

“Are You For Real?”

(Luke 11:37-54)

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**Next Sunday: “How much are you worth now?”*

I. Introduction

A. My first visit to Universal Studios

1. More than 500 sets on their back lot
 - a. Home of Beaver Cleaver
 - b. The square in “Back to the Future”
2. Only the facades are erected
3. Things aren’t always as they appear to be

B. Are you what you appear to be?

1. Are you for real?
2. “Oh yes, I’m the great pretender”
 - a. “Pretending that I’m doing well”
3. What are you really like?
 - a. Guy whose dad had dementia! cursing
 1. “Is that the real person?”
 - b. “Incognito” by David Eagleman
4. Nobody likes a phony
 - a. And we can all spot them

5. Butí are you a phony?
6. Are you faking it this morning?

C. How to avoid being phony

II. Text...Luke 11:37-54

A. The Problem with Phonies (vs. 37-44)

1. *They Enjoy Symbolism (v. 37)*

(37) When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table.

- a. Lunch with a Pharisee
 1. A long meal followed by a long conversation
 2. Others in attendance
- b. Pharisee means ðto separateö
 1. They were the separatists of their day
 2. They were not priestsí .they were laymen
- c. The most religious people
 1. They were devout, moral, fastidious, scrupulous people who revered the Old Testament,
 2. They were people who lived for ceremony, people who monitored very carefully their public conduct, people who spoke all the time about God.
 3. They were people who possessed intense moral and religious convictions.
- d. Would think they would get the greatest praise from Jesus
 1. Grand Rapids often called the ðnew Jerusalemö
 2. So religious
- e. But they received the greatest denunciation

1. Should cause us some concern
2. What if Jesus visited Hudsonville?
- f. There is no virtue in simply being religious
 1. Most of the world is religious
 2. Few societies are really secular
 - a. People cling to vestiges of their religions
 - b. They think religion saves
- g. Getting them lost
 1. The problem isn't getting them saved. You have to first get them lost.
 2. Most think they are saved because they practice a religion
- h. And pharisees love the symbolic (v. 38)

(38) But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised.

1. The ceremonial hand washing
 - a. Described

They were to use enough water to fill one and a half egg shells, and it was to be poured across the tips of the fingers, running down to the wrists, and then the hands were to be washed
 - b. Just in case they had touched a Gentile
 - c. A symbolic act to show their holiness
2. Jesus had purposely not done it
 - a. Not commanded in the Old Testament
3. A silly symbol to show their holiness
- i. What do you do for show?

2. They Harbor Sin (vs. 39-41)

(39) Then the Lord said to him, “Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.

- a. The problem with dirty dishes
 - 1. Washing pots & pans at “Granny’s Kitchen”
 - a. Only the outside of the pots
 - 2. Their ritualistic cleaning of vessels
 - a. Meticulous
- b. But they were filled with greed and wickedness
 - 1. **“greed”**
 - 2. **“wickedness”**
 - a. Bad to the bone
 - 3. Luke 16:14 “The Pharisees, who loved money”
 - 4. Luke 20:47 “They devour widows’ houses”
- c. Religious profiteers
 - 1. Would plead for money
 - 2. Used the excess for personal gain

(40) You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? (41) But give what is inside the dish to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

- d. They had missed the obvious point
- e. What’s going on inside of you this morning?
 - 1. You look okay on the outside
 - 2. Bitterness inside
 - 3. Anxiety

3. They Ignore the Significant (v. 42)

(42) Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

- a. ðWoeö
 - 1. Not ðOh you poor thingsö
 - 2. This is a pronouncement of judgment
- b. Tithing the insignificant from their gardens
 - 1. Mint, rue and other garden herbs
 - 2. God never asked for it
- c. But they neglect the core commandments
 - 1. ***but you neglect justice and the love of God***
 - 2. Matthew 23

(23) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness.

- d. ðFussing over the unimportantö
- e. Were to tithe a tenth of their grains, etc.
 - 1. To support the priest
- f. The perversion?
 - 1. Mint, anise (dill), cumin (herb)
 - 2. Smallest of herbs
 - 3. Counted seeds and leaves
 - 4. Felt so religious!
- g. Yet, missed the big ones
 - 1. Love of God, justice, mercy, and faithfulness

2. Micah 6:8 "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

3. Too busy counting seeds

h. Straining out a gnat ..Matthew 23:24

(24) You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

1. Smallest of unclean animals

2. Camel was the largest

i. Gnats would fly into wine vats

1. Filtered with teeth as they drank

2. Yet camels? no problem!

j. What are your top priorities?

