



Introduction/Icebreaker:

- Describe one of your most embarrassing moments.
- What made that moment so embarrassing?

Sermon Discussion:

Was there anything in today's sermon or service that stuck out to you, challenged you, or confused you?

Scripture Discussion:

- Read Luke 11:37-54 as a group.
- Look at verses 37-40.
 - "Why was the Pharisee surprised that Jesus didn't wash his hands?"
- Look at verses 39-44.
 - What does Jesus confront the Pharisees on here?
 - Summarize in your own words what Jesus was pointing out to the Pharisees.
 - Think about what is ironic about a whitewashed tomb?
 - What is Jesus saying about the Pharisees by describing them as "unmarked graves?"
- Look at verses 45-52.
 - What does Jesus confront the lawmakers on here?
 - Look specifically at verses 46 and 52.
 - When have you faced religious people who've loaded you down with burdens or religious rules and regulations you could hardly carry.

Application:

- In this passage Jesus uses a meal as an occasion for moral correction by confronting religious leaders who were missing the point of spirituality. They were focused more on religion (law-keeping) than faith (loving God and responding to His love). They had set up what John Ortberg describes in his book *The Life You've Always Wanted*, as “boundary-marker spirituality.”
 - What are the boundaries we've established in our faith community?
 - What boundaries/rules/regulations have you encountered in pursuing God?
 - How can we overcome boundary-marker spirituality?
- A recent study revealed that the primary challenge in helping people grow spiritually is that many people equate spirituality with rule following. In his upcoming book, *The Me I Want to Be*, John Ortberg reminds us that Jesus didn't say “I've come that you might follow my rules.” He said, “I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance.” (John 10:10b)
 - How have you encountered rules centered Christianity?
 - What might some of the possible consequences be if we become a community that follows a list of religious rules but neglects justice and the love of God?
- Rules-centered religion tends to create pride and judgmentalism.
 - How have you experienced this in yourself? In others?
 - What steps will you take to eliminate this from your life? From your community?
- Take a look at Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Matthew 23:37-40.
 - What do these passages say about religion based on rules as opposed to genuine faith?
 - Share one way you plan on pursuing justice and the love of God instead of just putting up a façade.

Prayer Time: