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NEWS & EVENTS – SEPTEMBER 2021

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Consider Luke 11:37-54 as we consider the interaction between religious men and the Son of Man.

37 Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined at the table. 38 When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal. 39 But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but **inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness.** 40 "You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? 41 "But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.

42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. 43 "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places. 44 "Woe to you! For **you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.**"

45 One of the lawyers said to Him in reply, "Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too." 46 But He said, "Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. 48 "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 "For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, 50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.' 52 "Woe to you lawyers! For **you have taken away the key of knowledge;** you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering." 53 When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects, 54 plotting against Him to catch Him in something He might say.

When God Eats Our Lunch

Sometimes our invitation to God is used to manage the unmanageable. A Pharisee invited God to his table. And all this religious leader could think of was a ceremonial washing that Jesus had neglected to perform. How often we misunderstand the nature of God, even as He is so close to our lives. The Pharisee was surprised. He is surprised at God's lack of preparation. He had set a place for God and God was out of place...at least in the Pharisee's misplaced priorities, *he was oblivious that Jesus is God.* The Lord begins to reveal the Pharisee's out of place religion. The outward show is to protect his reputation before men. The inward character was the reality of the man before God. Inside, the man was *full of robbery and wickedness.* No amount of ceremonial cleansing of the outside could make the inside fit for the King of the Kingdom of God. The motivation for religious giving to God was ceremonial for public consumption at best. At worst, the gifts were contaminated by the inward corrupted condition of this spiritually dead man. He was like a tomb that was hidden from sight and people were unaware of its presence. The whole occasion was no doubt a setting for the setting of a trap for Jesus. But Jesus ate his lunch! Imagine trying to manage the mind of God with the mind of a man! Have you ever prayed for the Lord to do a certain thing, in a particular way, and it just didn't happen? This particular Pharisee was previously listening to Jesus when He spoke of the sign of Jonah. He apparently missed the sign. Or the sign that Jonah was becoming. The religious leaders that people were following were not leading them where God wanted them to go. The key to the knowledge of God was so hidden away from others that the Pharisee didn't use even it for himself. He hid it away in the dead man's tomb in what was called his own life. The outward show of the minor things of religious practice did not give evidence of the major things called the justice and the love and the mercy of God. All that was found at the Pharisee's table...while Jesus was eating His lunch, so to speak. The Lord desires to demonstrate a life well-lived before men that represent and point to the nature of God to restore dead men's lives to living unto God. A life out of order with God will result in hostility towards God. When the Lord exposes our wickedness, it is for the purpose of repentance and restoration from His perspective. The rebellious heart always demonstrates enmity with the Word of God. From that perspective, repentance is always unnecessary...at least on the outside. But the unrepentant and unrestored never seem to look on the inside of their hearts...and this is where God is looking.

Blessing to you,
Pastor Sam