

# LUKE I Frightening Flaws of Fake Faith Lk 11:37–54

*Woes to the Pharisees and Lawyers*

*–Bill Turner*

## Introduction:

1. **A ship at sea, or a plane pilot who is only off course by 1 degree isn't very much**
    - a. One Degree seems small—but in time just 1 degree calculates into miles off course
  2. **Such is the case when religious leaders are aligned properly with God's Word**
    - a. Even though the error is small—over time it can lead someone away from God
  3. **The Scribes, Pharisees and lawyers were the Religious Leaders of Their Day**
    - a. But they had a flaw in their understanding that is only getting worse and worse
    - b. And Jesus is Pointing Out How Bad it Really Is
  4. **If Jesus interaction with the Scribes & Pharisees can be described as combustable—then this is where the match was lit...**
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## I. THE FRIGHTENING FLAWS OF FAKE FAITH

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### 1) CLEAN HANDS BUT CORRUPT HEARTS (v.37-41)

1. **PROBLEM:** Scribes & Pharisees created elaborate rules for cleaning hands  
**Which had nothing to do with hygiene, it had to do w/ symbolic purity**
  - a) Remember the word pharisee meant 'separated ones' (Mark 7:2–4)
  - b) Before eating anything, they had water poured over their hands to remove the defilement contracted by their contact with a sinful world.
  - c) But the Pharisees and Lawyers created extremely elaborate rules of how much water, what direction the water was pour at first, from hand to elbow, then 2nd from elbow to hand.
  - d) They washed their hands like a surgeon entering the surgery room and here Jesus did not wash His hands before eating!
2. **POINT:** If they were as careful about cleaning their hearts as they were about washing their hands, they would be a pure people. (Mark 7:5–8)  
**a) They Had Clean Hands — But Corrupt Hearts**
3. **APPLICATION:** We Need TRUE CLEANSING of the Heart!  
**Outward Cleanliness cannot cover wickedness within.**
  - a) God wants a clean heart and clean mind—not hands that smell like hand sanitizer.

### 2) NEGLECTING WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT (v.42)

1. **PROBLEM:** They become very meticulous in their tithing and they boasted about it to everybody who would listen!
  - a) But While They Spend Enormous amount of time tithing the smallest herbs
  - b) They totally neglected the more important parts of the Law
  - c) Jesus was not telling them to Stop Tithing—He was saying Stop Ignoring what is Most Important—The Love of God and the Justice and Mercy for Others

2. **POINT:** Because their perception grew so out of proportion they were  
'Straining at a gnat but swallowing a camel' (Matthew 23:23–24)

3. **APPLICATION:** Some Christians can hyper-focus on one passage...  
or one command to the exclusion of others just as important...

- a) Like a Married Couple who is very careful with their attendance and contribution
- b) But at home its Nagging, Criticizing, Arguing, Manipulating, Cutting each other down.
- c) But on Sunday they go through the motions but it doesn't last
- d) Husbands love your wives and live with her in an understanding way (1 Peter 3:7).
- e) Wives Respect your husband, build him up, encourage him!

### 3) **CRAVING THE PRAISE OF MEN (v.43)**

1. **PROBLEM:** The Scribes, Pharisees and Lawyers loved the praise of men

a) **They Wanted the Chief Seats of Honor in the Synagogue—**

- (1) These were seats of special honor and could be seen by all.
- (2) We see this idea today as holding a "chair" at a University.

b) **They Wanted to be praised in the streets and called Rabbi and Teacher**

- (1) They Were Status Seekers who wanted to be seen as important
- (2) They wanted to Praise of Men more than the Praise of God

2. **POINT:** All of their outward show of religion was Fake! (Luke 20:46–47)

- a) They Wanted STATUS. They Wanted RICHES. They Wanted HONOR and ESTEEM
- b) And With All That They Would Even Take Widows Houses!

3. **APPLICATION:** This wouldn't still happen today would it?

- a) Do people seek status today?
- b) Do people wear long robes today?
- c) Do people want the praise of men today?
- d) Every Religious Denomination Has a Power Structure!
  - (1) w/ Men Climbing Over the Backs of One Another to Reach the Top...
  - (2) I Don't Care if it's in Jerusalem, or Rome or Salt Lake City—it's all the same!

### 4) **SPIRITUALLY UNCLEAN (v.44)**

1. **PROBLEM:** Every year during the month leading up to Passover they  
marked and whitewashed the tombs of the dead...

- a) so that no one going to the Temple would accidentally come in contact w/ a grave
- b) by walking on them, or touching a grave accidentally, making them unclean for 7 days

2. **POINT:** Jesus is saying these religious hypocrites are like unmarked  
graves that are contaminating the people without realizing it.

- a) They Thought They Were Helping the People—But They Were Harming Them!
- b) They were corrupting everyone they came in contact with—
- c) through their False Doctrines, False Humility & False Forms of Self-Righteousness.

3. **APPLICATION:** A Tree is known by it's fruit— (Matthew 7:15–20)

**Jesus said You Will Know Them By Their Fruits...**

- a) If You See Envy, Arguing, Selfish Ambition, Status Seeking, Jealousy, hatred...

