

Lesson 4 – Accusations by the Pharisees

Text: Luke 11

Main Characters: God, Jesus, the disciples, Pharisees

Key Passages:

- Luke 11:2-4 – Jesus taught his disciples how to pray with a simple model prayer.
- Luke 11:53-54 – Jesus was hated by the Pharisees and other ruling Jews.

Main Storyline:

One day, after Jesus finished praying, the disciples approached Jesus and asked him to teach them how to pray, just as John had taught his disciples. While they had certainly heard prayers before, they seem to have been curious about how Jesus prayed. Jesus taught them with a model prayer (what is often called “The Lord’s Prayer”). Jesus’ prayer, while simple and short, included many important topics: praise to God and submission to his will, request for physical sustenance, forgiveness from sins, and deliverance from temptation.

Jesus then continued on the topic of prayer by giving two illustrations. In the first illustration, Jesus asked if anyone would deny a friend’s request for bread at midnight. Jesus pointed out that the request would be met, not only on the basis of friendship, but because one would not want to continue to be disturbed in the middle of the night (the persistence of the friend). Jesus said that if anyone asked, he would likewise receive. Further, Jesus asked if a man’s son asked for bread (or a fish or egg), would the man give the son a stone (or snake or scorpion)? Jesus taught that, if even evil men know how to give good gifts to their children, God would much more give (the Holy Spirit) to those who ask him.

Another time, Jesus had cast a demon out of a man who had been mute (healing him). After he had performed the miracle, the crowds were amazed, but some of the people accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub (Satan). Others demanded Jesus to show a sign to prove that he was from heaven. Jesus knew their thoughts and pointed out that it did not make sense for him to cast out demons by the power of the ruler of demons (“If Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?”). Further, Jesus asked the people what they thought of those amongst them (other than Jesus) who were able to cast out demons. Ultimately, the message Jesus was sending was that his deeds were by God’s power, not Satan’s. Jesus then taught briefly about what happens when a demon is sent out of a man; Jesus was teaching that if a person does not take an opportunity to be freed from sin, he will ultimately be worse off than at first.

While he was teaching, a woman from the crowd raised her voice and blessed Jesus’ mother. Jesus immediately redirected the attention to matters that were far more important. He said that, more than his mother should be blessed, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.

While the people were thickly gathered, Jesus made comments about how that generation wanted a sign. In fact, Jesus said, no sign would be given to it except for the sign of Jonah (as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days, so would Jesus be in the earth). Further, Jesus taught that the lamp of the body is the eye. When the eye is good, the whole body is full of light. When the eye is bad, the body is also full of darkness. It seems that Jesus was teaching the people that they should have open and clear minds about what they were seeing so as not to miss the true purpose of Jesus.

As he was teaching, a Pharisee invited Jesus to eat with him; Jesus agreed. The Pharisee noticed that Jesus did not wash before dinner and apparently raised an issue with Jesus. Jesus took the opportunity to teach against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, pointing out that while they appeared to be good on the outside, inside they were full of greed and wickedness. As Jesus was teaching against the Pharisees and lawyers, the Pharisees were arguing fiercely, hoping to catch him saying something wrong and accuse him.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Prayer is extremely important to our spiritual lives; we must learn to pray as Jesus did.
- 2.) We cannot be blind to the truth of God; if we are honest with ourselves, we will learn and understand.
- 3.) Hypocrisy is a dangerous flaw; we must make sure that our hearts are right as well as our actions.