



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Reformation without regeneration!

Luke 11:24-28.

Luke 11:24-28, *“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’²⁵ And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.²⁶ Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”²⁷ And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!”²⁸ But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”*

Morality is more dangerous than immorality.

It may surprise you. But it shouldn't because it's essentially what you just heard me read in this passage.

There is a very serious danger in moral reformation without regeneration.

There's a very serious danger in endeavouring to live your life according to Judeo-Christian values without salvation. Reformation without transformation puts a person in a very, very dangerous position.

I suppose the greatest illustration that we know anything about in human history is the Pharisees. They were classic moralists down to the minutiae. The apostle Paul being one of them could even say that measuring his life against the law he was blameless.

They lived by a complex ethical code.

They demanded that life be controlled by moral standards.

They demanded this ethical, moral behaviour be based upon the laws of their own tradition and the hottest hell awaited them.

Morality gained them nothing and it cost them everything. It was morality that caused them to reject the Messiah.

That's why Jesus said to them, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

It is the righteous, it is the moral, it is the religious, it is the self-satisfied, self-congratulating, moral people, the people who uphold the traditional values, who are resistant to the true diagnosis of their spiritual condition.

That was the case with the Jews.

The whole of the population had been largely influenced by the Pharisees. They hated the way that Jesus diagnosed their condition.

The Pharisees hated the fact that He identified them in the way that He did.

Luke 11:37-47, *And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. ³⁸When the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that He had not first washed before dinner. ³⁹Then 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. ⁴⁰Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.*

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. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. ⁴³Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴Woe 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."* ⁴⁵*Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."*

⁴⁶And 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. ⁴⁷Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. ⁴⁸In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' ⁵⁰that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, ⁵¹from 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. ⁵²"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."

⁵³And 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, ⁵⁴lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.

They successfully cleaned up their lives on the outside.

They whitewashed the tomb.

They were the moralists of the day.

They demanded morality.

They demanded ethical behaviour.

At the same time, they rejected the only one who could make them righteous on the inside!

They rejected the Messiah and the Saviour and the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you looked at the law and you looked at their lives you would say they matched. But they could do nothing to fill the void on the inside, the vacuum, the empty-sinful soul hidden behind the mask of morality and the mask of religion.

There was only one who could change the heart and the soul and the life and that was God and only through His Son, the Messiah, could it be done, and Him they hated and rejected.

Now perhaps there has never been a group in history more adamant about morality than the Pharisees and their friends the scribes.

They had all undergone a moral reformation.

They were the moral majority.

They were the religious right.

They had made themselves moral on the outside.

They were more than satisfied with their self-righteous exteriors.

They rejected Christ because He attacked them precisely at the point of the deadly danger of their external morality.

They were proudly confident in their superficiality. Now their hostility toward Jesus had been escalating and mounting for months and months because He continually exposed the superficiality of their morality.

In Galilee months earlier they had called Him satanic. They continued to send out this propaganda, all across Galilee and all across Judea where He is now in this chronology of Luke, and the propaganda that He is satanic is basically the spin of the Pharisaic media.

This is what they want the population to believe. Every way they can they have published that He does what He does by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

This, of course, is the supreme blasphemy.

So, you have the most moral people ever engaged in the worst possible blasphemy in which they call the work of God the work of Satan and therefore identify God as Satan and they identify the servant of God, the Messiah, as the servant of the devil. It is impossible that there would be a greater blasphemy. The most moral people are the worst blasphemers ever.

It broke out in Judea on this occasion.

Luke 11:14, *And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marvelled.*

The demon had made the man unable to hear and speak apparently, and certainly unable to speak. The multitudes marvelled when he began to speak.

Luke 11:15-16, *But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." ¹⁶Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.*

There was mockery, there was taunting and there was this extreme blasphemy of calling Him satanic as to His kingdom, satanic as to His connection, satanic as to His power source, satanic as to His service.

Jesus responded, Luke 11:17- 22 to this severe blasphemy from these who are the most moral of all, He responded with mercy.

Last week we saw in detail.

Luke 11:17-22, *But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls. ¹⁸If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. ¹⁹And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons*

cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁰ But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²¹ When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. ²² But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armour in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.

Jesus told them that their thinking is irrational. It is inconsistent and it is fleshly. In a merciful fashion He tries to help them rethink this conclusion.

Luke 11:23, *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.*

You are either with Me or against Me.

So that those who are against Him are the most moral and the most religious.

Those who are against Him are the most moral and the most religious and the most ceremonial.

But they are against Him, and this is the defining reality of His kingdom.

There are only two kingdoms in the world:

- The kingdom of darkness,
- The kingdom of light.

- The kingdom of Satan,
- The Kingdom of Christ.

You are in either one or the other.

There are no orphans.

You are either a child of the devil or a child of God.

You are either against Christ or with Christ and you don't have to be anti-Christ to be against Christ.

What does it mean to be with Christ?

Our text for today answers that question.

It compares reformation to transformation.

V24-26, *“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’²⁵ And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.²⁶ Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”*

Do you know what moral rearmament will do for you?

It will wide open a double door for the demons to come in.

This is a frightening reality.

One demon went out and eight came back.

We are talking here about a very religious person.

We are talking here about a person who cleans up his act.

By the way, this is almost identical to the parable that Jesus told in the very similar account in Matthew 12.

Matthew 12:43-45, the similar discussion months earlier in Galilee.

The main point is this, moral reformation is dangerous. Morality without salvation is frightening.

V 24, When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it doesn't say how but the assumption can be made that the man sort of cleaned up his act because of what it says in verse 25. "The house is swept and put in order."

Here is the picture of someone who is immoral, a picture of someone who is living an immoral life, someone who is engaged in wretched kind of conduct of one manner or another.

Whatever pressure comes to the point where he wants to clean up his life.

- He is tired of the consequence of his iniquity and the consequence of his immorality.
- He wants to change.
- He stops his homosexual behaviour,
- He stops his adultery.
- He stops his fornication.
- He stops his anger, his hatred, his lying, his killing.
- He stops whatever it is, stops his involvement with pornography, grabs himself by the bootstraps and takes the necessary steps he needs to take to clean up his life.

Maybe pressure comes from his family, comes from his wife, comes from people who know him, maybe he's been embarrassed, he's been caught, he's been trapped.

He says I don't want to do this anymore, want to get my life right.

- Maybe he's tired of just the built-in consequence.
- Maybe he fears venereal disease, or maybe he fears AIDS or whatever it might be.
- Maybe he fears prison.
- Maybe he fears having to live a debilitated life.
- Maybe he knows he's going to slide downward.
- Maybe he's gone to AA or he's gone to some other self-help group and he wants to get his life cleaned up.

As long as he had been living that wretched life, he had been a haven for a demon, an unclean spirit, **akatharton**.

Kathairō means to cleanse.

Akathairo is the negative, an unclean spirit.

All spirits are unclean but not all are equally unclean.

V 26, *Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."*

So, in this case the man cleans up his life and that doesn't suit the demon very well, initially. He's desired to turn from his vile behaviour, clean up his act, make a moral reformation; maybe even went to some Jewish exorcists and got some help.

So, he cleans up his life. This is classic legalism. Wants to become a better person, starts going to the synagogue, starts going in a contemporary setting to church, gets religion, joins Mormonism, joins Judaism, becomes a Catholic, cleans up his act. And as a result, a certain level of discomfort for the demon, who goes and departs.

V 24, *When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'*

This demon passes through waterless places seeking rest. Now that's metaphoric. Since demons are spirit, they don't need water. It's simply a metaphor for the barrenness of a demon floating around in the nether world, floating around in the spirit world. They do their work through people.

They do their work in and through people. This demon, who leaves because of some moral change and wanders aimlessly in the spiritual realm with no person through whom to work his diabolical work. To be in that existence outside someone is like being in a barren desert for a demon. It's like being in a waterless place. It's a restless, distressing situation.

Demon can't find a place, another place. In this case if the demon can't find any other place, it says, "*I will return to my house from which I came.*" That's what's called demon possession. That's the demon's house. I will return to my house, personal possession.

This is exactly what happens in legalism, in ceremonialism. The legalism of the Jews, or the legalism of any other form of false religion, trying to be good, trying to be moral, trying to be righteous, trying to hold to Judeo-Christian values, trying to

clean up your life by moral effort and religious activity, temporarily seeing the dismissal of that demonic power that was so accommodated in your wretchedness, only puts you in a very dangerous position.

This is where orthodox Jews, Mormons and Catholics and moralists of any religious kind find themselves. Certainly, the Jews were there.

John the Baptist had a tremendous impact. John was preaching down at the Jordan and his message was repentance and people came and they repented.

All Jerusalem and Judea came to him. He was baptizing all of them in the Jordan. There was a whole lot of repentance going on but there was a whole lot of moral reformation in that repentance.

When it came down to the end, that's the same group that were out at the Jordan being baptized by John, making a moral reformation, that screamed for the blood of Jesus.

Many were drawn to Jesus.

- They were attracted to Jesus initially.
- They wanted to have Him be the Messiah.

- They were cleaning up their lives because they were hearing from John that the Messiah was there, He was going to bring the kingdom.
- They didn't want to be outside the kingdom,
- They wanted to be inside.
- They wanted to receive the blessing.

So, they did this moral thing and got their lives kind of cleaned up, but it didn't work.

V 25, *And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.*

Matthew 12:44, *Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.*

The problem in the moral person's heart is it's unoccupied.

It's cleaned up, dressed up, but empty.

No occupant!

Swept used of the woman who swept in Luke 15, put in order.

Sweeping is a kind of superficial cleaning. On the surface this place had been cleaned up. We might think that's great. This is a clean life this person has cleaned up his life.

People clean up their lives, they get religion, they change their pattern. They come out of prison, and they clean up their lives. They turn from their life of crime or their life of immorality, or whatever.

But in doing that and still being empty. They are only in a more dangerous position than they have ever been because they now are living with a damning delusion that somehow this clean-up puts them on a secure footing with God. That is a damning delusion.

The truth of the matter is that empty house, that spiritual vacuum, that reformation, that religion, that morality, that legalism is a kind of emptiness.

V 26, *Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*"

Once living in open blatant iniquity, he was possessed by one unclean spirit. Now cleaned up and moral, he is possessed by eight unclean spirits who go in and settle down and dwell there permanently is what that means.

More demons more wicked.

The person is more infested with the agents of hell when morally reformed than when immoral.

What a statement. Listen to what the Lord said in

Matthew 23:15, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," listen to this, "for you compass sea and land to make one proselyte and when he is made you make him twice the child of hell than yourselves."

Why?

Because the proselyte becomes more fanatical for self-righteous works than the teacher, because he sees somehow this move from immorality to morality as some elevation of himself. The person sees the change and he relish the change and he get temporarily sort of cleaned from the pollution of his iniquity. He becomes even more an advocate for that than the old Pharisees who have cultivated their hypocrisy and know the truth of their own wretchedness.

The church's message can never be morality.
Jesus' message was never morality.

Morality makes people double sons of hell.
Morality kicks the door wide open for more demons.
Morality makes the last state worse than the first.

It is better to be immoral than moral without Christ.

It is better to be irreligious than religious without Christ, because morality and religion are a seduction.

Morality and religion give the deception of all is well with God when it is not.

Morality and religion is a soul-numbing deception.

As long as a person believes he is immoral, he could be saved.

It's when a person believes he is moral, doesn't need a Saviour.

As long as a person knows he is irreligious, sinner, wretched, he is in a position to be delivered. When a person comes to believe in his own righteousness, he is not redeemable.

It was never the immoral people that blasphemed Jesus.

As we go through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John never going to find the immoral people blaspheming Jesus.

It was always the moral ones.

Never been by the

- harlots,
- the prostitutes,
- the tax collectors,

- the criminal element.

It was the religious people.

It was the self-righteous people.

Moral people, religious people are self-congratulatory, they are self-righteous, they are confident in their own holiness, in their own morality.

They are utterly deceived into believing that they have been delivered from the powers of Satan because they live moral lives.

The truth of the matter is they may be more infested with demons than a prostitute or a criminal. Moral people tend to have no vigilance and therefore no protection.

So, the demon came back, found the whole place cleaned up but empty. That's the problem.

Cleaned up but empty.

If the living God is not present there, you have a disaster.

2 Peter 2:20, *For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.*

Peter has to be echoing what Jesus said. If you just try to clean your life up, maybe even in the name of Jesus, but it's empty in there, you are going to go right back, get entangled again, be overcome, and end up in a worse condition.

Peter says this amazing statement.

2 Peter 2:21-22, *For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²²But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."*

There is no more serious danger than the danger of morality. It's like the leper with no sense of pain. Such a person destroys himself without knowing it.

Leprosy is a nerve disease that obliterates feeling. The lepers rub off their fingers, feet, and their faces because they can't feel anything. This is the deadly danger of morality.

So, to attempt to clean your life up without Christ coming to dwell there is to be exposed to an even greater danger.

That statement, "The last state of that man becomes worse than the first," is very definitive. In the end, being moral is more dangerous than being immoral.

There is no benefit in reformation without regeneration.

This is exactly what the Jews did!

V 29, *And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.*

They wouldn't see it that way at all. They thought they were a righteous generation and that's why they hated Jesus.

They were moral but filthy. They were void of the purifying presence of God. They were damned by morality, religion, and reformation.

V 27-28, *And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" ²⁸But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"*

This is transformation.

What does it mean to be with Christ?

It doesn't mean to clean up your life.
It doesn't mean to be moral.
That's worse.

An illustration makes it happen.

One of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him.

This is a Middle Eastern expression.
This is the ultimate commendation.

Here is a woman who is with Christ in her mind. She says You are the Messiah, You are the Son of God, and she says it in a beatitude that was proverbial in her day.

Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you nursed.

That is the highest compliment you could pay to somebody in that part of the world at that time. This is the most noble thing you could say.

Here is a woman who is calling Jesus blessed, and even affirming that blessedness in a very familiar way, a Jewish expression, "Blessed is the one who brought You to us."

This woman is positive on Jesus. This woman respects Him. This woman gives Him the highest compliment she can give in her vernacular.

She has respect.

She affirms that He is the Messiah.

She may even have understood that He was God.

But Jesus replied.

V 28, And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!"

Jesus is saying it is not enough to commend Jesus, you are not necessarily with Me just because you commend Me, just because you honour Me, just because you respect Me. Being with Me means you hear the Word of God and you do it.

What does it mean to be against Christ?

Be religious or be moral. Or you could even commend Jesus?

Jesus said if you keep My commandments, you love Me, in His upper room discourse.

James says, "Don't be a hearer only but a doer."

Luke 6:46-49, *“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? ⁴⁷Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. ⁴⁹But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”*

Jesus said to be with Me is to obey Me, is to obey the Word of God.

1 John 3:23-24, *And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. ²⁴Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*

John why did he wrote the Gospel?

John 20:31, *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

Being with Christ is not just being moral.

Being with Christ is not just honouring Him, very unlike the Pharisees.

Being with Christ, He says, is hearing the Word of God and doing it.

The Word of God initially is to believe in the Son and be saved. A moral person is in the greatest danger. That danger is not mitigated by having good feelings about Jesus. A person would still be empty and a haven for demons.

On the other hand, a saved person is one who hears the Word concerning Christ, believes it in its fullness, embraces Him as Lord and Saviour and sets out on a path of obedience enabled by the indwelling presence of the Spirit of Christ.