

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

**Chapter 11- Luke 11:33-36**

225- These You Should Have Done Without Neglecting  
the Others- Part 3

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November 10, 2013

**Luke 11:37-54**

**37** Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined *at the table*.

**38** When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.

**39** But the Lord said to him, "**Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness.**

**40** "**You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also?**

**41** "**But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you.**

**42** "**But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.**

**43** "**Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places.**

**44** "**Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it."**

**45** One of the lawyers said to Him in reply, "Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too."

**46** But He said, "**Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.**

**47** "**Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and *it was* your fathers *who* killed them.**

**48** "**So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build *their tombs*.**

**49 "For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and *some* they will persecute,**  
**50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation,**  
**51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house *of God*; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.'**  
**52 "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering."**  
**53 When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects,**  
**54 plotting against Him to catch *Him* in something He might say.**

To the Glory of God

There is something that is very true about Jesus and something that is very frightening about us that we need to know:

- A. Jesus never accepted religious people
- B. We are religious people by nature

Now over the last several weeks- I have been talking to you about something that I find very interesting about the Life and Ministry of Jesus, and something that I also find every frightening. And the interesting thing is that Jesus never looked at people who believed in and who were following man-made religion and approve of them. Jesus didn't act toward these people the way we might would think or even the way that we do. Jesus didn't think these people were noble, He never praised them, He never said they were sincere, He never gave them the benefit of the doubt.

Jesus never said anything good about people who were trying very hard to earn Salvation by good works or who were trying to work their way into Heaven.

But in each and every case where Jesus came into contact with people like this- He condemned them. He *categorically* condemned them. He *brutally* and *vocally* and *repeatedly* and *to the point*- damned them for their effort. I find that interesting.

But what terrifies me is the fact that we are all religious people. All of humanity is religious- everybody on earth believes in god; everybody has a doctrine that they live by and ascribes to. Even atheists believe in god-and they worship this god- it's just that the god that they believe in and the god they worship is themselves. So it is built into our fallen nature to be religious. And that is one of our biggest problems.

When Adam and Eve fell- the very first thing they did was to create a false and man- made religion that would doom the entire human race. Please turn with me to read **Genesis 3:1-8**

**1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”**

**2 The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;**

**3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’”**

**4 The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die!**

**5 “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”**

**6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.**

**7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.**

**8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.**

Now look closely again at verses 7&8:

**7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.**

**8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.**

Now why did they sew fig leaves together? What was the motivation behind sewing fig leaves to make loin coverings? Two things:

- ✓ **The eyes of both of them were opened**
- ✓ **They knew that they were naked**

Now why did they hide? Two reasons:

- ✓ **The eyes of both of them were opened**
- ✓ **They heard the sound of the LORD God**

So these two fallen sinners did two things because of the very same reason:

1. They tried to cover their own nakedness (sin) by what they could do for themselves because they were fallen
2. They tried to hide from the Presence of God because they were afraid of God because they knew they were fallen.

And this is the origination of all false religions, all false beliefs, all false doctrines, and all heresy. And this initiation of false religion was internal in the nature of both Adam and Eve. Later on- through a man named Nimrod- that internal natural and normal false religion became externalized and formalized and codified, and it was written down and put into practice where it could be taught and learned and deceive the world, and that is why the Tower of Babel was a big deal- and why God took note of it and why He came down to stop it- and we are studying that on Sunday Evenings.

And neither one of those two acts by Adam and Eve were good; neither one of them was noble or holy and pure. Both of these acts by Adam and Eve were the result of knowing that they had sinned and were now fallen. So both of these acts came out of a depraved and fallen mind and thus by definition- they were both sinful.

Therefore- both running and hiding from God and trying to cover sin by what we do for ourselves are both evil manifestations of a fallen

and broken and diseased nature and can never bring glory to God and can never accomplish what it intends to do.

