



**GOD'S LAW  
IS LOVE**

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# THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

## THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

## THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

## EDITORIAL STAFF

Rev. Dr. Roderick Belin, Publisher  
Faith Waters, Lessons  
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M.E. Russell, Layout/Design

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

*AME Discipline*



# Jesus Eats With a Pharisee

Lesson Scripture: Luke 11:37-44

Focus Scripture: Luke 11:37-44

**KEY VERSE:** “You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?” Luke 11:40

## WORDS TO KNOW

*AMAZED – greatly surprised*

*WICKEDNESS – a profound evil committed knowingly and of free will*

*ALMS – acts and deeds of mercy, such as giving to the poor and widows*

*WOE – an exclamation of misfortune on oneself because of sinning against God*

*TITHE – giving of one-tenth of wages (or farmer’s produce)*

*JUSTICE – to ensure all are treated equally and fairly*

*SYNAGOGUES – the Jewish house of worship*

*PHARISEES – pronounced: FEHR – ih – seez*



**FOCUS SCRIPTURE: LUKE 11:37-44**

- 37** While he was speaking, a Pharisee invited him to dine with him; so he went in and took his place at the table.
- 38** The Pharisee was amazed to see that he did not first wash before dinner.
- 39** Then the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.
- 40** You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?
- 41** So give for alms those things that are within; and see, everything will be clean for you.
- 42** But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practiced, without neglecting the others.
- 43** Woe to you Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honor in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces.
- 44** Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without realizing it.”

**INTRODUCTION**

For the fall quarter, we are going to focus on the theme, *God's Law Is Love*. The fall quarter explores the role of God's law as it relates to faith in Christ. The lessons focus on New Testament scriptures that reinterpret the significance of the Mosaic law (Ten Commandments) for those who love Christ and respond in faith. As one who fulfilled the whole law, Jesus was able to show us how compassion is more important than a strict abiding of the law.

Unit I, “Love Completes, Law Falls Short,” is a four-week study from the Gospels of Luke and John. In Lesson 1, Jesus distinguishes the practice of empty religious acts from carrying out justice and the love of God. Lesson 2 asks the question of what sort of activities truly honor the Sabbath and keep it holy. In the gospel of John, Lesson 3 examines Jesus' teaching that the Sabbath ought to be a day of healing. And in Lesson 4, Jesus raises the question of who is qualified to pass judgment on those who fail to keep the commandments.

*How can you know if a person does not genuinely care about others?  
What do the actions of your church leaders indicate to people?*

## BIBLE STORY

The gospel of Luke was written by Luke, the physician who was a Greek and Gentile Christian. He is the only known Gentile author in the New Testament. Luke was a close companion and friend of Paul. He also wrote Acts, and the two books go together. Luke desired to give an accurate account of the life of Christ, and to present Christ as the perfect man and Savior. He accurately records the actions and teachings of Christ, helping us to understand the way of salvation.

In chapter eleven, Luke was teaching the disciples and others about prayer, casting out demons, warnings against unbelief, as well as explaining about the light within believers. Our lesson today comes from verses 37 through 44. After Jesus finished teaching, he accepted an invitation from a Pharisee to come share a meal with him. The Pharisee was surprised that Jesus did not wash before sitting at the table (vv.37 – 38). As a Pharisee, he was a member of an ancient Jewish sect, that believed in the strict observance of the traditional and written law. They felt a sense of religious superiority over others.

The "washing" was a ceremonial cleansing. It was not done for health reasons, but as a symbol of washing away any contamination from touching anything unclean. The Pharisees made a public show of their washing. They expected everyone to do it, even Jesus. But the practice was originally intended only for priests. Sometimes people in the church make up rules that are not in God's Word. Jesus spoke out against the Pharisees engaging in ceremonial washing for the body, yet their hearts were full of "greed and wickedness" (v. 39). God understands our motives, good or bad. The inside of a person (heart) is more important than outward actions, like ceremonial washing (v. 40).

God sees and knows all things. If we give to the poor because we genuinely care, it demonstrates we are not selfish, prideful, and wicked. Jesus used the word "woe" when mentioning the Pharisees three times (v. 41 – 44). "Woe" is a word used to warn of impending judgment for sins. The Pharisees tithed but neglected to enact justice, show compassion to the needy, and demonstrate the love of God towards others. When we give our tithes, it does not mean we should stop sharing and being compassionate. Moreover, we have to be mindful of who we associate with because some people are wicked like the Pharisees. They can negatively influence us. We must remain

humble and seek justice for others. Whenever possible, we are to help those in need.

