

A Plea for Kingdom Honesty - Part 1

by Don Basham

Don Basham's sermon emphasizes the importance of authenticity in faith and the dangers of hypocrisy, urging believers to align their lives with God's true intentions.

Duration: 35:28

Scripture: Luke 19:47 - 20:1, Luke 20:6, Acts 4:31-32, Acts 7:51

Topics: "Honesty"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the power and miracles experienced by the early church as recorded in Acts 4. The disciples prayed and were filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking the word of God boldly. The believers were united in heart and soul, sharing everything they had. The sermon also discusses the importance of humility, repentance, and honesty in our relationship with God, using examples from the stories of David, Jesus having lunch with people, and the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

Transcript

I'm calling what I'm talking about today a plea for kingdom honesty, and basically it's dealing with the subject of hypocrisy. Turn with me to John 11. We're going to be looking at quite a few scriptures this morning.

John 11 contains the story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and I want to make a little spiritual application about one verse out of that story. Jesus, you know, hears that Lazarus is sick, but he doesn't come to pray for him, and Lazarus dies, and he's been dead by four days by the time Jesus appears on the scene, and Mary and Martha take him out to the tomb that's already been closed, and Jesus tells them to roll away the stone, and Martha, Lazarus' sister, protests. He says, Lord, by this time he's stinking, for he's been dead four days.

And Jesus said unto her, said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God? And then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always. That's what you call spiritual confidence.

But because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came

forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin.

And Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Now, I think there's a kind of a spiritual lesson to be learned from the raising of Lazarus from the dead, because when Jesus spoke the word of life to Lazarus, and commanded him to come forth, there was such tremendous power and life in the words that Jesus spoke that it literally reversed the process of death, and new life came to Lazarus. Some of you may have heard me mention from time to time an old friend that had a great influence on my life years ago, a man named Rufus Mosley, who was sort of a prophet born out of a due time.

And I remember hearing Brother Rufus say one time, remarking about the tremendous power in the ministry of Jesus and the life that attended his words. He asked some of us a question one time. He said, Do you know why Jesus called Lazarus by name and told him to come forth? And we said, No.

He said, Well, if he hadn't specified who he wanted, the whole hillside would have given up its dead. And I think there may be some truth in that. But anyway, Jesus spoke the word of life, and Lazarus came forth full of new spiritual life, literally raised from the dead.

But the interesting thing was, he was still bound by his grave clothes. He was still wrapped in the grave wrappings and had a napkin over his face. And Jesus turned to some of the men standing around, and he said, Untie him and let him go.

So while Jesus had spoken the word of life to Lazarus, and Lazarus came forth alive, he still had, he was still bound and fettered by grave clothes. And I want to suggest to you that, in a kind of a parabolic way, that even today when Jesus speaks life to us, and for many of us has literally brought us out of a form of death, the fact that we are resurrected or the fact that we are raised to new life in Christ doesn't automatically mean that all the grave clothes that bind us are done away. And the unwrapping of those grave clothes is a kind of process that takes time.

And I believe the thing David was touching on and that I want to talk about today, hypocrisy and the problem that it causes, which stems out of our religiosity and out of our religious performance and out of centuries of inadequate thinking about the things of God, that all of the things that contribute to hypocrisy, and those things are like the grave clothes that fetter us, all of those things take time to be unraveled and unwrap from us in order that we may function the way God intends. And that's what I want to try to do today, is to help us understand how God feels about some of these things and what God intends that we do about them and how we can more than nearly think God's thoughts after him. Turn with me back to Isaiah chapter 55.

One thing you can say about a religious person or a person who knows about religious performance but who really doesn't understand much about God himself is that he hasn't understood, doesn't understand the way God thinks or the way God acts or how God feels. And Isaiah said this to the children of Israel in Isaiah 55, beginning with verse 8, when he said, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Some years ago the Lord led me in the most direct way that I've ever been led concerning what to write, led me to write a little book called True and False Prophets. And I really believe in many ways it's the most significant of all the books I've written. It certainly hasn't sold the best and it certainly hasn't been all that popular, but I still think that it's the most, in some ways, the most significant book that I've written.

And the thing that was impressed upon me so intensely as I was doing the research on that book, biblical research and as I was compiling the material for it, was how many ways that I myself as well as other people failed to understand how God felt and how God looked about certain things. And I became painfully aware that I had really a very limited understanding of how God viewed our situation. Some of you who have read the book may recall that one of the basic themes of it is that a man can work miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit and still be a false prophet.

And that the true mark of a true prophet, the marks of a true or false prophet, isn't to be determined by the miracles in his ministry but by the character of his life. And I remember the shock that came early on, even before I started to write that book, that I began to realize this, that people could, by God's power, could do all sorts of things and their personal lives be just really despicable. And yet most Christians don't understand that.

Most Christians have mistakenly felt that, well, if God blesses a man, it must mean that the man's holy. And nothing could be further from the truth. God does bless holy men, but God blesses unholy men.

God blesses a lot of things He doesn't approve of. And so in doing the research on that book, I came to realize how far I was in my own thinking from being able to think God's thoughts after Him. And some of the things that I just thought were horrible, God just scarcely noticed.

And some things that I thought were practically all right, God utterly abhors. So what I want to try to do today is to help us understand how God feels about things concerning the subject of hypocrisy and of self-righteousness and the things that David began to talk about. I want to do that, first of all, by examining two different stories or two different incidents in Scripture.

One is the story of David and Bathsheba. We won't read the story, but I do want you to turn to Psalm 51, and I want to read a part of that psalm. And then we want to look at the story of Ananias and Sapphira in the Book of Acts.

It's a rather strange and seemingly unconnected things that we're comparing, but as we go on, you'll see why I'm doing what I'm doing. Right at the beginning of this Psalm 51, underneath it, there's the little phrase or description that gives some information about the psalm. And in Psalm 51, it says to the chief musician, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

So this psalm is written, which is the expression of David's repentance for his sin in having Uriah killed and taking Bathsheba as his wife. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Against thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Purge me with isophon, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities, and create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me,

and restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." We don't need to read any further, but I want to just point out about David that even though this, as I said the other day, represented a very black period in David's life, perhaps the blackest, there's no question but what he received, the forgiveness he sought, and that he remained, even for that blot upon his character, he remained and is still referred to as the man after God's own heart.

And one of the amazing and thrilling things to me about all of scripture is the fact that God, even after this terrible thing happened, God did not desert David, but still used him in his purpose, and as we're all aware, David is the lineage through whom our Lord Jesus Christ came. It really astounds me, it amazes me at the compassion and the forgiving love of God to realize that one of the major forebearers of our Savior was an adulterer and a murderer, and yet he's still known as the man after God's own heart, and significantly, I think, the scriptures refer to Jesus not as son of Solomon or son of somebody else, but refers to him as son of David, and Jesus in the New Testament is referred to as the son of David. I'm saying all that to make a point, not in any way to wink at immorality, but to say that God recognizes and understands human weakness, and that even with this terrible thing that happened, it was because David confessed it honestly and openly and said, basically, God, it's before you that I've sinned, and because he had a broken and contrite spirit.

I've become increasingly aware that God is a lot more interested in our attitude about our disobedience than he is just in the disobedience itself. We're all going to fall short, we're all going to do stupid things or sinful things, but the important thing in the mind of God is, is what is our own reaction about that? What is our own attitude about it? And he waits until, if we are thoroughly repentant and come under conviction and repent, confess and repent, then it's dealt with once and for all. And God's major concern isn't that we stumble, his major concern is our humility and our penitence and our repentance afterwards.

Now, I want to contrast God's dealing with this situation and David with a story over in the fourth chapter of Acts. So turn with me over there. The fourth and fifth chapters of Acts in that part of, is recording those early days of the church when there was such great power and such great miracles and such great awesome spiritual presence upon the people of God that the whole area stood in awe.

And in Acts 4, after the disciples had been praying in a certain place after they'd been persecuted, and thank God that they're worthy to suffer persecution, verse 31 says, When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke the word of God with boldness, and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul. And neither said any of them that all of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

Not just grace, but great grace, whatever that means. Superlative kind of expression about the unusual anointing and power and presence of God upon the early disciples. Well, to paraphrase the story, you know what happens as those that had excess property would sell it and bring the money to the apostles' feet, and it was being distributed to those as the apostles decided it was needed.

And Barnabas, one of the apostles, was one who sold some land and gave it for the money to be distributed. Then down in chapter 5, it says, But a certain man named Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part

and laid it at the apostles' feet. And Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it was remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

And Ananias, hearing that, comes under conviction and falls down dead. Well, his wife isn't there, she comes in a little later, and the young men carry him out and bury him. And his wife comes in, and Peter deliberately tricks her.

I mean, he asks her point blank if they had actually sold the land for so much and given the money to the church, and he gave her the opportunity to be honest, but she carried on the deception, the lie, and condemned herself by her own words. She said, Peter answered and said unto her, Tell me whether you sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, and for so much.

Yea, that's what my husband says right. That's what we did. Peter said to her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

And then she fell down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost. And the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church.

I bet it did after that. Now, the point I want to make is the contrast in the two kinds of sin. The gross thing that David did when committing adultery and then plotting the murder of the woman that he had committed adultery with, and yet how that was handled by David and by the Lord and forgiven.

And then over in the New Testament is this case where all that was really, it amounts to by today's standard, is that people fibbed about what they gave to the Lord. It's sort of like cheating on the statement of how much you give to the church. Like cheating on your income tax, you know, where you only really give \$500 to charity, but on your income tax you say you gave \$1000.

The sort of thing that literally millions of people are guilty of today. Just a little dishonesty. Just a little bit of dishonesty.

All that Ananias and Sapphira really wanted to do was to appear to be more spiritual than they really were. They wanted to have the reputation for being sacrificial givers without having to pay the price for it. What they were guilty of simply was a kind of hypocrisy.

This is what hypocrisy is, the desire to appear more spiritual than you really are. And so we put the sin of hypocrisy, that's not all it is, but this was an example of it. This is what Ananias and Sapphira were guilty.

Put the sin of hypocrisy against the sin of adultery and murder and see which one God treats the most charitably. Now I'm saying that to point out to us that we need to rethink our thinking about how God views things. God says, my thoughts aren't your thoughts and my ways aren't your ways as high as the heaven is from the earth.

Are my thoughts higher than your thoughts and my ways than your ways? And I think we need to understand that. We have been so conditioned through centuries of religious thinking, so still bound up by these grave clothes of dead religious orthodoxy, that when Jesus Christ brings fresh life into us and we

begin to move in the things of the Spirit, we still trip over those grave ramparts. And we haven't yet come to understand how God views things and how serious God views some of the things that we think are trivial and some of the things that we think are the most grave and the most serious God thinks are relatively trivial.

Now please don't misunderstand me, I'm not winking at immorality, I'm just making a point about how important it is for us to understand how God feels about hypocrisy. To be a hypocrite, to pretend to be more spiritual than you are, is to lie not only to men but to the Holy Ghost. Do you know why I feel God considers this so much of an affront? It's that men are trying to use Him in a kind of dishonest way.

They're trying to use a spiritual reputation to consider trying to pretend to have the Holy Spirit in their lives in a way that will make them pretend to be spiritual when they're really dishonest. And God will not be privy to that kind of use, to that kind of abuse, that kind of misuse. And I think it's a stench in His nostrils.

And yet there are so many ways in which religious people and to some degree even we today fall prey to them. The difference between what offends God and what offends man, the difference in the way God looks at things and the way man looks at things. Derek was talking the other day about the time when Samuel came to the house of Jesse to anoint a king, and Jesse ran all his sons by and that wasn't any of them, and he finally said, Don't you have any more? And little boy David came in and was anointed.

But in his talking to Jesse, Jesse was recommending some of his older strong sons, and Samuel refused those. He said to Jesse, You don't understand. The Lord sees not as man sees.

For man looks on the outside, but God looks on the heart. All right. The point I'm making is that religion or religious tradition basically is the incubator or the hothouse or the unhealthy environment where dishonesty and hypocrisy are spawned and where they flourish.

The particular kind of obnoxious dishonesty and hypocrisy which is a stench in the nostrils of God. Religious dishonesty and hypocrisy which I really believe is more of an affront to God than just plain old being a thief or being dishonest. And this thing is so powerful and is so entrenched in religious people that when it's touched or when it's exposed, violence and madness is revealed.

When Jesus came, this is the reason that the men, that the scribes and Pharisees tried to put Jesus to death. Turn with me to John chapter 5. We should look at just a couple of examples where this was true. Chapter 5 is the story where Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath day, and verse 15 says, the man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus and sought to slay him because he had done these things on the Sabbath day. And Jesus answered them, my father worketh hitherto and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him because he not only had broken the Sabbath but said also that God was his father making himself equal with God.

The hypocrisy in the scribes and the Pharisees and the Jews of that day, as Derek was pointing out the other day, the hypocrisy, the preoccupation with religious performance so filled their thoughts and their minds and their hearts and they had so identified their own religious reputation with their own traditions that any violation of the tradition or any exposure of that misapplication of interest and of devotion and any comparison that would indicate that the well-being of a single individual person, to have him healed or to have him raised for the dead, that the welfare of the person could possibly be more important than the

keeping of the religious ritual, so enraged the scribes and Pharisees that they tried to kill Jesus. Because Jesus came exposing the fact that the Sabbath was not, that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man. In Acts chapter 7, this is the stoning of Stephen, where he's preaching under the power of the Holy Spirit and he rehearses the dealings of God with the children of Israel through all of the years and he's tracing the history of Israel and he comes down to the present day and again, as Derek said, when he revealed it to them, when he made the statement that God doesn't dwell in temples, in a temple made by human hands, they became enraged.

Of course, he took it a little further in verse 51. He said, Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. As your fathers did, so do ye.

Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before the coming of the just one, of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it. And when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

And then they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and didn't want to hear any more, and ran upon him with one accord and cast him out of the city and stoned him. When truth appears, or when the real truth is proclaimed, when spiritual reality appears on the scene and confronts or comes up against hypocrisy, one of two things is going to happen. Either the hypocrite is going to be stripped of his grave clothes and set free, or he's going to turn into a murderer.

The truth will either make you a killer or set you free, one or the other. And I think when we see the intensity of the evil and the spirit that lies behind hypocrisy, which is a murderous, vengeful spirit, we can see why God considers hypocrisy as he considers it. We're talking about when truth appears on the scene and the effect it has on people.

I want to share with you a couple of stories out of scripture now about how the presence of Jesus in a given situation elicits a certain response from people, depending upon what their motive is and what kind of person they are. These two scriptures, which are both in Luke 19, have to do with situations where Jesus went to have lunch with somebody. How many of you would like to take Jesus out to lunch sometime? It would be quite a thrilling experience, wouldn't it, to have the Lord literally, visibly sitting present with you at the table? This is exactly what happens in both of these cases.

The first one is in Luke 19, and it's the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus. Remember, Zacchaeus was a publican, one of the chief publicans. A publican was kind of an Israeli tax collector, and the most despised, perhaps, of all the Jewish people, because the Romans had laid terrific tax burdens upon the Jewish people.

And the Romans had their own tax collectors, but the Roman tax collectors then would in turn hire assistants, which were usually Jewish men, who were the publicans who would actually go out and collect the taxes. And they were really a despised lot, and Zacchaeus was one of those. There was a reason for them being despised.

One is that not only were the tax burdens heavy, but the way taxes were levied in those days, the more taxes the guy levied, the more money he could keep for himself. And so there was a lot of graft and that

sort of thing, and Zacchaeus himself was a typical publican, a typical tax collector. He was guilty of graft himself.

But anyway, he's a little guy, and he's got a heart really after God. There's something in him that's hungry, and he wants to see the Lord, and it's the days when the Lord's got lots of crowds of people around him, and every time Zacchaeus tries to get a glimpse of him, he's too short to see over people. So he picks out this little scheme that Jesus is coming down the street, and so he gets ahead of the crowds.