And what we need to understand is that this effort to cover sin by what we do for ourselves is part and parcel to what it means to be Lost and Fallen. In other words- all human beings do this and they do it instinctively. And this instinct to try to do something in our own power to cover our sin does not have to be taught or learned- all human beings automatically desire to do something for themselves in their own strength and their own power and through their own human initiative to originate some act or some action that will make them acceptable to God- precisely because they are fallen and sinful.

So what I'm trying to show you is that every effort that man puts forth- to try to make himself acceptable to God by what he does for himself- absent Grace and absent the finished Work of Jesus Christ and absent repentance is not a noble endeavor that we should admire or respect but is in fact simply another manifestation of what it means to be wicked in our hearts and separated from God in our fallen state.

But because this is what all fallen human beings do- none of these efforts pleases God. They can't please God by definition. In fact, all of these efforts combined are not the result of a genuine love for God- they are the result of the fallen depraved nature of Man trying to be god and trying to do for himself what only God can do, and, thus, it is impossible to please God through any of them.

And because we are fallen- these efforts by man are always attractive to us. And that is why heresy is always much more popular than Divine Truth, man-made religion always has more adherents than true Biblical Christianity, that is why darkness is more exciting than light to the unredeemed, and why lies attract more lost people than the Truth. And that is why a lost person doesn't have to be taught false religion- it simply makes sense to the sinful mind of man- but they do have to be taught and you do have to learn and you do have to grow in your appreciation of and your admiration of and your respect of and your love for- Truth- because Divine Truth operates according to God's logic and not Man's, and it runs *counter-intuitively* to the way the human mind of fallen Man works. And this has *always* been true and that will always be true.

So all of these efforts combined engaged by countless hundreds of millions of people all over the world- all the time- to do something to

deserve God's Favor- are- in fact- patently evil and sinful and they are a categorical *rejection* of God's Grace, they are at war against God's Mercy, and they are in complete rebellion to God's Plan of Salvation.

Where did Adam and Eve get this notion that they could fix their own problem by what they did for themselves? They got that from satan himself. And so it is correct to say that all false belief, all man-made teachings and doctrines, all heresy, all human initiated religion are, in fact, doctrines of demons designed to deceive mankind and make them feel good about being lost.

Nobody ever gets saved by believing the wrong thing. Nobody is made to be in right standing with God by false beliefs and man-made religion. Nobody comes closer to God by being deceived.

So all false religion, all man-made doctrines and false teachings and heresies are the enemy of Christianity, they are at war with God, they are all products of satan, and they are all evil- all the time.

And yet false teaching is easy to teach and easy to learn and easy to believe. Truth is sometimes difficult to learn and hard to teach and takes struggle to understand and takes nothing less than the Power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives to obey and love. The Apostle Paul taught this in **1Corinthians 12:3**

**Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.**

You don't have to be saved to want a better life. Lost sinners all want a better life. Nobody wants to make less money; nobody wants fewer possessions; nobody wants to go backward in technology or in safety or in comforts or in peace. You don't have to be born again to want to serve God as long as He would give you tons of money and a new car. You don't have to be regenerate to want Jesus as long as Jesus will make you popular and rich and healthy and successful. Who wouldn't want a god to bless their life? Who wouldn't want to go to heaven after they die?

And that is why I tell you that you don't have to be saved to agree with and believe and follow the false teachers on the hay, wood, and stubble television network. You don't have to be saved to want to be healed or to be blessed or to be important in this life. You don't have to

be saved to want God to help you fulfill all your dreams or to help you accomplish your goals in this life or to win the Super Bowl or to heal your mom from cancer. Lost people can do that all day long.

You don't even have to be saved to believe in God, or to believe that He created all things, or that to believe that He is superior to you in power and glory, and that He is infinitely wise and good. Lost people and even demons can do that- all day long. In fact, the devils believe in God so much so much that James said this in **James 2:19**

**You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.**

You don't have to be saved to want to live in Heaven forever or to want to miss hell or to believe that heaven is infinitely better than hell- lost people can do that all day long too.

You don't have to be saved to believe that Jesus is real or that He was born of a virgin or that He died on the Cross or that He performed miracles or that He is coming back- demons and Muslims all believe that.

You don't have to be saved to want or to believe any of those things- you just have to be saved to love Jesus. Nobody can truly love Jesus unless they are saved. And you have to be regenerate to desire to obey Jesus and to live your life with abandoned to the Glory of God; you have to be born again to want to decrease so that Christ will increase in your life and you have to be saved to love the Truth. And so false religion is the enemy of Truth. And that is why Jesus condemned these people.

So we see that Jesus did not accept these religious people. In fact, He kept His fiercest threats for them. You see, Jesus was not about sentimentality- He was about Truth. Jesus is Truth- personified. He is the living manifestation of the holy Law of God- and as such- He perfectly understood that false religion and spiritual teaching contrary to the Truth comes from hell and sends people to hell. So Jesus hated it. And we should too.

You see, dear friends- anything but the Divine Truth of God is a damning deception that has the greatest power to destroy souls forever because it gives the illusion that all is well. And that is true- no matter how popular it might be. In fact, I would go so far as to say that of all

the evils in the world, of all the sins in the world, of all the iniquities in the world, our Lord knew that man-made religion was the worst--false religion--and especially false Judaism and false Christianity. And that's why the severest eternal Judgment will be rendered for the religious who perverted the Old Testament and the New Testament.

So what we must try to understand is that the leaders of the Jewish religion in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century were not honest and sincere people who were sincerely trying to love and serve God. These were not nice guys who were trying so hard but were just a little bit off in their theology. No, we must understand- even though this is very hard to grasp- that the Pharisees were not followers of the Old Testament Scriptures- they were *perverters* of the Old Testament Scriptures, they were *deniers* of the Messiah, they were *haters* of God, they were *followers* and *worshippers* of the devil, and because they were lost- they were all evil- all the time. They were trying to go to heaven by some other means other than the one single way God had created.

These men were religious frauds and yet they were the single most fastidious and the single most sincere and the single most relentless and dedicated and hardest working people on earth. And the frightening part of this is that every single one of them thought they were right; they thought they were correct; they thought they were loving and serving God, and when God Almighty in human flesh stood before them- they not only categorically rejected Him- they sought to discredit Him, and finally they sought to destroy Him.

Jesus said that it would be more tolerable in the Day of Judgment for the perverted people of Sodom and Gomorrah than it would be for the religious hypocrites of Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum. In other words, hell is hotter for the people who rejected Jesus Christ coming out of a perverted Judaism than for the population of Sodom and the cities of the plain who were engaged in the most vile kind of homosexuality- even trying to rape angels. And that is a staggering statement that we should linger on.

So we need to know that man- made religion is not a virtue. It is not an example of man *ascending* to his highest level of his nobility. No, it is man *descending* to the lowest level of his depravity. When you see Muslims bowing down five times every day toward Mecca and praying- you are not looking at people who are in favor with God- you

are seeing demon initiated false religion enslaving these souls and deceiving them into hell.

False religion has no virtue in it at all and it deserves no respect from us at all. Man- made religion is a manifestation of depraved Man categorically abandoning the one true living God and worshipping demons. Now I realize that this sounds harsh- but I am not the one who said this- Jesus Christ- the very epitome of God's Love Personified- said this right here in this Passage that Brother Andy just read to us. Now over in **Romans 1**- the Apostle Paul said:

### **Romans 1:21-23**

**21** For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

**22** Professing to be wise, they became fools,

**23** and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

... and that doesn't matter if the idol they manufacture is that made of wood or stone, or if it is the god of materialism or sex or money or Allah or Buddha or Krishna. In **Matthew 23:15** Jesus called the Pharisees "sons of hell". In **Matthew 23:33**- He said:

**... how will you escape the sentence of hell?**

Jesus was supportive of the Truth- but never of man's false religion. And the text of Scripture this morning is the story of one of the most super religious men on earth. It's the story of a Pharisee who, with the others who were Pharisees and all who followed their teaching, needed to be awakened to his true condition. It's a tragic story about very religious people, devout, moral, fastidious, scrupulous people who revered the Old Testament, people who lived for ceremony, people who monitored very carefully their public conduct, people who spoke all the time about God.

