

Whoa to Legalistic Religionism

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn to our text for this morning and it is Luke chapter 11, Luke 11 and our text is verses 37 through 54 so we're going to be finishing up the 11th chapter of Luke and I want to go ahead and begin by reading the passage so starting with verse 29 of Luke chapter 11. Chapter 11 verse 29 where am I? 37 actually not 29, 37 through 54.

Were you listening? Okay. And as he spoke a certain Pharisee asked him to dine with him so he went in and sat down to eat.

When the Pharisee saw it he marveled that he had not first washed before dinner. My wife marvels about that as well sometimes. Then the Lord said to him, Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness.

Foolish ones! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? But rather give alms of such things as you have, then indeed all things are clean to you.

Woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs and pass by justice and the love of God.

[2 : 01] These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. Woe to you Pharisees! Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen. Men who walk over them are not aware of them.

And one of the lawyers answered and said to him, Teacher, by saying these things you reproach us as well or also. And he said, Woe to you also, lawyers!

For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers, for they indeed killed them.

That is, killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. Therefore the wisdom of God also said, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute.

[3 : 13] That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation. From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the temple.

Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Woe to you, lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge.

You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered. And as he said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail him vehemently, and to cross-examine him about many things, lying in wait for him, and seeking to catch him in something he might say, that they might accuse him.

Okay. The key verse in this passage, the verse that obviously needs some explanation, and I'm going to give that to you this morning, the key verse that defines the subject of this entire passage is verse 40, where Jesus said, Did not he who made the outside make the inside also?

That's the key passage. And of course, he's talking about the inner person. He's talking about, specifically, the heart, in the spiritual sense of the heart. So that's key to understanding everything that Jesus is saying and doing, and the point he's wanting to get across, certainly to these Pharisees, but specifically to us.

[4 : 47] And so we can say that Jesus' subject is about how the Pharisees had substituted purity of heart worship with religionism, a kind of legalistic, ritualistic religionism, which really basically was an outward, just simply an outward expression of religion, a ritualistic kind of religion.

That's his subject. Now, I'm going to get right to it and give you point number one and kind of use it as the introduction for the text. Again, remember, keep this in your minds.

The subject here is legalistic religionism. And so first of all, because this is what we need, and Jesus provides this, first of all, religionism defined.

We need to know what it is. And that's what he's doing for us in the first few verses of this particular passage. And we need to understand here at the outset that when we look at this and what happened here, we need to understand that Jesus set this whole thing up, as he did quite often. He deliberately provoked the Pharisees. We need to see that, understand that here at the very beginning. Deliberately, premeditatedly, which is something that Jesus did quite often.

[6 : 06] For example, you know that Jesus healed a lot of people during his ministry here on this earth. You also know that he certainly could have healed them on Sundays through Fridays.

But when did Jesus typically heal people that he healed? When did he do that? On Saturdays. On Saturdays. That is on the Sabbath days.

Now, he did not have to do that, did he? No, he certainly didn't have to. He could have respected, you know, the holiness of the Sabbath as the laws have been designed by the Pharisees and lawyers of the day.

He could have respected that and avoided Saturdays or the Sabbath days. He could have healed them on any other day if he wanted to. And so why did he do it very typically, very often on the Sabbath?

Well, the answer is obvious. To provoke the Pharisees. To provoke them. To provoke their religionism. And why would he do that?

[7 : 06] To expose them. That's what Jesus was about. He was always about exposing the true condition, true nature of the heart. He's still about that today. So he wanted to expose them, to reveal their corrupt religionism.

To expose, to reveal their utter hypocrisy. And he did the same thing here in our text. A Pharisee invited Jesus to supper one afternoon.

Innocent enough, I think, really. And Jesus, of course, could have submitted himself to the Jews' self-imposed ritual of hand-washing before dinner.

He could have done that. And by the way, I want to say to you men and children, you cannot charge your sweet wife or mother with some kind of Pharisaical legalism just because she makes you wash your hands before supper.

Because really what's going on here is something different. It's something else. They were not concerned about germs. That was not the deal here. This Pharisee did not look at Jesus and he was not appalled by how dirty Jesus' hands were and now he's about to eat.

[8 : 17] It was not about that at all. Now the text does say, of course, very straightforward, he marveled, the Pharisee marveled, that he, Jesus, had not first washed before dinner.

That's exactly how it's worded in the text. Which does sound a lot like about how my wife reacts when her boys forget to wash their hands before supper, including this big boy here.

And the word here for washed comes from baptizo. That sounds familiar, doesn't it? From which we get our word baptized, which means immerse.

And so literally he, the Pharisee, marveled that Jesus had not first baptized his hands before dinner. But what the Pharisee is referring to here was an elaborate ritual of dipping or baptizing the hands in special kind of water contained in special instruments or containers.

That's what he was concerned about. If you're not concerned about hygiene, it was for purposes of ceremony, ritual, symbolism. That's what he was concerned about.

[9 : 31] And the New American Standard, and some of you have that version, they even add the word ceremonial there in the text, even though it does not appear in the Greek text.

But that is the idea here. In Mark's parallel account, he wrote in Mark 7, 3, for the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way.

That doesn't mean just with soap. They did it in a special way, very ceremonial way, holding, Mark says, holding the tradition of the fathers.

So that's the idea here. The washing was a ceremonial thing only. The washing was ritual only, very legalistic. Matthew 15, 1, Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus saying, Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?

For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread. I saw this was important to them, very important to their religion, even though this particular requirement was not in the Word of God. [10:41] It doesn't appear anywhere in the Mosaic Law. Rather, it was something recorded in the Mishnah, the Jewish Mishnah, the repetitions, divided into six parts.

And the sixth part, sixth and final part is Tahrad, the purities. That's where this particular law is contained. And the Mishnah was developed by the Pharisees to presumably help the people to become holy, help them in their holiness.

And presumably, they did this by cleansing or somehow ceremonially cleansing the filth and the defilements of the world, but it was completely bogus in a spiritual sense.

These man-made laws did not address the problem of the heart, the filth of the heart, which, of course, is most important to God. And so, and here's the point, Jesus certainly could have submitted himself to this requirement, this self-imposed ritual of hand-washing.

Jesus could have, out of courtesy, perhaps, out of the desire to keep the peace and not cause controversy. Jesus, though it's not scriptural, Jesus could have submitted himself to this man-made law.

[11:58] He could have gone along with it, but he did not. And not only that, but I think we could say that when he was questioned about it, Jesus could have been more polite about it. Right? Instead, what does he do?

He calls them fools. Fools, he said. And then he pronounces, goes further, to pronounce six woes or judgments upon them.

And then when the lawyer, in verse 45, said that Jesus had also offended them, he did not say, well, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to offend you, good people.

But instead, he said, woe to you also. That is judgment upon you as well. So you see, very clearly, this was a deliberate act on the part of Jesus.

He purposefully provoked these Jewish leaders, the Pharisees, the lawyers, the experts on the law, and he provoked them so that he could do what?

[12:58] He could reveal what was in them. He could reveal the truth of their sin, their religionism. The truth, by the way, as we saw in the text, they did not see, would not see, could not see.

And so this is what Jesus was about. He, Jesus, set this whole thing up, in a sense. He purposefully provoked them so that they might see their religionism.

And in so doing, he also defines it for us in these passages. So what is legalistic religionism?

By the way, you add ism to about anything and it makes it bad. Have you ever noticed that?

Legalistic religionism, what is it? Well, it's more than just mere legalism. We may have an understanding of what that is.

Someone has defined legalism as an attempt to gain favor with God and praise from man through rigid obedience to every letter of the law.

[14:04] I think that's a pretty good definition of legalism. But this is more than that. Because legalistic religionism goes a step further. It is, I think we could call it, it is the institutionalizing of legalism.

I think that's a good way to think of it. That is, it's very organized. And it is basically the forming of an elaborate system of external disciplines and ritualistic practices that are largely ceremonial, largely ritual, symbolic, and they are always unbiblical.

Unbiblical. Because it's all external. It's all designed to address the outside. And it is absolutely void of any spiritual reality.

And it is completely absent of any true devotion to God. That's ritualistic or legalistic religionism.

And its focus then is only on the external practice of legalistic, ritualistic disciplines and so forth and symbolic forms of worship.

That's what it's about. All that's external. But it is completely void of internal, the internal condition of the heart before God.

[15:27] It doesn't pay any attention to that whatsoever. And this is how Jesus defined it in our passage. Jesus said in verse 39, look at it again, Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean.

