The final pronouncement of judgment is against those who have removed the key to knowing God, thus preventing themselves and other from entering God's truth.
How do you study God's word? Do you have favorite bible teachers or reference sources that help you discern God's truth?

3. Lessons from Jesus' Table of Conflict

There are lessons we can apply from the way Jesus confronts the Pharisees and Scribes.

- Conversations take place face to face
- God loves them and wants them corrected not punished
- Defend God and those who are oppressed, not yourself
- Listen for God to tell you when to leave
- Work towards reconciliation with God and others

Notice who Jesus was correcting and who He wasn't. Why do you think He was more often in conflict with religious leaders than gentiles? How should that serve to guide our encounters with unbelievers?

WRAP-UP

Jesus' meal with the Pharisees (Luke 11:37–45) shows how easily we can get caught up in outward appearances, religious rules, and seeking approval from others while missing what really matters to God. Jesus challenged the Pharisees to look beyond their traditions and examine their hearts, reminding them that love, compassion, justice, and caring for others matter more than simply looking religious. His example reminds us to stand up for what is right, speak truth with love, and focus on having a genuine relationship with God rather than just going through the motions.

MEMORY VERSE

42 "What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore justice and the love of God. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. – Luke 11:42 NLT

***Challenge** – God wants us to win souls not arguments. That begins with the attitude of our hearts. This week pray for those who you will see over the holidays and ask for God's eyes and His heart for them.*

Tables of Conflict
Jesus-y Tables– Week

INTRODUCTION

In the next few weeks many of us will gather with family over a Thanksgiving dinner. But just because we are family doesn't mean we agree on everything. For some families the holiday table can become a battleground. The same was true for Jesus. Some of His meals were shared in an atmosphere of love, compassion and hospitality while others generated conflict. This week we look at a meal in the home of a Pharisee. Jesus had accepted the invitation but that didn't mean He agreed with everything the Pharisee did. And that became evident from the moment Jesus sat down.

Ice Breaker

If you are in a group where an argument begins are you more likely to duck and cover, join in to express your opinion, or attempt to be an arbiter?

Key Passage

37 As Jesus was speaking, one of the Pharisees invited him home for a meal. So he went in and took his place at the table. 38 His host was amazed to see that he sat down to eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony required by Jewish custom. 39 Then the Lord said to him, "You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and wickedness! 40 Fools! Didn't God make the inside as well as the outside? 41 So clean the inside by giving gifts to the poor, and you will be clean all over. 45 "Teacher," said an expert in religious law, "you have insulted us, too, in what you just said.". Luke 11:37-41,45 (NLT)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Offense at the Table

When Jesus entered the Pharisee's home he sat down in the same way he did at any other table. The host took offense because Jesus hadn't performed the ritual hand-washing prescribed by Jewish law. But the hypocrisy of the Pharisee's practices made Jesus angry.

39 Then the Lord said to him, "You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and wickedness! Luke 11:39 (NLT)

7 ... The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." – 1 Samuel 16:7b NIV

The deeds done with our hands are a window into our heart. As the Lord explained to Samuel, God doesn't look on the outside, He looks at our heart. Washing your hands doesn't purify your heart any more than washing the exterior of a cup cleans it where it counts. Jesus didn't begin the argument, but He was not reluctant to correct and admonish the Scribes and Pharisees.

2. The Woes

Jesus' anger was provoked against the scribes and Pharisees in several areas. He admonished each specifically, exposing their errors.

42 "What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore justice and the love of God. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. – Luke 11:42 NLT

When Jesus refers to the practice of tithing herbs, He is making a point about how they were focused on meeting the exact legal requirements of "tithing" (returning a 10th to God) but neglecting that which was vital to God. What were they ignoring? In what ways might we focus on doing things that are "right" but miss fulfilling the greatest commandments, love God and love others?

43 "Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces. – Luke 11:43 NIV

42 Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved human praise more than praise from God. – John 12:42-43 NIV

The Pharisees should not have loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. This is easy to agree with but not so easy to overcome. Think about how we are encouraged from an early age to be recognized for accomplishments. We have been conditioned to seek praise and avoid criticism. But what pleases God is often counter to what people value.

In John 12:42 believers would not acknowledge their faith. The consequence would be ejection from the synagogue, but v. 43 tells us the underlying reason was loving human praise over praise from God. Have you been in a situation where professing your faith resulted in criticism or rejection?

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

Walking over a grave equated to touching the dead which would defile someone, disqualifying them from approaching God without being cleansed. In essence Jesus is saying these Pharisees are dead and as people come to them, they become a barrier between God and others.
How had the Pharisee's priorities inverted the role they should be playing as religious leaders?

46 Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them. – Luke 11:46 NIV
1 Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, 2 to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. – Isaiah 10:1-2 NIV

Jesus condemned the lawyers who added man-made interpretations that sometimes superseded the intent of God's original law. God had expressed this same judgment in Isaiah about unjust laws and oppressive decrees. Who was being harmed by these weighty religious requirements? Why was this so offensive to God?

46 Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them. 47 "Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your ancestors who killed them. 48 So you testify that you approve of what your ancestors did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. – Luke 11:46-48 NIV

Tombs were built to honor the prophets sent by God. But those building the tombs were descended from the Prophets' murderers. Jesus said they approved of what their ancestors had done and were thereby responsible for the blood of the Prophets. Not only because of their guilt, but also because of their hypocrisy Jesus condemned them.
Why is the church often criticized for its hypocrisy? Do you feel that concern is justified?

52 "Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering." – Luke 11:52 NIV