The Pharisees actually possessed intense moral sensibilities. They had very active consciences that could easily be offended. They had strong religious convictions. And that's why I say it would seem to just

an outside observer that these men would be Jesus' favorite people—the ones most likely to be accepted by Him and Him by them. They really should be the most eager people to repent, the most eager to believe, and the most eager to enter the Kingdom.

But just the opposite was true. And Jesus said He could identify with the prostitutes and the tax collectors and the scum and the riff-raff before He could ever identify with the Pharisees and the people who followed them. He said, *"I can't identify with you at all because I have come to call sinners, not the righteous, and you think you're righteous."* You see, false religion blinds people to the Truth. Self-righteous works based religious systems- which all false religions are- feed human pride, and they feed human vanity- and thus they always produce adept hypocrites. And the Pharisees are the greatest Biblical examples of this because they were the most devout among the Jews. They were the main spiritual examples for the people. Yet their warped and distorted interpretation of the Old Testament cut them off from God completely. In fact, Jesus said to them, *"You're of your father, the devil, and the reason you don't know Me is because you're of your father the devil."*

Now I don't think for a second that these men sought out to be hypocrites on purpose. I don't think anyone who falls into false religion pursues those religions in order that they might become hypocrites. You just end up there. And all people in all false religions are hypocrites. They are religious on the outside- but they are evil on the inside because the only thing that can change the inside is the Gospel. And so they're all hypocrites to one degree or another. They're making a better show than what's really going on inside. And that's what all false religion does. Religious people become highly skilled at covering their corruption with external morality and ritual because it's all they can do.

The religion of the Pharisees was an empty deception: no love for God, no Sovereign Work of the Holy Spirit, no knowledge of the Truth, no genuine righteousness, and no real repentance. So they were all just actors.

So all false religion is a kind of hypocrisy- it's a life of covering up; it's a game you play on the outside- you're simply creating an illusion.

Now in the text before us in Luke 11- Jesus mercifully confronts a religious hypocrite- this Pharisee. And He confronts him with the Truth about his own hypocrisy head on. And this is essential. Religious people can't be converted until they realize the hypocrisy of what they're

involved in. So this is a very good lesson on how to evangelize religious people- and in this case- *extremely* religious people. But don't expect a lot of good results. Drop down for a moment to verse 53,

### **Luke 11:53&54**

**53 When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile and to question Him closely on many subjects,**

**54 plotting against Him to catch *Him* in something He might say.**

And that just reinforces the fact that they become so good at being hypocritical- that they do not yield it up easily. So rather than repent of hypocrisy- they just turn up their hatred on the One Who confronted it and they are successful in having Him removed.

Now as we look at this account- we're going to see the state of apostate Judaism and you're going to see the true character of Pharisaical Judaism. But I want you to get beyond that- because you're also going to see an example of all false religion and how all false religion operates and how it functions in its blinding, deceptive hypocrisy. Religious hypocrites with unchanged hearts cut off from God are left to do nothing but be hypocrites. And we're very familiar with it, whether you're talking about the Roman Catholic Church, for example, or the Greek Orthodox movement, or Hindus, or Muslims- whatever you're talking about. It's the same kind of thing; it's all for show and it's utterly absent of any reality.

Now there are at least five points here in this Passage that are always true about false man- made religion that are never true with genuine Biblical Christianity:

1. False Religion is Always External and Superficial
2. False Religion Possesses no Forgiveness of Sin
3. False Religion is Always Surface and Shallow
4. False Religion Always Replaces the Important With the Unimportant
5. False Religion Always Seeks Human Acceptance

So let's examine each one.

### **1. False Religion is Always External and Superficial**

### **Luke 11:37&38**

**37** Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined *at the table*.

**38** When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.

All false religion is purely external and superficial. And what happens is this: in order to live out your man-made religion and put on a convincing show- you have to always emphasize the external. You have no Truth- so you put on a show. So you expand and emphasize the emblems, you expand the functions, you expand the ceremonies, you expand the rituals, the trinkets the colors, the music, and the show.

And that's exactly what the Jews had done here. They went way beyond what the Old Testament actually taught. And that's what the Roman Catholics and the Greek Orthodox people have done. They have gone way beyond what the New Testament teaches- adding almost endless rituals and routines and ceremonies and regulations, and that is because there's nothing on the inside- no Truth, no power, no reality- so they make up for that lack by simply creating a bigger illusion on the outside and on the surface.

Pentecostalism is the latest religious movement to do the very same thing. They have no solid Biblical Doctrine and so they emphasize the external and the superficial and they fall on the floor and they scream and shout and they talk endlessly about their dreams and their visions and what God told them and what the Holy Spirit revealed to them. They are focused on the superficial and the extravagant because they are empty inside.

And listen- the statement, "*But Brother Blair, some of these people are saved and love Jesus*" is not an excuse or an answer to their false teaching. Those who are saved in the Full Gospel Movement are saved *in spite of* what they are taught, and *in spite of* what they believe- not because of it. God is Sovereign, my friends- and He can save anyone He chooses- no matter what they are involved in- but that doesn't justify real bad theology and real bad practices.

Now the Pharisees lived for these rites and rituals and ceremonies. And the Lord knew He could get this guy's attention by violating one of these silly rituals. And so that's what Jesus did here.

Jesus had already denounced them and following Him telling them that their unbelief was not a “light” problem- it was a “sight” problem because there was plenty of Light. The true Light of God was everywhere in blazing clarity- Jesus was in their midst- so their unbelief and their rejection of Him was a sight issue. They're blind in their sin. And then Jesus gave us an illustration of this blindness, this inability to see the light.

And so after that- Dr. Luke says a Pharisee asked Jesus to have lunch with him. And so Jesus went in and just reclined at the table. And that sounds pretty matter of fact. But we should know that there were basically two main meals in the day: one was the word here which is the word for lunch; it was a kind of brunch- just a little before noon. And then there was huge dinner later in the day. That didn't even know about three squares a day until Dr. Kellogg invented that notion.

So this is the word for what we would call “lunch”. And it was the meal after a few hours of morning work. And it was a significant meal- something that took some time to prepare and to eat. And so this wasn't a snack- it wasn't on the run- and this required an invitation. And so Jesus went in and did what you do at a formal prolonged meal- you recline at the table- extending yourself *toward* the table with your feet *away* from the table in a sort of comfortable posture on a kind of couch and you get ready for an extended meal and conversation.

And here is this Pharisee (from the Hebrew *parosh*, which means to separate). This is one who was “a separated one”. That's how they designated themselves. These men were fundamentalists; they were non-priests; they were laymen. They were devoted extremely to the laws and the traditions. And there were about 6,000 of them at the time. They had a long history, all the way back to the Babylonian exile. Their influence had been growing for 400 years since Ezra.

They had come to be seen as the spiritual authorities to whom the people looked. They were self-righteous. They were evil. They were degenerate. They were hypocritical. They were filled with pride. They abused people for personal gain, etc.

But when this invitation came, Luke says the man asked Jesus to have lunch, and the Lord went in and reclined at the table and didn't ceremonially wash. So at this moment- Jesus has already breached the code of the Pharisees, and He did it on purpose. And what surfaces,

starting in verse 38, is the first Characteristic of false religion- it was all external and superficial.

Now the washing here was not about hygiene- this isn't about Jesus having dirty hands. This is about a man-made ceremony that Jesus had not first ceremonial washed. It's actually the verb in the Greek *baptize*, from where we get our English word "baptize". You see, they had developed a ceremonial washing that they did to demonstrate their cleanliness, to demonstrate their holiness. And in fact, this was an old thing- it had been around a long time- just in case they might have touched a Gentile that day or even touched something a Gentile had touched, or touched something an unclean person touched, or touched something else unclean.

