



Luke 11

Luke 11
Tape #8055
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Luke chapter eleven as we continue our journey through the scriptures.

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he had ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples (11:1).

Prayer was a very important and integral part of the life of Christ. You could say concerning Jesus that He was a man of prayer. It is interesting, however, that when it speaks of Jesus asking, it is a different Greek word. When we ask it's in the form of a petition. When Jesus asked, it was as in consultation. It was not really a petition as such but just a talking to the Father because, of course, Jesus had been with the Father from the beginning and in the beginning They said, Let us make man in Our image and after Our likeness, so the divine counsel. So when Jesus was praying, His was more the communion, the divine counsel as He talked with the Father concerning the issues of His ministry and mission here on the earth. But He stayed in that constant communion with the Father and thus the disciples in observing how that Jesus was always praying before every major decision, before every major manifestation of God's presence and power, He was in prayer. And so once more Jesus is praying. The disciples recognizing that this is the pattern of His life. When He was through praying, one of them came and said, Lord, would you teach us to pray? John taught his disciples. You teach us.

And he said unto them, When you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name (11:2).

So the first thing in prayer is relationship. Our Father. You see, if you are not a child of God you have no access to the Father. In the Old Testament period, to come to God you had to go through the priest and through many sacrifices. You could not come directly to God. You had the priest as your mediator and you would bring your sacrifice to him. He would go to God for you. But now through Jesus Christ we have the relationship of sons. And thus, we can come and with this relationship, Father in heaven, access to God is made available and we can bring our petitions and our requests to Him. "Our Father which art in heaven," the address of the prayer. The God who has created the heavens and the earth. And I'm coming to Him.

In the fourth chapter of the book of Acts, as the disciples had been threatened not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus, and lest they would experience dire consequences, they came to the body of Christ and they shared the threats that were made to them by the religious leaders and they knew that trouble was brewing. And so they joined together in prayer and they began the prayer by saying, "O Lord, Thou art God, Thou has created the heavens, and the earth, and everything that is in them" (Acts 4:24). And then they began to quote the scripture that prophesied of the very things they had experienced that day. Lord, You're God, You're the creator of the heaven and the earth and everything that is in it. How we need to know that in prayer. How that gives us confidence when we bring to Him our requests.

So many times when we go to prayer, we're so overwhelmed by our problem that all we can see is the problem. It just looms like a giant before us. And we can see no answer, no solution. But when you begin your prayer, "O Lord, Thou art God, You created the heavens and the earth and everything that is in them," and I look out at this vast universe, then my problem doesn't look so big anymore. The God who created the universe and all of the life forms within it surely can handle this little issue that I'm faced with. It is nothing for Thee, O Lord, to help. And we need to realize the One that we are talking to is the Creator. And that He knows all about our situation.

Prayer is not sharing time. Okay, Lord, this is information time. I want you to know what's going on in my life. He knows what's going on in your life. And the Bible tells us that He knows what you have need of before you even ask Him. So prayer is time with just communing with the Father and laying bare our hearts and seeking His help and His strength. "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name." Holy, sacred is Your name.

Now, His name is not God. That's His title. His name is Yahweh or Jehovah and we don't know for sure just how it should be phonetically sounded because all we have are the consonants. But "the name of the Lord" or the name Jehovah or Yahweh, the scripture said, "is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and are safe" (Proverbs 18:10). So that "Hallowed be Thy name," throughout the Psalms there is the mention of the name of the Lord. It was very important, in fact, the reason why we don't know how to pronounce it is that the Jews felt that the name of God was so holy that human lips should not even utter it. And thus, no endeavor to utter the name of God. They would just refer to Him as the name but no endeavor to pronounce at all. In fact, it causes the Jews sort of to shutter when we Gentiles are guessing at Yahweh or Jehovah. They get sort of uptight because the name of God is so reverend, so holy to them that they feel that human lips should not even utter the name. "Hallowed be Thy name." And then the first petition and prayer for us is petition, asking God for our need. But our first concern should not be our own personal needs but our first concern should be for the kingdom of God. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these other things," referring to our needs, what we're going to eat, what we're going to drink, what we're going to wear, all these things "will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). Get your priorities right.

