

The Character of Jesus 24
Exposing Contradictions
Luke 11:37 – 54

- Characteristic: Addressing logical flaws
 - Note, Jesus did not cite any Scripture. He exposed only the logical disconnect between practice and common sense.
 - (37 – 41) The washing referenced in verse 38 is a ceremonial practice, not an hygienic one, and is not found in the Law of Moses. Rather, it was a traditional practice illustrating purity. Further, if one were “unclean” according to the Law, the “un-uncleanness” ritual required waiting until evening after washing oneself and clothes.
 - (39) Obviously, everyone washed dinnerware inside and out. Jesus’ figure of speech, which He expected to be understood, was of a person, their actions versus their hearts.
 - (41) The traditional observance had failed, having become a goal in itself instead of bringing to mind what it represented. Switching to alms as the illustration (a practice enjoined in the Law), perhaps taking a shot at the lack of generosity among the wealthy dinner guests, Jesus noted that it is not the money that makes alms a good thing, but the character behind it, which is parallel to the ritual washing.
 - (42) The tithe was an enforced sharing from the Law. Again, the Pharisees were obsessive about tithing, but neglected to let the sharing attitude spill over into matters of justice and love.
 - (43) Self-importance characterized the religious leadership.
 - (44) The common people were deceived by the self-centered, legalistic teaching.
 - (45) Jesus started with the Pharisees probably because He was addressing His host, a Pharisee. But, some Sadducees were present, who recognized that the contradictions being exposed by Jesus hit both parties equally.
 - (46) Both parties had rules that were difficult for common people to afford. Not only did the leaders fail to help ease the burdens, but also to recognize the burdens.
 - (47 – 51) The leaders reveled in the few bright spots in their history, but conveniently overlooked the many failures in the same history.
 - (52) The illogic of the leadership made it extremely difficult for ordinary people to figure out the truth.
 - (53) Rather than evaluating the validity of Jesus’ points, the scribes (Sadducees) and Pharisees attempted to cover their flaws by attacking.
- Applications of logical flaws today:
 - Note that this is not about competing explanations for the same Scripture, but the illogic created by common practices.
 - How can we expose the illogic of the following common failures in the modern church?
 - Illustrations that have become goals in themselves, having lost their meaning:
 - Baptism
 - Lord’s Supper
 - Assembly

- Many Catholic rituals, most of which started out as good illustrations.
- Church leaders tend toward self-importance. The existence of some who are humble does not negate Jesus' point.
- The ordinary person cannot follow legalistic or theological arguments. Becoming simpler will upset those with favorite habits and slogans.
- Churches tend to appeal to middle class professionals. The poor cannot afford to appear to fit in. The less educated cannot keep up with the complexity.
- Every denomination tries to connect itself to the original church, touting the bright spots and ignoring the many failures.
- Calvinism (the basis of 90% of all denominations) does not match up with reality, so people stop expecting Christianity to make sense.
- Exposing logical flaws will make people angry. But some will hear. Is this OK?