



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK FIVE - Jesus Over Rules

This is the final week of our Jesus Over Everything series. If you've been joining us for daily prayer in the printed journal, welcome to the digital version that goes out weekly to hundreds of Providence people, Small Groups and Discipleship Groups. I hope you'll continue in this daily practice and let God shape you into the image of Christ! Here is the simple litany we began this series with:

When we're tempted to earn our way to heaven. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

When we focus on what we have or don't have. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

When we face battles against darkness. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

When we hope that idols can save us. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

When we put our trust in the rules of religion. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

This Sunday, we focused on this last line. The rules and laws contained in the Scripture are there for a reason and were meant to serve a purpose for the lives of faithful people. But history is full of examples of the rules becoming the main thing. We remember that Jesus is over our rules. When we are tempted to put our faith in rules...Jesus overrules.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below.. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 11.37-56 (NIV)

When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. ³⁸ But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed that Jesus did not first wash before the meal.

³⁹ Then the Lord said to him, “Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰ You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹ But now as for what is inside you—be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.

⁴² “Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

⁴³ “Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces.

⁴⁴ “Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which people walk over without knowing it.”

⁴⁵ One of the experts in the law answered him, “Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also.”

⁴⁶ Jesus replied, “And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.

⁴⁷ “Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your ancestors who killed them. ⁴⁸ So you testify that you approve of what your ancestors did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹ Because of this, God in his wisdom said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.’ ⁵⁰ Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.

⁵² “Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.”

⁵³ When Jesus went outside, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, ⁵⁴ waiting to catch him in something he might say.

- This is a challenging passage for sure. Pastor Angela admitted that she probably wouldn't have selected it on her own. But we are learning from the entirety of the Word of God, and therefore, we have to engage with the tricky stuff too. The temptation here is to keep the arrows pointed at the Pharisees and lawyers as Jesus did, but it is more beneficial to consider how Jesus might have also meant for these words to apply to us as well. Am I likely to keep up appearances so that I might seem better than what is actually going on in my heart? Could my generosity actually serve as a cleaning-agent for my own heart?

- **Prayer Prompt: But if we live in the light in the same way as he is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1.7 CEB)**
- *Cleanse me O God, in through the loving sacrifice of your Son. Spur me on to see and respond to the needs of my neighbors. Amen.*

TUESDAY: LUKE 11.37-56)

- You may have your own hand-washing rituals. You may have stepped them up in recent years. I am acutely aware of the increase in hand sanitizer stations that remain a part of our lives. Anyone who has visited Haiti with one of our mission teams is familiar with the ritual of ladling water upon the hands of the person behind you as you prepare for a meal at a local restaurant. The washing of hands at particular times is evidence of God’s provision for the health and thriving of God’s people. But unless you are also allowing God to cleanse your heart and make you pure, then you are missing the point. That’s what Jesus is addressing with the Pharisees. “Sure your hands are clean, but what does it matter if your heart is dirty?” Are there ways in which you are more focused on the illusion of cleanliness than the state of your heart?

- **Prayer Prompt: Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.**
¹¹ **Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.**
¹² **Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.(Psalm 51.10-12)**
- *God guard me against the charade of cleanliness and holiness. You know the difference and so do I. I want to live only for you. Renew a right spirit within me. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: LUKE 11.37-56

- Jesus addressed the meticulous way in which the Pharisees observed the command to tithe. 10% of mint and 10% of rue was meant to be symbolic of a 100% commitment to justice for the poor. How is your financial commitment to the work of God through the church connected to your God-given calling to see and reach the disconnected in your community and on the streets?

- **Prayer Prompt: But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6.20-21)**
- *God, may my offering be pleasing in our sight. Use it and use all of me for your glory. Amen.*

THURSDAY: LUKE 11.37-56

- Our response to the “woes” spoken against the Pharisees and layers of Jesus’ day, is best considered as a response of the heart (more than our pocket book, or rule of ethics). Jesus invites us into a process of transformation. He wants our hearts even more than our actions. How do your day to day actions represent the state of your heart? Is there a gap between your actions and your heart for God?

- **Prayer Prompt: Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3.5-6)**
- *Almighty God, by my own actions, I may or may not reveal a heart for you. Guide my actions towards an integrity of heart. Amen.*

FRIDAY: LUKE 11.37-56

- The Pharisees were accused of being like unmarked graves that defiled all of those who stepped across them. Have you ever had a strange sense when walking through a cemetery? *Am I stepping where I should not be stepping?* It may come from this Old Testament idea that you are unclean if you walk over a burial spot. Jesus is accusing the Pharisees of causing others to stumble and defile themselves without even knowing it. Their actions were leading others in ways that were not leading them to holiness. Think back over the last week...are there ways in which others’ actions might have caused you to move away from Christ-likeness? Are there any ways in which your action had that effect on others?

- **Prayer Prompt: Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. (Romans 14.13)**
- *Lord, I do not want to cause others to stumble in their journey towards you. Instead, lead me to live and act in such a way that others see Jesus more clearly. Amen.*

SATURDAY: LUKE 11.37-56

- The Message translation of Matthew 11.28-30 asks, *are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion?* What Jesus says in response to that sentiment is a word of grace and comfort. *Get away with me and you will recover your life...and find real rest.* I can't think of more comforting words. Yes Jesus, we are tired of trying to be better. We would rather rest and receive from you. In the space below write a note to Jesus about the many things you would like to lay down in exchange for his mercy and love.

- **Prayer Prompt: In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.(Psalm 4.8)**
- *Jesus, I want more than rules and religion. I want you. May my life be restored in you. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

- *Which verses or words stand out to you in this week's passage?*
- *Which rules of religion seem to be most talked about today?*
- *How do those rules relate to what Jesus was warning the Pharisees about?*
- *What might change about your daily religious practices if you placed those practices fully under the authority of Jesus?*