The kingdom of God first. Concern for the kingdom of God first. And as we look at the world in which we live today, and as we see the problems of our society, we observe the moral breakdown, the anarchy, how that stirs in our heart to pray for, Lord,

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done (11:2),

The pain, the suffering, the misery that we experience in this world should only sharpen our focus on heavenly things and increase our desire for the kingdom of God to come. Lord, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done."

in earth, even as it is in heaven (11:2).

This is a recognition that the world today is in rebellion against God. And I don't think that that point needs to be argued at all. As we look around at the world in which we live, it is anti-God and anti-Christ. It's in rebellion against the law of God and against the authority of God. And it would appear that these worldly entities, the powers of darkness, are in control of most of the media so that we are always seeing on the media those things that are opposed to the laws of God and to the holiness of God and to the purity of God. They are advocating, and people get on and they advocate all kinds of unrighteous, unholy activities in defiance of God and the laws of God. And whenever we see this, and we see the disaster that results from it, from our hearts there comes that spontaneous cry, O Lord, come quickly, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.

It's interesting that the last prayer of the Bible is for the coming kingdom. The end of the book of Revelation as God closed off His revelation of Himself to man, the Lord said to John, "Behold I come quickly." And John responded, "Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. Amen" (Revelation 22:20). That prayer of John is repeated so often by us as we look at the world and conditions today. "Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." Because we want to see the will of God being done here on earth, even as it is in heaven. The will of God is not being done here on earth. It is the will of man in rebellion against God. But we want to see God's kingdom come and His will being done.

We move from the broad kingdom of God to our own personal needs and one thing that we do need is bread. And bread does represent those things that are necessary to sustain life. Bread is essential to sustain life. Food is important and necessary in the sustenance of man. Therefore,

Give us this day our daily bread (11:3).

Asking God for that personal need that we have to sustain ourselves. Nothing wrong with that. There are people that have that holier-than-thou, and they sort of say, I never like to ask God anything for myself. Come on, give me a break. If you search behind all of your motives in prayer, you'll find that most of them are selfish motives if you really look close enough. That's why I don't try to look too closely. And then,

Forgive us our sins (11:4);

From a physical standpoint, I need daily bread. From a spiritual standpoint, my greatest need spiritually is the forgiveness of my sins. Because if my sins aren't forgiven, then my sins will be judged. And thus I

need the forgiveness of my sins lest I stand before God in judgment. "Forgive us our sins." Thank God He has provided through Jesus Christ the means whereby our sins can be forgiven. And so the prayer, "Forgive us our sins." But then another petition or statement is added to that,

for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us (11:4).

Lord, I've done things that offended You. Forgive me. And Lord, I do forgive those who have done things that offended me. It's important that we also have a forgiving heart. That we not hold against someone else a wrong that is real or imagined that they have done to us. Oh how Satan likes to get in and just destroy us with that feeling of vengeance and get even or I'll never forgive you for that kind of an attitude. And Jesus spoke a lot about forgiveness and about the importance of our forgiving. And then,

Lead us not into temptation (11:4);

Difficult kind of a petition because James said, "Let no man when he is tempted, say that I am tempted of God: because God does not tempt men with evil: But a man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. And when that lust comes to fruition, it brings sin" (James 1:13-15). So Lord, keep me from those things that would arouse the fleshly nature.

Now as we get to the end of the chapter, Jesus is going to be talking about how that the light of the soul is the eye. And "if your eye is single, then your body is full of light; but if the light that is in you is dark, how great is your darkness" (Matthew 6:22,23)! It is through the eye that so much temptation comes.

And of course today, living in this society when we have now such means of communication and the ability to, you don't have to visualize anything, you can see things. As television is getting more rotten all the time. As they are really constantly sort of pressing the limits to see how far they can go without sanction. And as more and more we are seeing filth on television that you would not dream to have seen in times past but they are exposing more and more. And of course the United States is a little bit behind Europe in these things and some of the other nations where these media is really putting blatantly before people all kinds of suggestive, arousing things. Now, Lord, help me to leave that thing off if necessary rather than to sit there and pollute my mind with the junk that Satan is offering to destroy people today on the tube. I don't know. It may be that we will come to a time when we'll have to take a very strong stand against this whole corrupt media that is just filling the minds of people with all kinds of filth and really leaving the nation down the tube to destruction.