He runs down the street and climbs up in this sycamore tree so that he can see the Lord when he comes by. And I think his eagerness to see the Lord tells us something about, even though he was a despised little fellow and as crooked as a turnstile, he still really had a heart for God. So he ran before and climbed into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down, for today I must abide at thy house. Now can't you imagine the response in that little publican, how his heart must have leaped, and he shinnied down out of that tree, and the sense of gratitude that in spite of his despised profession here, he had the opportunity to take Jesus home to lunch. But notice what the presence of the Lord with Zacchaeus or in his home does.

It immediately does its work. It's the presence of God and the holiness of Jesus that immediately converts Zacchaeus. Of course, the people who saw Jesus going with him said, a murmured said, he was going to be the guest with a man that was a sinner, because the publicans were really low on the social totem pole.

And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I've taken anything from any man by false accusation, and you can better believe he had, because he's a typical publican. If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation.

Come to this house for so as much as he also is a son of Abraham. So because of Zacchaeus' heart, when the light of God appeared in his presence, or when Jesus came to stay in his house, conviction came, repentance came, and glad confession came. And Zacchaeus said, I'll give half of everything that I have to the poor, and all the people I've defrauded, Lord, I'll restore it fourfold.

And he was full of joy because salvation had come to his house. Now the reason for that was that he had a heart after God, that his heart was pure. He knew he was a sinner.

He knew he was despised, but he was hungry for God. And so when he met the truth and met the light, he responded in a way that brought redemption. Now turn back to Luke chapter 7. I'll read another story about where Jesus goes to lunch with another guy.

And one of the Pharisees, verse 36 in chapter 7, one of the Pharisees desired him, that is Jesus, that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat at the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him, this is Simon the Pharisee that had invited Jesus, when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spoke within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet,

would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he said, Master, say on.

And then Jesus tells this story. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors. The one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty.

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most. And Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.

And he said to him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, and thou gavest me no water for my feet. But she has washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto her, Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much.

But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And he could have said unto Simon, Do you understand what I'm saying? Now here's the two stories where Jesus goes to lunch with two different men.

And the Pharisee was the respected man in the community. Religious leader, highly respected, reputation, man of wealth and prominence. And Zacchaeus, that little grubby publican that everybody spit on if they had a chance.

But the difference was in attitude. Zacchaeus had a heart for God, and the Pharisee was a hypocrite. And the thing about hypocrisy, when it meets truth or when it meets spiritual light, is that it doesn't allow the light to judge it, it judges the light.

Zacchaeus allowed the light of God to judge his life and repented and found salvation, but the hypocrite couldn't find salvation because he sat there judging the light, judging the Son of God. And this is one of the reasons why God is so adamant in the way he feels about hypocrites and about the sin of hypocrisy. All right, let's turn and see some of Jesus' own words.

Turn to Matthew 23. Read the first fifteen verses. Then spoke Jesus to the multitude and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.

But do not ye after their works, for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do, for to be seen of men.

They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at the feast, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven.

Neither be ye called Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant, and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be

exalted. Notice that Jesus is talking here to his disciples in the hearing of the multitude.

The scribes and the Pharisees who were there. And at this point, then, he switches from talking to his disciples and begins, then, to speak to the religious guys who are around the edge, who are always there trying to listen to Jesus and to trip him up and to find fault with what he's doing. And this is when he lets them have it with both barrels.

Hypocrites, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you shall receive the greater damnation.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you encompass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he's made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it's nothing, but whoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he's a debtor. And so Jesus goes on and on, rebuking and castigating the scribes and the Pharisees.

Down in verse 23. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. These ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you may clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Well, we could go on and on. There are other places where Jesus does the same thing.

But you know, in a way, it almost seems out of character with the Lord Jesus to do this. There's no place else in the scripture where we see him this indignant, except perhaps momentarily at the temple when he drives out the money changers. But I mean here, he really levels a blast at these people, which almost seems out of character.

But what he's feeling is the righteous indignation of God himself against what the scribes and Pharisees represent because of their hypocrisy. Now, you know, the reason why God, I think, feels so strongly about that and why the Lord felt so strongly about it is it was that the scribes and the Pharisees and the Jewish religious leaders were the ones who held in their hands the spiritual destiny of Israel.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/19/SID19625.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/don-basham/a-plea-for-kingdom-honesty-part-1/>

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