*Why did the Pharisee feel surprised by Jesus' action? What are some of the warnings Jesus gave to the Pharisees?*

## **SANKOFA**

“Miami-Dade pastor arrested for allegedly stealing money, home belonging to elderly couple”

A woman who supposedly was a pastor befriended an elderly couple and stole more than \$18,000 from them. Watch the YouTube video and discuss your opinion about her actions.

What does her behavior reflect about her life? How can we distinguish between good and bad church leaders?

Video: <https://youtu.be/ACSQgsGWHko>

## **REAL TALK, FAITH WALK**

What characteristics do you believe make a good friend? Who are your friends and why do you like being associated with them?

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On most Sundays, the Decalogue is read in its entirety or in a summary. The Decalogue contains the Ten Commandments. As you recite the Commandments, do you think about their meaning or just repeat the words? Why are the Commandments so important that they are recited during our worship services?

When we take a bath or shower, it makes us feel clean and refreshed. But, by the next day, we feel dirty, so we take another bath or shower. This is part of our daily hygiene. *But, if we hate or mistreat others, what does this reflect? How do we make sure our hearts are pure? Who can help us purify our hearts? How can we demonstrate love for all people, just like God loves us?*



## SUMMARY

Washing our bodies will make our skin clean, but it does not clean our hearts of sin. If we are selfish and greedy, this does not reflect the love of God. We cannot mistreat others and expect God to overlook what we have done. What changes do you need to make in your life? Every day take the time to reflect on your actions. If you have done anything towards others that does not reflect the love of God, repent, and ask God to forgive you. Be intentional in witnessing for Christ wherever you go. Speak out against injustices and inequality in society for those who cannot do it for themselves.

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

*Prayer: God, thank you for all you have done for me. I ask that you forgive me for behaving ungodly towards others. I commit to loving and faithfully serving others. Amen.*

Hymn: "To God Be the Glory"  
(AMEC Hymnal #21)

# Is It Lawful to Heal on the Sabbath?

Lesson Scripture: Luke 14:1-6

Focus Scripture: Luke 14:1-6

**KEY VERSES:** Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, “Is it lawful to cure people on the sabbath, or not?” But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him, and sent him away. Luke 14:3-4

## WORDS TO KNOW

**SABBATH** – According to Exodus 20:8 – 11, the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, on which the children of Israel were to rest in remembrance that God created the universe in six days and then “rested” on the seventh day; it is observed from Friday evening to Saturday evening

**DROPSY** – the abnormal swelling of tissues in the body from a buildup of fluid

**LAWFUL** – an act permitted by law

**PHARISEES** – pronounced: FEHR – ih – seez

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE: LUKE 14:1-6**

- 1 On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.
- 2 Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had dropsy.
- 3 And Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, "Is it lawful to cure people on the sabbath, or not?"
- 4 But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him, and sent him away.
- 5 Then he said to them, "If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a sabbath day?"
- 6 And they could not reply to this.

**INTRODUCTION**

Everyone desires to be a leader in his/her profession. It makes you feel powerful when you have the ability to create positive changes to enhance the lives of others. Your leadership can be successful if you use your authority for the good of all. But there are some who fail to act when they have the power to do so. This reflects a leader who is selfish and has little regard for others.

In today's lesson, we discover Jesus' act of compassion toward a sick man on the Sabbath.

*What type of leaders do you hope to be? What does the behavior of your church leaders reflect about them?*

**BIBLE STORY**

In Luke 14:1 – 6, we have Jesus at the home of a leader of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to share a meal. This is not unusual for Jesus. He has dined with Pharisees previously. And as usual, those in the house watched Jesus very carefully. Jesus was invited to the Pharisee's home to trap him into saying or doing something wrong so they could have him arrested. He was well aware of what the Pharisees were doing, but this did not hinder Jesus from accepting the Pharisee's invitation to the Sabbath meal.

During this time, table customs were identifying marks of a group.

A person would be identified by the people he or she ate meals with. Jesus ate meals with Pharisees, lawyers, publicans, the poor and outcasts, as well as all other sinners. Table fellowship meant full acceptance of one another. Jesus' inclusiveness transcends religious, economic, and political differences.

Luke, the physician, identifies a man's disease in verse 2. There was a man who suffered from dropsy who came into the home (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/dropsy/>). The man had excess fluid in all parts of his body, which affected his heart and other organs. He stood in front of Jesus. Jesus asked the Pharisees about the legality of healing on the Sabbath (v. 3). His questioning them before the miracle made it difficult for them to protest afterwards.

The law stated, "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy" (Exo. 20:8). The Sabbath was a day set aside for rest and worship. For the Pharisees, Sabbath laws had become more important than Sabbath rest. The Sabbath is a day to do good (Mk. 3:4). God wants us to rest but it should not keep us from seeking to help others.

