

**Pastor Glen Keeffe**  
**Shelton First Baptist Church**  
**06/27/10**

### **Battle Scars Series (#3)**

#### **Hypocrisy** **Luke 11:37-54**

Luke 11

I remember growing up part of a religious system that...for me had 'pretend' at its' foundation. I remember getting dressed up...to the hilt every Sunday. It didn't really matter how messed up things in my heart were. Every Sunday we'd tuck our shirts in, put on the tie and go to church.

I learned that God was more impressed with my outward appearance than he was with my insides...that somehow my cloths, along with my greased back hair and cow lick – somehow appeased God. "We're going to give God our best", was the message. So...I bought in at an early age. The goods? Look good on the outside and don't worry about the inside. In fact, hide the inside or all the work done on the outside is wasted.

So, at an early age I bought in to the game of showing up looking good on the outside in order to protect how messed up things were on the inside. In my family we learned how to hide from...CHURCH/Religion.

This morning we're going to talk about **religion**. And I hope from today's lesson we'll see the difference between **religion** and **the gospel** of Jesus Christ. In its simplest form...religion is about external performance and is in contrast to the Gospel which is about internal transformation.

I think a lot of Christians believe they've got this under control. It's the..."We don't do that because we're Christians" chant that you hear in church circles. Have you ever caught yourself telling your kids, "We don't think that way about people...because we're Christians"? There are a couple problems with that statement.

**First**, you're probably lying...because you absolutely do feel that way about – Whatever...and in desperation you're trying to deny it. **Secondly**, you're stealing from the power of the cross. The cross isn't about loving and accepting perfect people who..."Don't do that". It's that you are anything but perfect and Christ loves you anyway. The...'Christ loves you anyway' part should lead us straight to worship.

- Years ago, one of my biggest fears about coming on staff in ministry was this tension around what those Christians who say, "do this and don't do that". It just sort of felt like this inescapable vacuum that was going to suck me into a place I didn't want to go.

- As a Pastor who is also a father I have found my foot stuck in this trap more that I care to admit. It's this sick feeling that comes over me when I tell my kids to do, or not do something. Whatever that something is. And they appeal with the question why, or why not? It's like something in my gut just starts to rot because those do this...don't do that people are out there...and in the attempt to get my kids to perform for them...protect my kids from their label...I'm hanging religion around their necks.

There is a Hypocrisy attached to the 'Do this...don't do that' people.

**Hypocrisy:** is the act of persistently professing [beliefs](#), [opinions](#), [virtues](#), [feelings](#), [qualities](#), or [standards](#) that are inconsistent with one's actions. Hypocrisy is a [lie](#).

And when I think of the **battle scars** within the church...done by one to another. It must just drive Jesus batty.

**The gospel** of Jesus Christ and **religion** are not the same thing. If we were looking on a continuum religion would be way over here...and the Gospel of Jesus would be as far removed from it as light is from darkness. The foundational differences between **the gospel** and **religion** are basic to understand and yet vital to embrace.

**(OVERHEAD)**

**Religion says; "I obey, therefore I'm Accepted"**

Religion is a code to be followed, these things that I have to do. And...if I do them, God will be pleased with me. If I don't do them, God is angry with me. As long as I do what's right and avoid what's wrong, then God will accept me."

The **Gospel** is completely different. At the center of the gospel is Jesus Christ who endured a blood stained cross willingly allowing the wrath of God the Father to be poured out on Him instead of we who deserve it. For those who by faith accept the gospel the cry is different.

**(OVERHEAD)**

**The Gospel says, "I'm accepted, therefore I Obey"**

- ❖ The motivation for **religion** is fear.
- ❖ The motivation for the **Gospel** is grateful joy.
- ❖ **Religion** says; God's going to get me if I do this or don't do that
- ❖ The **Gospel** leads us to obey in order to preserve relationship that brings great joy and blessing into our lives. The gospel is about longing to be near Him and transformed by him.
- ❖ **Religion** measures your self-worth based on how hard you work and how good you are. So you can't help but look at and then judge those around you.
  - **50/50** Plan in marriage. Religion it's all about comparisons.

- ❖ The **Gospel** says you are saved by grace, through faith. And even the faith to believe in that grace was given to you by God, so that you would be unable to boast in anything. (Eph. 2:89)

Those who embrace the gospel understand they didn't do anything to deserve God. When you are a grace filled Christian...its way more difficult to judge others...why? You see your junk first.

Luke 11:37 – **PRAY** (For Messed up People)

By the way if you feel messed up this morning I suggest Jesus is all about you this morning. When I read through the gospel I see Jesus advocate for messed up people. In fact, the only time you see Jesus go off like a cherry bomb is when he's dealing with Religious people.

**(OVERHEAD)**

***When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. <sup>38</sup>But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised.***

Right away we see a significant difference between **Religion** and **Gospel**. Religion is always looking at performance...are they doing it right. Religion and the Gospel are sitting down together for a meal.

**(OVERHEAD)**

**The motivation of Religion is always about \_\_\_\_\_**

**The motivation of The Gospel is always about \_\_\_\_\_**

Jesus barley gets in the door and religion is like..."He missed that one". So right away we see the heart of religion. Religion evaluates what you're doing wrong in order to change you to their expectation. He didn't wash. Write that one down...we've got to fix that.

This isn't, "Oh gross...Jesus ate with dirty hands. This was a rigid ceremonial law. Their law required that you had to wash a certain way.

- Water poured from finger tips to wrist
- Palms washed with fist of opposite hand rubbing open hand
- Water poured again...this time from wrist down to fingertips
- Repeated between each course in the meal.

To miss even one detail to religion was a sin. To do it right was to find right standing with God. Jesus took them to their need to be clean...but no way does he tolerate hypocrisy. Verse 39...Jesus said: (I can just see Jesus shifting...he came for a meal...available for relationship – Religion took it to duty/performance and Jesus isn't going to let it go by).

**(OVERHEAD)**

*...you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. <sup>40</sup>You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? <sup>41</sup>But give what is inside the dish to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.*

Jesus told them and He is telling us: “Your religion has killed your heart. I am about your heart, not performance based hypocrisy”. Jesus told them they were dead. More than that...He told them about opportunity to be alive and clean.

If we would just be honest with God about the condition of our hearts...dry, dead without life – a condition that performance will not – cannot redeem. A condition requiring a perfect sacrifice ...Jesus. Then and only then can we be clean. Jesus goes on, verse 42:

**(OVERHEAD)**

*<sup>42</sup>“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.*

When you miss the heart...you miss living people. People need justice and God’s love. If all we have is rules then people are missed. Verse 43:

**(OVERHEAD)**

*<sup>43</sup>“Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places. <sup>44</sup>“Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.”*

**(OVERHEAD)**

**The end result of Religion is \_\_\_\_\_.**

Best seats...respectful greetings. “See my performance”.

**(OVERHEAD)**

**The end result of The Gospel is \_\_\_\_\_.**

Humility understands that whatever blessings come our way is in spite of who we are. It’s clear that our blessings are a gift from God.

Look at the irony of verse 44. *“...you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.”* Pharisees believed even touching the ground of a grave meant defilement. Jesus says to them, “You don’t even recognize the death and defilement you bring to those who come in contact with you. Religion doesn’t recognize that they poison people. Verse 45:

**(OVERHEAD)**

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

So religion, in the form of this lawyer asks Jesus, "So, you don't want to be a part of our club"? Remember a few weeks ago we talked about how the fullness of Jesus is acceptance of His love merging with both grace and justice? Not just loving, sacrificial, patient Jesus...but Jesus who fights for justice, who in Revelation 14 stands to declare war and in the end will send people to hell. Justice Jesus is coming out here...verse 46.

**(OVERHEAD)**

***"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."***

The lawyer must have been like..."I wish I would have kept my mouth shut". Their job in that culture was to take the Word of God and teach God's people in a way that lead them to God. Instead they crushed God's people with heavy yokes of burden. Matthew's gospel Jesus said, ***"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"***. Verse 47...Jesus' response.

**(OVERHEAD)**

***<sup>47</sup>"Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. <sup>48</sup>So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. <sup>49</sup>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.' <sup>50</sup>Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, <sup>51</sup>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.***

***<sup>52</sup>"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."***

Jesus tells Religion, "You don't want truth... in fact you're an enemy of truth". Throughout Luke Jesus brings justice up against religion. It's always the same thought process. You know the scriptures...but it's in vain because you think in them you have life but you've refused to come to God. Those you see trying to get to God...you block. This is a consistent theme of Jesus' issue with religion. Verse 53.

**(OVERHEAD)**

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

Religion poses and hides at all costs. Religion isn't about to allow for transparency...because the moment you look inside is the moment you realize your religion doesn't work. You realize

that in spite of all your hard work and rule following...you're still a mess in there. Therefore Religion refuses to look inside in humility...stands in self righteous judgment and points the finger. I don't know how else to say it...Jesus hates religion.

The essence of the gospel is not that you're good. The gospel message is that in spite of your not being good...Jesus loves you. When you really get that...it causes you to worship. Why is it difficult for so many to worship?

I think it's because we don't understand our salvation. Every time I walk in self sufficiency **(Religion)** I find it nearly impossible to worship God as my Savior.

Why? Because I'm taking away from what has already been freely given to me through Jesus. I'm exchanging His ability for my inability. Why do we do that? Honestly, because we want to hide from what's really going on in our hearts.

The irony? Luke 12...there are no secrets with Jesus. Religion hides, but the gospel knows...and...paid the price for you.