Now he's not giving them a lesson on how to wash dishes. Because he's really not talking about literal cups and dishes here. And we know that from what he says next. Because he said, But your inward part, the inside, is full of greed and wickedness.

That is, you're full of sin. You know he's not talking about cups and dishes. Jesus didn't look down at his cup and his dish before supper and notice it was a little bit dirty on the outside. He said, Some men must have washed these things.

That wasn't what it was about. He's talking about the cup of their life, the dish of their life. He's talking about what was on the inside. Because this is an analogy, you see. And a very strong one. It's like a dirty cup or dish. And you wouldn't take that cup or that dish and clean and polish the outside and the bottom of it and then leave on the inside, leave it full of caked, you know, debris from yesterday's supper.

[16:39] You wouldn't do that. I mean, that would be absurd and that's the point of the analogy. And yet, really the point of the analogy is this. Their legalistic religionism did just that.

It left the inside dirty, filthy, did not address anything about the inside, anything about the heart whatsoever. And so through an elaborate system of legalistic disciplines and ritualistic ceremony, they made sure, this is what they were concerned about, they made sure that they appeared holy on the outside.

That's legalistic religionism. Because it completely misses the filth and wickedness of the inside. And Jesus said, fools! You fools! fools! A word that really just simply means without any sense. We could translate morons or simpletons.

Maybe a little bit less derogatory. He said, did not he who made the inside, the outside rather, speaking of God, didn't he who made the outside make the inside also?

[17:58] And that is, he's saying that God cares about the inside too. And you Pharisees have forgotten all about that.

You've completely missed that altogether. In fact, I think from verse 41, and we'll talk more about verse 41 at the end of the message, verse 41 reveals that God cares infinitely more about the inside than he does about the outside.

And this is what he's addressing with these Pharisees. The inside. We're talking about the inside. That is the heart in the spiritual sense.

The inside to God is more important than the outside. The outside being specifically the external practices of religion. Not just how you keep yourself on the outside.

We're talking about practice of religion. He's more interested in the inside the true issues of the heart than he is about the outside.

[19:01] The kind of motions and forms and rituals and practice of religion. And so the point of it is you get the outside right only after you get the inside right.

We'll get back to that because that is the truth of the text. Alright, so getting back to the definition. religionism is institutionalized legalism.

That's a good way to think of it. It is the constructing or crafting or forming of an elaborate system of external disciplines, disciplines that are just on the outside, and ritualistic practices that are largely symbolic and ceremonial and unbiblical.

And so it is all external, void of any spiritual reality, void of any true devotion to God.

A lot of people are there. Listen, I'm talking about, excuse me, but I'm talking about Roman Catholicism. I'm talking about Greek and Russian orthodoxy. I've been in a Russian orthodox church in Ukraine.

[20:18] I've seen the elaborate dressings and trappings of their places, quote, places of worship, and the elaborate headdresses and clothing of their priests, and the waving of censers every place, and the icons that are up everywhere, and the people walking around, you know, in circles, so to speak, and verbalizing gibberish and things that don't even make any sense, and waving their things in the air and so forth.

And here are these poor millions of souls in Ukraine that are trying to connect with God through some kind of external, superficial, bogus kind of religion that addresses nothing, offers nothing for the inside.

I'm talking about Mohammedism. That's Islam. I'm talking here about Buddhism. I've been in a Buddhist temple before, too, and watched some of the forms of worship, the burning of incense, and the worship of ancestors, and on and on.

It's empty. It's bogus. It addresses the external only, and gives the, quote, devotee or worshiper a false sense of security, as long as they continue with the ritual.

I'm talking about Buddhism. I'm talking about Hinduism. I'm talking about Mormonism. I could go on with the list. All of the world religions, great and small. Listen, I'm talking about what Jesus is talking about here specifically, and that is Judaism.

[21 : 53] Judaism, that is, as it had evolved into since the Babylonian captivity hundreds of years prior to Christ. And by the way, that's when the Pharisees came on the scene. Legalistic religionism is purely external.

External. And listen, we might also add, ready for this? Christianity. Christianity. I know that's not an official designation of a world religion, Christianity, but I would say it is perhaps the largest religion in the world.

