbstruck*?



Think about it. **What’s Jesus been touching?**

**The sick and diseased!** Even *I’m a little upset He didn’t wash! They eat with their fingers ... and generally, from a common dish or pot.*

*Jesus is always, always, always, in control of the focus!*

Then the Lord said to him, [as well as the others] *“Now then, [Great line! “Where were we? Oh, I was saying how you’re like a house that’s religiously sanitized, but empty of righteousness, and thus becomes occupied by unclean/wickedness; you see ...”] you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, [Now, to be fair, the inside was clean too ... unless ... except ... until ... He sticks His filthy finger in it!] but inside [DUNK] you are full [SWIRL] of greed and [SCOOP] wickedness.*

Wait. Now, He’s mixing His metaphors; He said: *“you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.”* He’s talking as though they’re the serving dish. And ... *they are.*

[As Ezekiel has written] For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: *“Woe to the city of bloodshed, to the pot now encrusted, whose deposit will not go away!”* – Ezekiel 24:6a NIV

[Jesus suddenly shouts: *“UNTHINKING”* (that’s Young’s Literal Translation)] You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?

How do you *not recognize* that **the part of you that doesn't show is just as apparent and even more important to our Father than what *does*?**

But give what is inside the dish to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

**We must assess and confess and flush out that encrusted deposit!**

**Give up your greed for those in need.** And, your heart will be free from its vicelike grip.

**But, your motive must be love and compassion, fueled by gratitude, and offered as worship; or you'll begrudge the gift you're giving.**

Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, ["and it's *good* that you're *so disciplined*" (He's likely commenting on what they're eating, btw)] *but* you neglect justice and the love of God. ["*And, if this isn't occupying your house, wickedness will; because your heart isn't right*"] You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

**Don't settle for going through the mechanics of righteous living or giving just to look a part, or to feel better about yourself.**

Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.

We do things like *this* to increase our sense of self-worth.

**But, you're either Christ centered or you're self-centered.**

Those are the only two options.

Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it." – Luke 11:37-44 NIV

These Pharisees believed they were made unclean if even their *shadow touched* a grave;<sup>1</sup> and yet, their hearts are dead within. No assessing. No confessing. Unmarked. Unaware. Unclean.

**If I'm not a grateful giver, I'm not a follower, I'm a fooler.**

**And, in the end, the only fool I fool is *me*.**

**But, when your heart is right, grateful obedience follows.**

And, that's when we do the right thing ... for the right reason.

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<sup>1</sup> Craig S. Keener, "IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament", InterVarsity Press (1993)