1. Job

2. Exercise

3. House and car

4. Church attendance

k. Yet truly important

1. A heart and life of mercy

2. Faithfulness

a. Time with God

b. Time with wife and kids

l. The tyranny of the urgent

1. Gordon MacDonald's family

2. The most important don't cry out at first
 3. But a much higher price to pay
- m. What is non-negotiable in your daily schedule?
 - n. Phonies are good at doing the insignificant

4. *They Love Status (v. 43)*

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

- a. The thrones at Wealthy Street Baptist Church
- b. The denominational big shots

“Watch the religious leaders, all the funny thrones they sit on, all the wacky hats they wear, all the crazy garb, all the junk hanging all over everywhere, all the fancy titles, the right honorable holy reverend doctor...” (MacArthur)

- c. Phonies want people to think they're a somebody when they enter a room
 1. Fundraising dinners
 2. Politicians working the tables
- d. Impressing with your wealth
 1. Clothes with labels
 2. What you drive
- e. Phonies love titles (Matthew 23:8-9)

(8) But you are not to be called “Rabbi,” for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. (9) And do not call anyone on earth “father,” for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.

5. *They Practice Seduction (v. 44)*

(44) Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it.”

- a. Were not to touch dead bodies

1. They expanded it to include not touching or stepping on a grave
 2. Marked the graves to prevent it from occurring
 3. Whitewashed to make them easier to see
- b. The danger of stepping on an unmarked grave
1. Ceremonially unclean
- c. Jesus is talking about their influence
1. Danger to those influenced by a false teacher
 - a. How they influence or seduce
 - b. Planting the seeds of doubt
 2. Danger to the false teacher
 - a. That's why James said, "Stop being so many teachers, they have a greater condemnation"
 - b. My fear as I preach each Sunday
 1. If I get it right: power and authority
 2. But if I get it wrong:
 - c. Religious phonies are going to be judged not only for their own sin, but for the corruption and defilement of all those who followed them.
- d. Your influence on your children
- e. Matthew 23:15

(15) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

B. You can't trust a phony (vs. 45-54)

(45) One of the experts in the law answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also."

1. Phonies are all talk (vs. 45-46)

- a. The experts in the law
 - 1. All of whom were also Pharisees

(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.”

- b. They had all kinds of rules regarding what was right or wrong
 - 1. And a whole bunch of frustrated followers who couldn't keep the rules
 - 2. And neither could their leaders.
- c. The people that rise to the top of these systems are just the most articulate or the most talented of the phonies

2. Phonies are great pretenders (vs. 47-51)

(47) Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. (48) So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs.

- a. Monuments to great men (v. 47)
 - 1. Washington DC
 - a. Lincoln, Washington, Jefferson
 - b. New one for **Martin Luther King**
 - 2. Jerusalem
 - a. Abraham, David, Prophets
- b. The Pharisees campaigned to embellish the tombs of the dead prophets
 - 1. They wanted to convince people that they were better than their fathers who had killed the prophets of God
 - 2. They adorned tombs of great prophets
 - 3. Who had been murdered by guys just like them

- c. They pleadedí ðWe wouldn't have done that!ö
- d. Jesus saidð ðYou'll prove your guiltöí ..v. 49

(49) Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.'

- 1. They were planning to kill one greater than the prophets
- e. They had already killed John the Baptist
- f. They would soon kill the Apostles
- g. They would prove their guilt

(50) Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, (51) from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.

- h. From Abel to Zechariah
 - 1. Abel
 - a. The first martyr
 - b. Killed by his brother Cain
 - c. Because of Abel's obedience to God
 - 2. Zechariah
 - a. The last martyr in the Old Testament
 - b. Described in Matthew 23:35
 - c. Killed for his obedience to God
- i. Jesus says they are actually worse than their fathers
 - 1. They had received the complete truth
 - 2. Standing face to face with the promised Messiah
- j. God used Rome to bring judgment

1. Talking about 66-70 AD
2. The radical zealots who hated the Romans
 - a. Killers and terrorists
 - b. Stabbed Romans
3. Romans had had enough
4. Butchered people in the Galilee
5. Led by General Titus
 - a. In 70 AD his army surrounded Jerusalem
6. As many as 1 million Jews died
7. As many as 100,000 dead bodies thrown over the wall
 - a. The incredible stench from the pile of bodies
8. Jerusalem finally fell and then the temple fell
9. The Roman soldiers erected their banners in the holy place and sacrificed to their idols there
10. They took a hundred thousand prisoners.

3. Phonies are like dogs in a manger (vs. 52-54)

(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.

- a. What is the key of knowledge?
 1. Accurate understanding of the Word of God
 2. Salvation through Jesus not religion
 3. They turned the Old Testament into a mish-mash and muddle of riddles, puzzles allegories, secret meanings, obscure interpretations that did nothing but create fanciful nonsense and support their false system of self-righteous works.

4. Distracted people from the truth
5. False religion today

(53) When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, (54) waiting to catch him in something he might say.

- b. What is ña dog in a manger?ö

IV. Summary

A. Are you a phony?

1. God is looking at your heart this morning
2. Are you just going through the motions
3. Do you have mercy?
4. If Jesus visited us this morningí what would he say?
5. Any õwoes?ö

B. Commitment to be authentic

1. In our worship and church and ourselves