Seriously. And it has devotees all around the world, and they are in every evangelical church. church. And Sunday after Sunday, they attend churches just like this one, and they are strictly devoted to the practice of worship, the forms of worship, the giving of tithes, the living of outward moral lives, and on and on we could go, but they care nothing about what really matters, and that is the inner issues of the heart before God.

And so they firmly believe that the practices of Christianity are going to commend them to God, that's what God requires, and that is completely bogus.

America is full of Christianity. Religionism defined. Second, religionism denounced.

[23 : 32] Religionism denounced. And so Jesus not only defines it, but he denounces it.

Denounces the legalistic religionism of the Pharisees and lawyers, and he does so by pronouncing six woes.

Six woes upon them. Now the word woe must be a little confusing maybe to some. We have an expression, woe is me, you know. And the idea of course there generally is a feeling of sorrow or pity or, you know, poor pitiful me or woe is me, but that's not the idea here.

The Bible, this word means something different in the Bible. Every place you find this Greek word in the New Testament, it is a declaration of judgment or impending judgment.

And the word woe signals God's impending wrath rather than his blessing. Pretty serious word. And so Jesus is being very serious here.

He is pronouncing a judgment upon these Pharisees and these lawyers. And so having defined pharisaical, legalistic religionism, now he unmasks it.

[24 : 53] Unmasks it for what it is and what it is in the lives of these Pharisees. And not only that, but he denounces it. So let's run through these six woes real quickly.

First woe, they trivialized submission. That's the first woe kind of identified. They trivialized submission or submission to God or obedience to God.

And we can put it this way, religionists major on trivial and peripheral matters of religious duty while at the same time totally ignoring real hard issues.

That's what this first woe is all about. How does Jesus put it? Verse 42. But woe to you Pharisees for you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs and pass by justice and the love of God.

You see? See, these Pharisees and lawyers, the religious religious muckety-muck of the Jewish nation, they were so meticulously legalistic that they even tithe from their herb garden, of all things.

[26 : 08] I mean, can you imagine this? I mean, they tithe everything. And so even the tiniest of herbs. I mean, can you imagine counting out a tenth of your mint?

A tenth of your thyme and rosemary and parsley and basil and dill and, you know, I'm sure there are many, many other herbs.

Some of you know them. Can you imagine very meticulously separating out a tenth of each of these small little, many of them, very small, minute little herbs?

Can you imagine doing that? I mean, if we did that here, I mean, why that would be a nightmare for our tellers? I mean, out there, you know, trying to count out the mint and so they could record your donation for the day.

Well, it's kind of ridiculous. But we need to understand that there's nothing, absolutely nothing in the Mosaic Law that demanded this kind of trivial tithing.

[27 : 11] It's not anywhere in Scripture. And so you see, this is legalistic religionism, majoring on the minors and then absolutely missing totally the majors.

Putting forth, and here's really what the heart of it, putting forth a proud show on the outside and yet, in reality, on the inside, absolutely void of the love of God and devotion to Him.

Not only that, but on the inside, there's injustice and dishonesty and greediness and prejudice and many other things. All that on the inside.

And they're just focused on the outside. Woe number two. They aggrandized self. They aggrandized self.

Verse 43. Woe to you, Pharisees, for you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Pharisees. They loved this. And the people accommodated them with this.

[28 : 17] To us, from our perspective, our biblical perspective, the Pharisees are always the bad guys. They're the ones that show up with the black hats. And so, you know, because of what they did and how they treated Jesus and so forth, and that's our perspective of the Pharisees.

But in the days of Jesus, the Pharisees were highly respected. They were revered. They were always honored with the very best seats in the synagogues, the places of worship.

And they also would always receive special greetings, greetings of honor and reverence, just short of worship by people who would see them in the marketplaces.

So here's a Pharisee coming, and boy, the reverence that's given toward them. The Pharisees loved this. They ate this up. It fed their pride, you see.

And worse, it made them feel holy, when in reality they were not. And so we can sum this woe up this way. Religionists believe that the praise and honor of others is the definitive, the true indicator of their own personal holiness and their own personal spirituality.

[29 : 32] That's how they validated their holiness. That's where they found definition, because of the praise of others. That defined and validated their holiness.

That's what a religionist does. Third woe. They rationalized sin. They certainly did that. And Jesus puts this in an interesting way.

