

## **WEEK 26 DAY 1**

Today's Reading: Luke 11:37-54

In today's reading, we see Jesus had some strong feelings toward the actions of the Pharisees and the lawyers. The Pharisees and scribes were the Jewish religious leaders at that time. Jesus embodied the Father's love and rebuked the Pharisees for their greed, wickedness and lack of love. The Pharisees knew the right way to act in order to keep the Law, but they acted without love. Furthermore, Jesus rebuked them because the way they were acting harmed the people around them. Jesus brought to light their flaws to show them that the way of the kingdom is love and mercy, not pride and greed.

The two greatest commandments are to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" and to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37, 39). The Pharisees would have escaped the rebuke of Jesus if they had loved God and loved people as commanded. Jesus taught us to walk in love rather than legalism and pride.

•How can we share God's love with those around us?

### **PRAYER:**

God, You are love, and You are kind. Help me walk in love and kindness rather than pride.

**Bonus Reading: Matthew 22:34-40**

## WEEK 26 DAY 2

### Today's Reading: Matthew 23

In today's reading, we find Matthew's account of Jesus' rebuking the Pharisees for their actions. Take note of what verse 3 says: The scribes and Pharisees "preach, but do not practice." In other words, they "talked the talk" but did not "walk the walk." This idea is shown throughout the reading in the other rebukes from Jesus.

The Pharisees lived in hypocrisy, as Jesus pointed out, because of their lack of care for people and increased self-indulgence. Since the Pharisees were at the top of the social class, they wanted to build themselves up rather than build the kingdom of God. Not only was hypocrisy an issue the Pharisees faced but so was pride.

The Pharisees' pride was evident in how they wanted to look good in front of those around them. Jesus spoke on the importance of humility rather than pride when He said in verse 11, "The greatest among you shall be your servant," and warned the Pharisees of their pridefulness in verse 12, saying, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled." Jesus valued mercy, justice and faithfulness rather than pride and hypocrisy (Matthew 5:23).

- Has the Lord shown you areas of weakness in your life?  
What are they?
- Surrender these to God and ask Him to help purify your heart.

### PRAYER:

Lord, thank You for illuminating my weaknesses. I ask You, Holy Spirit, to reveal where my flesh is weak and help me walk in the ways that please You.

**Bonus Reading: 1 Peter 5:5-7;  
Philippians 2:1-11**

## **WEEK 26 DAY 3**

Today's Reading: Luke 11:37-54;  
Matthew 23

In Luke 11 and Matthew 23, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and scribes for their actions. In Matthew's account, more so than in Luke's, seven specific rebukes give more insight into the wrong done by the Pharisees. In both accounts, pride and hypocrisy are the most prevalent issues shown.

In Luke's account, we observe the welcoming nature of Jesus as He shared a meal with the Pharisees. Jesus did not come into the Pharisees' house and openly rebuke them; instead, the Pharisees were the first to point out a flaw they saw in Jesus. This interaction explains the rebukes Jesus gave the Pharisees in the rest of Luke 11 and Matthew 23.

The Pharisees were more concerned with how others viewed them than walking in love, as Jesus demonstrated and taught. Jesus knew there was a balance needed to keep the spirit of the law while abiding by the law that legalism failed to uphold. Luke 11 and Matthew 23 show the legalism of the Pharisees and how Jesus rebuked that culture of legalism.

•Are there ways you are practicing legalism? How so? Give those to God and allow Him to soften your heart to do as He did.

### **PRAYER:**

God, thank You for Your mercy toward me. I repent for striving for Your love. Remind me that Your love is shown through Your Son's death and Resurrection.

## **WEEK 26 DAY 4**

Today's Reading: Luke 11:37-54;  
Matthew 23

Throughout this week, we have seen Scripture caution against legalism, pride and hypocrisy. Sadly, legalism is still prevalent today, and we often fall into the trap of thinking we must earn God's love, even though Jesus' death and Resurrection prove otherwise (1 John 4:8-10). One need not look beyond the rise of social media platforms and influence to recognize that pride is a problem. In contrast, Jesus said, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled" (Matthew 23:12). Hypocrisy can be the most damaging to our witness, when we affirm the truth of Scripture with our mouths, but do not align our lives and decisions accordingly. Like Timothy, we should "set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

The predominant issues of the Pharisees during the time Jesus walked the earth are in many ways the same as ours today, but we must remember Jesus thoughtfully rebuked them, and it was for their good. God will often convict us of our sin in order for us to repent and ask forgiveness. Remember, God is love (1 John 4:8), so He will act in love and mercy toward us. We have been forgiven because of Jesus' sacrifice, so let us continue to thank Him and ask Him for the forgiveness He freely gave us.

- Where has the Lord revealed sin in your life? Repent and ask for forgiveness and thank Jesus that He has already forgiven you.

## **PRAYER:**

Jesus, thank You for forgiving my sins and allowing me to be in a relationship with You now.

**Bonus Reading: 1 John 4:8-10;  
Matthew 23:12; 1 Timothy 4:12**

## **WEEK 26 DAY 5**

Today's Reading: Luke 11:37-54; 12;  
Matthew 23

This week we have explored the account of Jesus' calling out the Pharisees for their legalism and sin.

The rebuke of the Pharisees was one way Jesus showed them the log in their own eyes before they judged others (see Matthew 7:1-5).

Since the Pharisees were the religious rulers of that day, the people looked up to them. We read this week how the Pharisees led the people poorly, so Jesus spoke to the people directly. As we will read next week, Jesus taught the people how to act in order to follow God. Jesus began to point the people back to Himself and His Father, which brought peace, rather than looking to the Pharisees.

- What was your biggest takeaway from this week's reading?
- What are you looking forward to in next week's reading of Luke 12?

### **PRAYER:**

God, thank You for teaching me this week through Your Word. I pray that You continue to teach me from Your Word and lead me closer to You.

**Bonus Reading: Matthew 7:1-5**