So "Lead us not into temptation." Lord, keep me from those things that would pander to my fleshly desires and turn me away from you.

deliver me from that evil (11:4).

And having given to them the model, and that's not to be repeated verbatim as a rote kind of a thing, but it's sort of a pattern for prayer, a model for prayer.

And he said unto them (11:5),

Still talking on the subject of prayer.

Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to my house, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you (11:5-7).

Usually the houses were just one room. There was a divider in the middle and for warmth the family all slept together in the same bed, which is not really a bed but mats on the floor, but they had them close to each other for warmth. And, of course, if one gets up, then all of the children are aroused and they awaken and you know how children are when they wake up at night, hard to get them back to sleep. So you can see the picture. Midnight, you're settled comfortably in bed. Here comes this knock on the door insistent and persistent. And it's your neighbor and he's wanting to borrow some bread. It's midnight, man. And so the objection, I can't get up. I'm in bed. The kids are all asleep. Go away.

But I say unto you [Jesus said], Though he will not rise and give to him, because he is his friend (11:8),

If you're my friend, go home. But he won't do it because he is his friend but,

yet because of his importunity (11:8)

That's translated in other versions, his shameful persistence. That is, he just keeps knocking. You sort of

think, Oh I hope I didn't hear anything. Maybe he'll go away and you stay there in bed for a while. It's warm, it's comfortable. You don't want to disturb everybody but the guy just keeps knocking. Finally, you think, I'm not going to get rid of him until I get up and give him the bread. So "yet because of his importunity," his shameless persistence,

he will rise and give him as many as he needs. And I say unto you, Ask (11:8,9),

I believe that Jesus is teaching here by contrast. He's not saying that you've got to just persist with God. You've got to bug God until He gives in. I think that the contrast is here. That with a friend, though he will not do for a friend yet because if you're persistent enough, he'll give in. I don't think that we have to break down God's resistance. I don't think that that is really at all the purpose of prayer. I don't think that God is reluctant to give to us that which is right and that which is good. But I believe that every good thing we've ever asked God for, God has already determined to give it to us. And prayer opens the door to allow God to do what He is wanting to do all along.

In John the fifteenth chapter, Jesus is talking to His disciples. He said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you, and ordained that you should be my disciples, and that you should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you" (John 15:16). Not He shall, but He may. In other words, it opens the door to allow God to do what He wants to do. God has given to us our free will, the power of choice. God will not violate our free will. He will not force on us something we don't want. That's not God's way and it's not God's nature to force on you what you don't want.

And so through prayer I open the door and allow God then to do what He is desiring to do, as true prayer begins with the heart of God. That's where prayer always starts. He makes His will known to my heart. He puts desires in my heart. He writes His law on the fleshly tablets of my heart. I see the need and I express the need to God and thus, the circle is complete and now God is able to do for me what He's longing and desiring to do.

So I think that we have a lesson here in contrast. On the earth, men will give in to persistence. But such is not necessary with God if you just ask,

you will receive; if you just seek, you will find; and if you knock, it will be opened (11:9).

You won't hear a voice saying, Go away. Don't want to be bothered with you now. Leave me alone. You won't find a reluctance. But you'll find a God who is ready and willing and desiring because you're His child to just give to you whatever you need.

For every one that asketh receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. If a son shall ask for bread (11:10,11)

And again we have the contrast here. Notice "Give us this day our daily bread." We're going back to the modeled prayer. The story has to do with bread and the need for bread. Then another story in which bread is a factor in it. You have a son who asks you for bread,

any of you who are a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask for fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion (11:11,12)?