Verse 44, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like graves which are not seen. And the men who walk over them are not aware of them.

Now, what's this all about? According to the Old Testament ceremonial laws, those laws that came to an end when Jesus came, but in the Old Testament ceremonial laws, if you touched a dead body, whether human or animal, or even if you touched a grave, you know, walk on top of one, stand on the top of a grave.

When that happened, you became ceremonially unclean, and you were not allowed then to worship in the temple until you cleansed yourself through a very prescribed way.

[30 : 47] That was part of the Mosaic law. Again, a law that was fulfilled and abolished when Jesus came. But this was the law. And so, because the Jews were, you know, very meticulous, very careful about keeping every jot and tittle of the law, they would go around marking all of the grave sites so that people would not walk on top of them unawares and thereby become unclean.

The Pharisees were very, very deliberate about this, made sure every grave was marked. But Jesus said, the Pharisees, you Pharisees, are like unmarked graves.

You're walking unmarked graves. Nobody knows. They don't know what's on the inside. They don't know that death is in there. You're unmarked because you have concealed your sinfulness, your true heart condition before God.

You've concealed it. You've rationalized it. And thus, then, you are, because you're a walking grave, you are spreading corruption everywhere you go. That's legalistic religionism.

Again, this one in a nutshell. Religionists conceal the corruption in their own hearts and spread, then spread defilement to unsuspecting followers and acquaintances.

[32 : 16] I mean, every one of us have people who look up to us and follow us and we're responsible for and they, they, they care about what we teach and what we show in our lives.

And if you're walking around a graveyard of defilement because the heart is not right, then everything on the outside of you corrupts, leads people astray.

That's what the Pharisees were. So they trivialized submission. religion. They aggrandized self. They rationalized sin.

And number four, the fourth woe, they ritualized spirituality. They turned it into a ritual. And that's what religionists do. Let me just put it in a nutshell.

Religionists always demand of others strict obedience to burdensome man-made rules of spirituality, but at the same time, carefully devise loopholes for themselves.

[33 : 17] Huh? That's what the Pharisees did. Here's what Jesus said. Verse 46, woe to you also lawyers. Speaking to the lawyers now, but they're no different than the Pharisees.

Lawyers were just experts in the Mosaic law and they were close associates with the Pharisees. So he says, woe to you also lawyers, for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

They were not even just a little finger. In fact, the word here means to just barely touch, just kind of brush against it. Wouldn't even do that. These burdens that you've made.

And that's the psyche of a religionist, you know, always thinking that the laws are for everyone else. Religionists then, like the Pharisees, always add to what they perceive the word of God is saying and demanding.

And so they add more and more rules and more and more rituals of spirituality and more and more rote disciplines and so forth. And so we could say that here's the rule of thumb for a religionist.

[34 : 30] The more symbolic ritual there is, the less spiritual reality. That's it all the way.

The more symbolic ritual there is, the more, or the less rather, spiritual reality. Because the ritual is taking the place of reality.

The symbol is taking place of the true spiritual in religionism.

Fifth woe. They scandalized the Savior. They scandalized the Savior. Look at verse 47. Woe to you, for you build the tombs of the prophets.

And they did. They built beautiful shrines and tombs to venerate the Old Testament prophets. So you build tombs, the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

[35 : 31] Your fathers killed them. This is interesting. You know, see, the Old Testament prophets, what did they preach? They preached heart obedience to God.

They said obedience is better than sacrifice. That is, obedience, heart obedience to God is better than all the ritual sacrifices.

And so what they're saying is, don't perform the ritual without committing your whole life as an act of love to God. An act of worship to God.

Forget about the ritual. If you're not going to do this, you're not going to have true worship, true heart love for God, then the ritual is meaningless. Don't do that.

Don't do that. And so the prophets preached that. And in so doing, what did they do? They exposed the hypocrisy. Just like what Jesus is doing right here.

[36 : 31] Exposed the prophecy. The hypocrisy. And so what did they do? They scandalized. In response, they scandalized the prophets and their message and had them killed from the first to the last, from Abel to Zechariah, verse 51.

And so Jesus is saying what? It's pretty clear. He's saying you're no different than your fathers. No different. You claim to walk in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets, but in reality, you stand in the tradition of the murderers of the Old Testament prophets.