And this was done to symbolize their holiness and their desire to be clean from all the defilements of the world. And the Jewish Mishnah actually describes how this was to be done. It even gets down to the amount of water they had to use. You were to use enough water to fill one and a half egg shells, and it was to be poured across the tips of the fingers, running down to the wrist, and then the hands were to be washed, symbolizing this bathing/cleansing.

Now there's absolutely nothing about any of this in the Old Testament. Nothing. They just made this ceremony up to symbolize *externally* how holy they were. So this was just a silly little ritual that they had developed to publicly parade their own purity.

Now over in **Matthew 15:2**- Levi says that these guys came to Jesus to rebuke Him and said

**Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.**

... and in the next verse- Jesus condemned them by saying,

**Matthew 15:3**

**Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?**

So Jesus just ignored their tradition. You know what He was saying? He was purposely saying this, *"I have no interest in being in being a part of your religious club."* Our Lord was willing to insult this

man at the very outset of this lunch. And this is how it is, my friends, with false religion. They love the external; they love the superficial; they love the symbolic.

In Greek Orthodoxy, for example- they just knock your socks off- with all the extravagant external symbolism. You stand in one spot and this parade goes on with people in all these elaborate dressings and head dresses and waving censors, and icons all over everywhere. It literally blasts your senses- it's bizarre- and there are people walking in endless circles and mumbling incomprehensible drivel and waving things in the air- and these poor, sad souls are trying somehow to connect God and Salvation and Truth with all this external superficial madness.

But false religion that has nothing true on the inside loves the elaborate superficial symbolism. Look at the Roman Church which is full of it. And the more important things are supposed to be- the more elaborate the ceremony is and the ritual and the music and the colors- everything except the Truth. They will dazzle you with things that don't matter at the expense of Truth.

So this is a very important characteristic of false religion- they have no Truth, no spiritual power, no genuine salvation, and so they make up for it by having elaborate and colorful and musical ceremonies and rituals and traditions.

So anytime the tradition of man outweighs the Truth of God- run from that- it is a sign of a false religion because all false religions love meaningless and superficial symbols and rituals and ceremonies and human traditions.

The longer the song service- the less Truth will be preached and taught and the result is that the people will know God and His Ways less and less. The more programs that are designed to tickle the ears of lukewarm and unsaved and carnal minded people, the more sporting events take the place of Bible Studies and Prayer meetings, the plays and the puppet shows and comedians and music concerts that are flooding into the House of God- are all signs that people do not love Jesus, people do not love the Truth, and people love pleasure more than they love God and the things of God.

Over the last 25 or 30 years- we have been inundated with a syndrome in our culture that has been collectively called, "ADD"- Attention Deficient Disorder. And so now we put children on Lythium

and Rydalyn instead of taking away the violent and pagan video games and giving them an orange and pushing them outside to climb trees and run and play and scream and holler like children are supposed to.

But there is another malady that has struck our nation and it is called "ABB"- Anything But the Bible. And it has infected the American Church. And so the leaders of the Church will give the people *anything*- everything- except the only thing that matters and that is Holy Spirit inspired Scripture. And so they will play and have concerts and comedy shows and yoga classes and they will grow large in number and they will all have a blast- all while Jesus and the Truth sits over in a corner somewhere- unknown and unloved and disrespected in His Own House and not obeyed and the people perish for a lack of knowledge.

And this is done in spite of the fact that The Church possesses the only Truth that can change the human heart and save the soul, and that Truth is preached and taught and known and understood and obeyed and loved and defended less now than at any time in the 2,000 year history of the Church. And that is because we have traded the Real and the True and the Important for the Superficial and the External and the Symbolic. Please turn with me to read what the Apostle Paul said about this in **2Timothy 4:1-5**:

**1 I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:**

**2 preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.**

**3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,**

**4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.**

**5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**

So Point #1 is that anytime false religion exists- they will *always* emphasize the external and the superficial- at the expense of the Truth. And Lord willing- we will examine the other points next week.

Amen. Let's pray.