And these things are in our minds repulsive and of course, we recoil against even the thought of these things. Of course not. As a father I wouldn't do something like that for my child who is coming home and is hungry and wants some food. He says, Dad, is there any bread around here? I want a peanut butter sandwich. I don't say, Go out and eat the rock, kid. And I wouldn't think of that. So as a father, it's sort of a repulsive idea that you would treat your children that way who are coming to you out of their need. Jesus then gives again a contrast.

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more [and there's your contrast] shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him (11:13)?

So when we come and we ask the Father that which we need to sustain us spiritually, the Holy Spirit, the tremendous need that we have for the Holy Spirit. And so I come recognizing my need, knowing that I don't have the power in myself to live the kind of a life that I want to live. A life of dedication and commitment to the Lord. I just don't have that capacity. I need the help and the power of the Holy Spirit recognizing my need, hungry for God and the things of God. When I come and say, O Lord, fill me with Your Holy Spirit, how much more will my heavenly Father give me the Holy Spirit when I ask Him.

There is in some quarters a blasphemous kind of concept of God that would say, Now you be careful when you ask God for the Holy Spirit because you never know when you open the door what might happen. And they tell some hair-raising tales of somebody who was seeking for the Holy Spirit and they became demon-possessed. That's blasphemous. If you're truly asking God for the Holy Spirit, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him. And you don't have to be afraid when you come to God. You don't have to think, I hope I don't get some crazy weird kind of experience.

If you're seeking an experience, then do be careful. Make sure that you're seeking the Holy Spirit when you're asking for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does and can manifest Himself in different ways. Throughout the scriptures there were different manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit upon the lives of the believer. But it is wrong to see how someone else has experienced the power of the Holy Spirit and then ask for that experience. For instance, Dr. Finney describes when he received the Holy Spirit, it was like waves of liquid love just pouring over him. It just came in waves and just seemed to fill him from head to toe with this liquid love. And that sounds beautiful and no doubt was to him an extremely beautiful experience. But I need to be careful not to say, O Lord, I want the waves of living love to flow over me, Lord. Let the liquid love just fill my being. Because I'm asking for a particular experience. I'm not just saying, Lord, fill me with Your Spirit, you see. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. Don't just ask for an experience, ask for the Holy Spirit and however you experience it, let that be in His hands but don't seek an experience.

Having given them the lessons on prayer, Luke tells us that,

He was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered (11:14).

In Matthew's gospel, we are told that this man was also deaf and blind. Now always there are those who jump to unscriptural conclusions and they then begin to say that everyone who is mute, that there is demonic activity involved. If a person is blind, there's demonic activity. Certainly Jesus dispelled that kind of irrational thinking. When they saw the blind man and the disciples said, "Lord, who did sin? This man is born blind. Himself or his parents? And Jesus said, Neither, but that God might be glorified. I must do the works of God" (John 9:1-4).

It is possible that a person can be possessed by an evil spirit and one of the manifestations being that the evil spirit does not allow that person to speak. But that is not an adequate explanation for all of those who are mute nor for all of those who are blind or for all of those who are deaf. That would be a horrible, horrible conclusion to try to draw and certainly no scriptural basis for it whatsoever. But in this particular case, that was so. And Jesus cast out the evil spirit and the man was able to speak. And all of the people were in awe.

But some of them said, He is casting out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils (11:15).

In other words, they were accusing Jesus of this kind of power that He was manifesting as coming from Satan, from the chief of the devils.

And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven (11:16).

Two issues involved here. One of them the accusation that He is doing these works, casting out devils, by the power of Beelzebub, or the chief of the devils, the prince of the devils; and the other was asking Him to give them a sign from heaven. Here He's been doing all kinds of miracles. And yet they are asking for some kind of a sign.

But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falls. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God am casting out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you (11:17-20).

Jesus here is declaring, Look, your position is not rational. If I am doing this by the power of the devil, I'm casting out devils by the power of the devil, then Satan's kingdom is divided against itself and it's going to fall. Time to rejoice. Satan's kingdom is about over. He's casting himself out of a, he's against himself. But Jesus is saying, That's irrational if that were the case.