That's who you are. You're just like them. He said in verse 48, by your legalistic external religionism, Jesus says, verse 48, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers.

They murdered the prophets because they did not like how they exposed their hypocrisy and you're doing exactly the same thing now. Verse 50, the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation from the blood of Abel, murdered at the beginning of the Old Testament, to the blood of Zechariah, historically murdered at the end of the Old Testament.

Yes, I say to you, he said, you shall or it shall be required of this generation. Now, how could Jesus be so deliberate and definite about that?

[37 : 58] Because another prophet was standing right before them, these Pharisees. The only, by the way, prophet, priest and king, the Messiah, standing right before them.

And what was he preaching? Heart obedience. What's on the inside? And so he exposed their ritualistic religionism, but they loved the ritual rather than the Redeemer.

And so they scandalized his person and they scandalized his message. That's what you have in verse 53. Look at that again. Verse 53, it says, And as he said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail him vehemently, strongly, and to cross-examine him.

Do you think they got what he was saying? They didn't get it at all. Instead, they scandalized him. They assailed him.

They cross-examined him about many things. And for what purpose? They were lying in wait for him and seeking to catch him in something he might say that they might accuse him, and though it doesn't say it here, so that they might condemn him.

[39 : 20] That's what these Pharisees were all about. Just like their fathers who killed the Old Testament prophets. Just like their fathers before them.

And then they would then have Jesus murdered. Indeed, murder was already in their hearts, even at this point. So in a nutshell, this woe could be defined this way.

Religionism scandalizes the true biblical message of faith alone in Christ alone because it prefers man-centered religion. Sixth woe.

They vandalized the Scriptures. They vandalized the Scriptures. Indeed, raped it of true meaning. Verse 53, Woe to you lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge.

That's talking about the Word of God. They had taken away the true Word of God from the people and had substituted it with a legalistic set of man-made rules and religious practices.

[40 : 29] And these practices only offered an outward image of holiness. They had vandalized the true Word of God. What was the result?

Well, because their religion offers no inner holiness. It's all external.

Jesus says, you did not enter in yourselves because you didn't enter in to salvation yourself. You weren't saved. And worse, those who were entering in, you hindered.

Well, that describes all the world religions of our day. Sadly, even some of those who claim to be evangelical. We have preachers and teachers who do not preach the Word of God.

Not only are they not entering in, but they stand as a hindrance to those who would enter in. This is serious business. So we could put this final woe into this nutshell.

[41 : 38] Religionists are willfully blind to the true meaning of Scripture. Thus, barring their own way to salvation and hindering those who follow their teaching.

Alright, so Jesus takes religionism head on here, doesn't He? I mean, He just set this whole thing up. He defines it. He diagnoses it.

And third, for those who are willing, He destroys it. He destroys it. So finally, this morning, religionism destroyed. It's not all woe here in this passage.

It's not all doom and gloom and judgment. Because in this passage, Jesus provides the remedy for legalistic religionism. we go back to verse 41 where Jesus says, but rather, but rather what?

Rather than external, empty religion, give alms of such things as you have, then, indeed, all things are clean to you.

[42 : 57] Now, He just talked about cups and dishes. He made the point that God, who made the outside, also made the inside, and then He says this in verse 41.

So what's the point? See, Jesus is referring here to the inside. He's referring to what God has made on the inside of the cup, the cup of your life.

that is, He's talking about what we all have on the inside. And what is it? Our hearts. That's what God is interested in.

Our hearts. And He says, give that to God. Give your heart to God. Give your heart and your life and everything about you to God.

That's the first thing you must do. That's what destroys legalism and religionism. J.C. Ryle stated it perfectly. Give first, now listen to this very carefully.

[44 : 03] Give first the offering of the inward man. Give your heart, your affections, your will to God as the first great alms which you give.

And then all your other actions, proceeding now from a clean heart, are an acceptable sacrifice and a clean offering in the sight of God.

That's it. You will get the outside right only after you get the inside right.

So here's the question. Is what is on the inside of you your heart, is it right with God? If not, everything else you do in the name of quote, religion, end quote, meaningless, meaningless.

What you're doing here today and what we did a moment ago in singing, praying, giving of our tithes, worthless, meaningless.

[45 : 15] And Jesus is not saying don't do any of that. He's saying first, take care of the infant and then everything on the outside will be right.