

## “Inside Out” Luke 11:37-45

**Context:** Luke details his historical investigation of Christ’s birth account, active life, redeeming death, and life-giving glorification. The context of our current section is part of a crescendo of Jesus’ rejection, not only by the Galileans but by all. The core reason for His rejection is highlighted in Luke’s account of Christ’s foundational teaching. A call for the Holy Spirit’s transformation of our darkened sin-filled thought and emotional-life aroused denial and vicious attack. Today we consider the importance of inner change for who we are and what we do, which is a contrast to any type of legalism. This passage is essential for the understanding of Luke’s purpose for writing, which is to steady the wobbly faith of ‘God lovers’ as they follow the path of Jesus (cf. Luke 1:3-4).

**Life Principle:** Tend to God’s image internally and you will also cultivate your life eternally (cf. Luke 11:40).

### 1. Living outside (Luke 11:37-38)

A Pharisee invited Jesus to have breakfast with him some time after the Beelzebul confrontation. Jesus caused His host bewildered wonderment by purposely violating the ceremonial hand washing ritual before the meal. His purpose was a wake up call to the host’s spiritual deadness.

### 2. Living inside (Luke 11:39-41)

External actions of traditions are not ridiculed here; rather, they are shown to be holy only when they are part of and proceeding from thoughts and emotions that are sanctified by the Spirit. Thus, mercy that motivates the giving of leftovers from the Pharisee’s meal has greater eternal weight than ceremonial washing because it is the reality behind the practice of that washing.

### 3. Living down under (Luke 11:42-44)

The central command of God, love and right judgment, was passed by while a minute ritual of herbal sacrifice was scrupulously executed. Such rituals, along with self-aggrandizement, created a religious model that defiles the hearts of the common people who embraced it as the right manner to worship God. Jesus pronounced eternal calamity to be the consequence.

## For Further Study:

- Cultural rituals are often used to deepen the bite of a teaching. As a **Bible study method**, search out Luke 11:37 in Edersheim’s *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* for the cultural context of this event (hint Chapter xii) at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/lifetimes.titlepage.html>. Why would the Pharisee notice Jesus’ choice not to wash his hands? What is the significance of cleansing the cup and platter in this context? What warrant is there for Jesus’ apparently shockingly rude behavior? Do you practice some Christian tradition so scrupulously that it has lost its life-changing meaning? You can identify that tradition if you judge others whose practice of that tradition is not as meticulous as yours.
- Luke 11:39-40 suggests that the Pharisees are unthinking as well as corrupt to their very core. Our **doctrinal statement ‘On Mankind’** under **what we believe** alludes to the cause of this corruption (<http://gracepointfellowship.org/files/DocStmnt.pdf> - cf. footnotes 6, 8, and 9). How do the passages in these footnotes explain the disconnect between the Pharisees’ ceremonial actions and God’s created intent for those actions (Genesis 2:17; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 5:12-14)? How do these passages apply to you?
- In Luke 11:41, Jesus commands the hearer to “give the things that are within.” Study the following passages in context: Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 12:1; 2Corinthians 2:15; Hebrews 4:12; and Acts 5:1. What made the Pharisee’s motive for ceremonial cleansing unacceptable to Jesus? How do we cleanse our motives within in order that we might give them as an offering that is acceptable to God?

## Transformation exercise:

Meditate on Luke 11:39-41 each morning. Ask the Lord to show you something physical, emotional, or spiritual that you can ‘give’ to another in need for (1) their help, (2) your reasonable service, and (3) God’s glory.