

The Life of Christ

Lesson 5

Luke 6:1-11, 11:29-54

February 7, 2021

Jesus and the Religious Establishment

Introduction

According to the dictionary, a Pharisee is “a member of a Jewish sect that ... strictly observed religious ceremony and practices, and firmly adhered to oral laws and traditions.” Put simply, the Pharisees were biblical fundamentalists. They studied God’s word carefully and recognized that Israel’s condition was a result of sin. They intended was to hold the Jewish people accountable to Biblical Law, producing holiness and allowing God’s kingdom to come through adding their own rules and traditions to the Law to keep themselves from breaking it.

The Pharisees’ intentions were not bad. What they believed and hoped to accomplish was not wrong. Rather, how they carried out their goals became the problem. They became so focused on their interpretation of the Law and creating safeguards against breaking it that they lost sight of its purpose.

They should have been the first to recognize Jesus—after all, they had studied the Bible extensively. They should have recognized Jesus’ arrival and teachings as God’s readying His kingdom to come. Instead, they rejected Him and questioned Jesus’ actions.

Memory verse: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?’”—Luke 6:9

Pray and read Luke 6:1-11 and 11:29-54. What questions or observations do you have about these passages?

What do the passages say?

1. What was Jesus answer to the Pharisees when they asked why He was doing something “unlawful?” (Luke 6:3-5)
2. Why were the Pharisees watching Jesus? (Luke 6:7)
3. What did Jesus ask those around Him? (Luke 6:9)
4. Why were the Pharisees and teachers of the Law furious? What did they discuss? (Luke 6:11)
5. Who will judge “this generation?” Why? (Luke 11:29, 31-32)
6. How is our body like a lamp? What happens when it is full of light? (Luke 11:34-36)
7. Why were the Pharisees surprised? What was Jesus response? (Luke 11:38-41)
8. List the woes detailed in Luke 11:42-44, 46-47, 52.

What do the passages mean?

1. The Pharisees and religious leaders didn't like that Jesus was working, according to their standards, on the Sabbath. What point was Jesus trying to make about the Sabbath? (Matthew 12:8, 11-12; Mark 2:27-28; Luke 6:5; John 5:17-18)

2. The Pharisees were watching for Jesus to break the Law. But Jesus was trying to show the cost of keeping the letter of the Law without understanding the Law. What point was Jesus trying to make? (Proverbs 21:3; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:8; Matthew 9:1-8; John 5:39-40)

3. The religious leaders of the time studied the Law and followed the Law carefully. But, did they understand the purpose of the Law and recognize Jesus for who He was? What does the Bible say about Jesus fulfilling the Law? (Matthew 5:17; John 5:36-40; Romans 8:3-4, 10:4; Galatians 3:23-25)

4. Reread Luke 11:37-54. Jesus pointed out that the traditions they followed had become more important than God. The focus had shifted on what could be observed and not on a person's heart. Why should our focus be on people's hearts and not on their actions? (Matthew 23:25-28; John 5:22-23; Romans 14:4, 13; James 2:8-9)

5. The religious leaders had "load[ed] the people down with burdens they can hardly carry." (Luke 11:46) But, Jesus came to lift that oppression. What does submitting to Jesus give us? (John 8:31-32, 36; Romans 8:1-2; Galatians 4:3-7, 5:13; Ephesians 2:8)

Applying the passages

1. Do you understand the purpose of the Law? What keeps you from spending time in your Bible regularly and really understanding God's Word?