Isn't it interesting how irrational people do get who don't want to acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God? That they can become very irrational specially when they try to explain the

works of Jesus in the hearts and lives of people. They try to attribute to psychology and everything else things that are wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. And they become totally irrational. So Jesus said, If I by the finger of God, or by the hand of God, am casting out devils, then the proper conclusion is that the kingdom of God is come.

In this context and light,

When a strong man [that would be Satan] is armed, he keeps his palace, and his goods are in peace (11:21):

Strong man has his territory, has his defense.

But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him all of his armor wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils (11:22).

Jesus is declaring that Satan had his dominion. Satan had his kingdom. He was armed and he kept that which was his. But the stronger, of course, is Jesus. And when He comes, He destroys the defense, the armor, and He spoils the enemy. John tells us that “Greater is He that is in you and than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). When Martin Luther wrote, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*, that one verse, *The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not at him. One little word will fell him.*

Through Jesus Christ, Satan’s power was destroyed. Jesus triumphed over Satan as the cross. In Colossians chapter two, Paul tells us that “He triumphed over him, making an open display of His victory” (Colossians 2:15), as He triumphed over Satan there at the cross. So that we go into the battle as victors, the stronger. Through the power of Jesus Christ, we have authority and power over the forces of darkness and evil. One day and one day soon, Satan’s kingdom is to be cast out. And Jesus is going to establish the kingdom of God. And when we pray, Thy kingdom come, we’re praying for that stronger One to come and establish His kingdom.

And then Jesus said,

He that is not with me is against me (11:23):

That is, there is no place for neutrality. He doesn’t give you that option. He declares, and He doesn’t even say, You’re either for Me or against Me. He says, If you’re not for Me, you are against Me. So He doesn’t give you any kind of a neutral option that you can take concerning Jesus. I really don’t know. I’m just. No, no. If you’re not for Him, you are against Him.

and he that gathereth not with me scattereth (11:23).

It’s more than just being against Him, it is scattering people rather than gathering them unto the Lord, it’s scattering them away. And then Jesus talks about really the worthlessness of self-reformation.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out. And when he comes, he finds it all swept and garnished. Then he goes out, and takes to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first (11:24-26).

Jesus is giving us an insight into the spirit world and that specially of demons. And the importance of not having or leaving a void. When a demon is driven out by the power of the Spirit, in the name of Jesus, unless that person receives then Jesus Christ and unless he fills that void in his life, he’s only setting himself up for a worse condition. Jesus seems to indicate that demonic spirits are restless unless they have a body in which they can operate. And they are seeking embodiment.

We had the story just a few weeks ago of the demoniac at Gadara where the demons when cast out begged that they might go into the swine. And you remember the story of how the swine ran down a steep place and were drowned in the sea of Galilee and the men came out and begged Jesus to leave their coast. Again, they were begging not to be sent to the abyss. But they were seeking embodiment even in swine. Now I’ve met a few dogs that I thought might be demon-possessed. They were mean. But there is a restlessness, looking for places to inhabit.

How important that the void within our life is filled by the Spirit of God. We’re protected. There is no possibility of there being fellowship with light and darkness. It’s important that your life be filled with the light of Jesus Christ. And so, they seek for a house to inhabit. They go through the dry wilderness places, finding no place, they’ll come back to the house from whence they were driven. They find it. Hey, this is

great. This is all clean, it's empty. It's swept, it's garnished. So he goes out and gets seven others and they come. And the last estate of the man is really worse than the first.

And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts from which you nursed (11:27).

And he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it (11:28).

Interesting here is an attempt of the woman to draw attention and worship to His mother. And this follows in the eighth chapter where His mother and brother came and they couldn't get into the house where He was and they sent a message in, Your mother and brothers are out here. They want to talk to you. And He said, Here are My mother and My brothers, they that do the word of God and keep it. Again, He associates the word of God, those that have it and keep it, as being the ones who are truly blessed. And so in spite of the fact that Jesus did not encourage the worship of Mary, yet it became incorporated within the historic church and much honor and veneration was given to her above that which Jesus allowed or what the scripture would actually allow. Rather tragic indeed.

The ones who are blessed are the ones who hear the word of God and keep it. Don't be deceived, just hearing the word of God isn't enough. It's important that you keep the word of God. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

And when the people were gathered thick together [really big crowds], he began to say, This is an evil generation: and they seek a sign (11:29);

You remember back in verse sixteen, they were seeking a sign from heaven, wanting Him to give them a sign. So He said, "This is an evil generation: and they seek a sign;"

and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonah the prophet (11:29).

The other gospels tell us that Jesus added, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). So the greatest sign that Jesus is indeed the Messiah would be His resurrection from the dead. That was to be the climactic sign that He indeed was the Messiah. So "no sign will be given, except the sign of Jonah," the resurrection from the dead, even as Jonah came out of the whale. Then He went on to say,

For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites (11:30),

There are those who suggest that Jonah was quite a sight when he came to Nineveh, that after the experience in the whale, that the high vitamin A content of the gastric juices in the whale or whatever would have turned his skin yellow, caused a jaundice condition that it probably would have destroyed his hair. And so here he comes to Nineveh looking like he's something from outer space and that's why they hearkened unto him.

The queen of the south [who we know to be the queen of Sheba] shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here (11:31,32).

First of all, Jesus is teaching the general resurrection. Death is not the end. You may think that you can live like a hog and die like a dog but that's not so. There is judgment coming. And every man is going to have to answer to God on the day of judgment. And so Jesus is teaching the general resurrection of the dead to face the judgment of God. You cannot escape it except through Jesus Christ. He took the judgment of God for us. That's the glorious work of Christ in my behalf in that He took the judgment of God for me, for my sin, for my guilt. And so, "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). But to those who are not in Christ Jesus, they are going to have to stand one day before the judgment of God and all of history, all of the men who have lived throughout history will rise to stand before that judgment. Revelation chapter twenty gives us an insight into this great white throne judgment of God. So all those of history, the queen of Sheba, she'll be standing there. But she'll condemn this generation because she came all the way from Sheba to listen to Solomon because she had heard of his reputation. And so she came to learn of his God. She said, Oh blessed is God. He must love His people because He put such a wise man over them. And Jesus said, "A greater than Solomon is here," referring to Himself.

The men of Nineveh will rise up with this generation and they're going to condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. Now that is really something because Jonah was not a loving prophet at all. In fact, he hated his mission. He was angry with God when the Ninevites repented. And his whole fear of going to Nineveh is that he might have a successful revival. And when it was successful, he said, Didn't I say that? I knew You were a gracious God and loving, and I knew You would forgive them. Just angry with God because He didn't destroy Nineveh. He wanted to see it destroyed. And so you can imagine his preaching. Not very loving. And really, he didn't offer them any hope. He would just say, Forty days and you're going to be destroyed! Ha-ha-ha! Good enough for you. It was a monotonous message. No hope offered. So well might the men of Nineveh rise with this generation and condemn it.

Because the Gospel is preached, on almost every corner you'll find a church for all types, sizes and varieties. You can just sort of choose the kind of a message you want to hear. And you can be choosing the kind of a vessel that you want to hear it from. And yet people not repenting. So they will judge and condemn this generation, Jesus said, because a greater than Jonah is here, again referring to Himself.

No man, when he has lighted a candle, puts it in a secret place, neither under a bushel (11:33),

The purpose of a candle is to give light. That's the one purpose. So when you light the candle, you don't put it under a bushel basket.

but you put it on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when your eye is single [that is, single toward God and the things of God], then your whole body is full of light; but if your eye is evil [always seeing and beholding evil things], your body also is full of darkness (11:33,34).

"Therefore if the light that is in you is darkness, then how great is that darkness" (Matthew 6:22,23). And so,

take heed that the light which is in you be not darkness. If the whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light (11:35,36).

May our lives just filled with God's light. May God keep us from darkness and from allowing the things of darkness to penetrate into our life. How I desire to be pure as He is pure, Holy as He is holy. Righteous as He is righteous. To live a godly, pure and righteous life. And not to allow my mind to be polluted with the things of darkness. There might be the glorious shining of His light.

And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him (11:37):

Jesus never turned down a dinner invitation.

and he went in, and sat down to meat (11:37).