- b) All covered by a Shiny Veneer of Virtue Signaling...
- c) your seeing modern day Pharisees! (**James 3:13–18**)

## 5) **MADE SALVATION AN UNBEARABLE BURDEN FOR OTHERS (v.45-46)**

### 1. **PROBLEM: the scribes convinced the people that nobody could understand and explain the Law except trained, authorized teachers.**

- a) Which Meant—THEM! > They Were the Only Interpreters of the Law!
- b) They Actually Taught that it was MORE important to observe the scribal interpretations of the Law—than the Law itself (*Sanhedrin 11:3*).
- c) Here is How They Justified It:

“If it was a serious matter to offend against God’s Law which was sometimes hard to understand, it was a much more serious matter to offend against their interpretation which, the scribes thought, made everything clear.” <sup>1</sup>

#### d) But They DIDN’T Make it Clearer—They Made it Harder!

“On the sabbath, they taught, a man may not carry a burden ‘in his right hand or in his left hand, in his bosom or on his shoulder’. But he may carry it ‘on the back of his hand, or with his foot or with his mouth or with his elbow, or in his ear or in his hair or in his wallet (carried) mouth downwards, or between his wallet and his shirt, or in the hem of his shirt, or in his shoe or in his sandal’ (*Shabbath 10:3*). <sup>2</sup>

### 2. **POINT: To Maintain Their Power—They Put Heavy Burden on the People That They Themselves Didn’t Have to Keep!**

- a) This was just 1 of hundreds of man-made laws they were binding on the people
- b) but since they created these laws—they also created the loop holes for the laws
- c) that only they could remember or understand!

### 3. **APPLICATION: That Wouldn’t Happen Today Would it?**

- a) Are there people today making Man-Made Religious Rules?
- b) The Question of Authority can be answered with a Simple Question:  
Is it From Heaven or is it from Men? [One is from God—the other isn’t!]

## 6) **THE MURDER OF GOD’S MESSENGERS (v.47–51)**

### 1. **PROBLEM: God sent prophet after prophet who spoke the truth...**

#### **But Some Don’t Care About Truth—they only care about Power**

- a) The Religious Elites Had a Way of “Embalming the past” to white-wash the tombs of the prophets that their own ancestors had murdered
- b) Jesus is ripping the mask off the faces of these fake pharisees and its not pretty

### 2. **POINT: These same people are plotting the murder the Son of God**

- a) and they will later murder His messengers the Apostles
- b) Before God Destroys these Murderers and their city (**Matthew 23:31–36**)
- c) The City Jesus Wept Over (**Matthew 23:37–39**)

<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris, Luke, Tyndale New Testament Commentary

<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris, Luke, Tyndale New Testament Commentary

3. **APPLICATION:** “The further a society drifts from the Truth, the more it will hate those who proclaim it.” (George Orwell)

Truth is Always Under Attack by the wicked— because Truth stands in the way of the power they seek

- God’s Word is Truth—which is Why God’s Word is Under Attack
- God’s Word is Truth and His Church is the Pillar and Ground of Truth!

NOT News Media, or Government or Universities, or Laboratories or Science—God’s Word!

**7) TAKING THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE FOR OWN POWER/CONTROL (v.52)**

1. **PROBLEM:** The Scribes, Pharisees and Lawyers of the Law Took the Key of Knowledge and Taught No one could enter except Through Them!

- a) This is how they Kept Their Power...
- b) This is How They Kept Their Control...
- c) This is How They Beat Down the People...

2. **POINT:** This is Why They Hated Jesus! – Jesus Did Not Go Through Them!

- a) Jesus Didn’t Go To Their Schools! Jesus Wasn’t Trained By Their Rabbi’s!
- b) He Wan’t a Part of Their Inner-Circle!
- c) He did not get His authority from Them!

*“It’s amazing how much panic one honest man can spread among a multitude of hypocrites.” –Thomas Sewell*

3. **APPLICATION:** Even Today Some Want to Control the People by Taking the Key of Knowledge for Their own Power

- a) Even Today Many Reject Jesus Because Jesus Didn’t Get His Authority From Them!

4. **God’s word is Truth—and it is a gift from God to you!**

- a) The Bible is NOT Just for Theologians or Scholars or Priests.
- b) It is written for anyone to understand and Find God Themselves

5. **Where scripture speaks—God speaks!**

- a) You may not realize it—but hundreds of people have died so you to could have the word of God the Bible in your hands.
- b) Some were burned at the stake / Impaled / Imprisoned / Tortured / starved to death

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Many Think Pharisees were people who were strict in observing God’s commandments—and anyone who follows God’s word is a pharisee.
2. **FALSE:** The allegiance of the Pharisees was not to God but themselves!
  - They Gave the Outward Appearance that they loved God—
  - but really they loved themselves more than they loved God
3. But Jesus died so that even pharisees could know the truth and be saved!
4. Even Pharisees can change—by the grace of God!

–Notice these words of a former pharisee! (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)