But they were always there just to find fault. They weren't really seeking Jesus' company so much. Just to look for something to condemn, look for something to criticize.

And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner (11:38).

They had a ritual washing and it's all prescribed. How that you had to pour so much water over your hands as you are rubbing your hands in an upward fashion like this and you had to hold them out so that the water wouldn't drip down your wrist. So hold them out like this and they pour water over and you rub and then they'd pour more water and you hold them down and rub them. It was a ritualistic kind of thing and Jesus didn't go through that whole ritual. And so this fellow marvelled because after all, this is ritual.

And the Lord said unto him, Now do you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. You fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather you give alms of such things as you have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you (11:39-41).

Because you pay your tithe, you think that you can do anything you want. And you can have all kinds of evil thoughts and surmisings, just because you give to God you're thinking that you can buy favors with the Lord.

But woe unto you, Pharisees! for you tithe mint (11:42)

And anise and cumin. Actually these little herbs that they would grow in their gardens, the little spices, they'd be sitting there counting out of the little seeds. Nine for me and one for Him, nine for me, one for.

Giving the tenth of the spices out of their gardens. Very exacting to make sure that they paid their alms, their tithes. But he said,

You pass over judgment and the love of God (11:42):

The really important things, you sort of slight. You're so exacting in these things but you're slighting the more important things of being fair, being honest, and of loving God and the love of God.

these things ought you to have done (11:42),

In other words, Jesus didn't say, You shouldn't tithe. You ought to do that but really, you shouldn't leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues,

That is, the places of prominence. They would sit in front and face the people. They love that. And He said, you love the,

greetings in the markets (11:42,43).

They wore their robes that distinguished them as the spiritual leaders and they love that greeting in the marketplace. That reverence that people would show to them because of their position.

Woe unto you, scribes (11:44)

The ones who copied the scriptures.

and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are as graves which do not appear, and men walk over them are not aware of them (11:44).

They weren't to touch a grave because if they would touch a grave, it would be unclean. So you're like a grave that you can't see. People walking over you and becoming unclean just by contact.

One of the lawyers answered him, and said, Master, what you say is reproaching us also (11:45).

These men were the men who interpreted the law of Moses for the people. And so he's objecting to what Jesus is saying. He applies to us and so he sort of opens the door.

And he said, Woe unto you also, you lawyers! for you load men down with burdens that are hard to bear, and ye yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your little fingers (11:46).

You're saying, This is what God said, this is what God said, and you're putting on such a heavy burden. Peter in referring to the law as it was given to them said, "Why should we put on the Gentiles a yoke of bondage, that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear" (Acts 15:10)? So these teachers of the law were loading the people on with all of these regulations, all of these rules. On the sabbath day, you're not to bear a burden. False teeth are a burden. Can't wear them on the sabbath day. Wooden leg is a burden. Have to leave it off on the sabbath day. And all of these, and He says, you don't touch them yourself with your little fingers. You're putting regulations on others that you yourself can't even keep.

Woe unto you! for you build the sepulchres of the prophets, but your fathers killed them. Truly you bear witness that you allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and you build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation (11:47-50);

Heavy duty. The blood of all of the prophets who prophesied of the coming of the Messiah who were killed because the people did not want to hear that God was displeased with them. People wanted to do their own thing without guilty consciences. And thus they sought to close the mouth of the prophets by destroying them. But the prophets were telling them that God was going to send His Son, the Saviour of the world, to be the Saviour of the world, and now God has kept His promise but they, the generation, these lawyers and scribes and Pharisees He's talking to, they're going to crucify Him. So the blood of all of the prophets that their fathers killed are going to be required of this generation.

It's pretty much what Stephen said when he stood before the council. And he cried out, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers slain" (Acts 7:52)? But then he went on to tell them that you have actually slain the One of whom the prophets spake. He laid it so heavy on them that they began to gnash with their teeth. They went berserk and they grabbed him and stoned him to death because they didn't want to hear the truth of their own guilt.

Man doesn't want to hear the truth that he is guilty. He wants to hear soothing words. You're alright,

that's just a part of human nature. You're just normal like everybody else and you're feeling, and they want to be soothed in their evil. And they want to have someone just to appease them rather than to declare God's truth that the wrath of God is going to come against "those that do such things, and those that take pleasure in those that do them" (Romans 1:32). So the blood of all of the prophets is going to be required of this generation, Jesus said.

From the blood of Abel (11:51)

Going clear back the book of Genesis, the son of Adam who was killed by his brother Cain. You remember the story well. And "from the blood of Abel,"

unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple (11:51):

Zacharias was the son of Jehoiada the high priest. And there was the time when the nation of Judah had really sank very low. Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, had married the king. He died and she became the queen and she was trying to destroy all of the descendants of David so that none of David's descendants could live to be up on the throne. She's trying to wipe out the family of David. Even though God had promised that there would never cease to be one of David's family sitting on the throne, she was doing her best to wipe it out. But one of the nurses took a baby, Joash, and she hid him and they raised him in the temple until he was seven years old.

And then Jehoiada the priest set things up so that on a certain day, they had strategically placed the Levites throughout the city all armed and then they proclaimed that, they brought Joash the baby out, he was seven years old now, proclaimed him king and the people began to shout and all. Then Athaliah came in and she said, Treason, treason. He said, Take her outside the temple, don't kill her inside but take her outside. So they killed Athaliah and Joash began to reign over Israel.

Through Joash and the influence of Joash, because he was only seven years old, Jehoiada the priest had an extremely strong influence on Joash. And so they got rid of the worship of Baal. And they cut down all of the places of worship for the false gods and they reinstituted the temple worship. They refurbished the temple, reinstituted the worship within the temple. During the years of Jehoiada, they worshipped God and were blessed. But when Jehoiada died, then the young princes came in and they turned the mind of Joash the king and they began again to worship Ashtoreth and the other gods. And so Zacharias who was the son of Jehoiada, this very influential priest who brought Joash to the throne and influenced him during his life, the son Zacharias came in and he began to rebuke them for reverting back to their pagan worship. And Joash the king ordered Zacharias, he said, Kill him, don't want to hear it. Don't want to be rebuked. And so he killed the son of Jehoiada the priest that had had such a godly influence upon him because he rebuked him because of the reintroduction of the pagan idols and all in the nation. Of course, from then on the nation was just downhill plunge.

But "the blood from Abel to Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple,"

verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation (11:51).

That generation that crucified the Lord, greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah, the people of Solomon's time and Jonah's time will rise in the day of judgment and condemn them because they at least turned to God and these people are rebelling and they're going to crucify the very Son of God.

Woe unto you, lawyers! for you have taken away the key of knowledge: you entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in you hindered (11:52).

You actually stand in the way and hinder people from entering the kingdom of God. I think that that's probably one of the worst things that a person can do. Not entering in is bad. But hindering those that would enter in is a horrible sin.

Jesus speaks about those who would destroy the faith of a child. It would be better for them that a millstone be hung around their neck and they be tossed into the sea than to destroy the faith of a child. Hindering those who would enter in is one of the most heinous sins in the eyes of God. May God help us that by our lives we don't hinder people. If you are inconsistent in your walk, it can be a hindrance to people. You can be a bad witness for Christ. We are all witnesses, some good, some bad. God help us to be good witnesses for Him.

And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees [Oh man, they got into it. This got

heated real fast.] began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things (11:53):

They're really baiting Him, urging Him, baiting Him because they were,

Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him (11:54).

They were trying to get Him to say something that they could take legal charges against Him and so they were really pressing and pushing at this point. So quite an afternoon, I would say, as Jesus puts them in their place.

Father, thank You again for the study of the word and may we glean from it Lord. And may our prayer life be enriched and enhanced, as we understand Your nature, Your giving nature. And how willing You are to give to us, Lord, both for our physical and spiritual needs. Lord, may we learn to just look to You for all things. And Lord, we just pray that You will help us to realize Your power and Your victory over the forces of darkness. Lord, help us that we'll guard those things that we look at lest we bring in to our minds things of darkness, things that would pollute, things that would destroy. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.