The Pharisees remained silent in response to Jesus' question (v. 4). Jesus healed the man and sent him on his way. Jesus' second question about rescuing the child or ox on the Sabbath was not answered (v. 5). The Pharisees' silence may reflect their awareness of their own hypocrisy, and their silence may be an unspoken acknowledgment of their misplaced concerns.

*How was Jesus' response to the sick man different than the Pharisees' concerns? How can we demonstrate a love for others?*

## **SANKOFA**

Ida B. Wells was born in Mississippi in 1862. She was a black newspaper editor, suffragist, sociologist, and leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the 1890s, Ida B. Wells began to document the lynching of black Americans. A persuasive speaker, she traveled internationally on lecture tours promoting equality for blacks and voting rights for blacks and for women.

“Miss Wells made a National Reputation as editor of the *Memphis Free Speech*, the publication of which she was compelled to suspend because of her Bold, Fearless and Intelligent Denunciation of Mob Violence and the enactment and enforcement of malicious and degrading class Laws.”

“On October 31, (1892) Ida B. Wells spoke at Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, D. C.; the subject: ‘Southern Mob Rule.’ Although the meeting was given extensive advertising and support by the local newspaper, *The Washington Bee*, as well as by Frederick Douglass and T. Thomas Fortune, the turnout was quite small. Frederick Douglass was embarrassed by the reception Wells received and promised to reschedule and deliver a larger crowd.

“The Black community of Washington, D.C. rallied to support Ida B. Wells’ return engagement at Metropolitan AME Church on February 3, (1893). (Frederick) Douglass’ promise to Wells that if she came back, he would guarantee a large crowd came true; the church was filled with what Wells called ‘one of the biggest audiences I had ever seen.’ Douglass’ success was partially due to his recruitment of the of the city’s prominent Black women to take a role in the event. Douglass presided, aided by Anna J. Cooper, principal of Washington’s Black high school, and Lucy Moten, head of the Miner Normal School (later Miner Teachers College and now the University of the District of Columbia). Mary Church Terrell, perhaps the city most prominent Black woman, introduced each speaker.

“In January 1894, Frederick Douglass returned to Metropolitan AME Church and gave his last great speech, ‘The Lesson of The Hour.’” That speech was in support of the anti-lynching crusade of Ida B. Wells. Ida B. Wells Barnett was the lone woman in a group of eleven Black leaders who met with President Woodrow Wilson in the fall of 1913. The Black leaders went to the White House in protest of the segregationist policies of the new Wilson administration.

“Ida B. Wells Barnett died in Chicago in March 1931. The Wells-Barnett home, at 3624 South Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Chicago, Illinois, is now a National Historic Landmark.”

She was honored with the 2020 prize in the Special Citations and

Awards category “for her outstanding and courageous reporting on the horrific and vicious violence against African Americans during the era of lynching,” the Pulitzer Prize Board said. She was a member of Bethel AME Chicago and frequently wrote in *The Christian Recorder* and *The AME Review* in addition to her prolific writings in major periodicals of the day.

*What did Ida B. Wells do in defense of her personal beliefs? How would you describe Ida B. Wells in three words?*

Resources: <https://www.facebook.com/MetropolitanAMEC/photos/ida-b-wells-at-metropolitan-ame-churchida-b-wells-was-born-in-mississippi-in-186/10157478357451432/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheChristianRecorder/posts/ida-b-wells-1862-1931-was-honored-with-the-2020-prize-in-the-special-citations-a/3106573576068684/>

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

What can you do to be prepared to defend the gospel against false claims?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

There are many in our communities that suffer with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. God loves everyone. We have to be inclusive as a community of believers. *How can the church support those with disabilities? What do we have to take into consideration when doing outreach to these specific groups?*

## SUMMARY

Jesus healed the man of dropsy on the Sabbath. The Pharisees believed



Jesus broke the law but remained silent when questioned. We are required to know and understand God's commands. But beyond the knowing, we have to demonstrate a love for others. "Loving thy neighbor as thyself" is the greatest command to observe. But we are going to face opposition to our beliefs no matter how we treat others. What can we do? Always be prepared to defend our beliefs by equipping ourselves with the Word, prayer, and unconditional love for the world to have a relationship with Christ. This week collaborate with others in your church and develop a plan of action to help those handicapped and in need.

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

*Prayer: God help us love and care for others just like you do for us. Amen.*

*Hymn: "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"  
(AMEC Hymnal #75)*

# Jesus Gives God Glory

Lesson Scripture: John 7:14-24

Focus Scripture: John 7:14-24

**KEY VERSE:** “Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him.” John 7:18

## WORDS TO KNOW

**SABBATH** – According to Exodus 20:8 – 11, the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, on which the children of Israel were to rest in remembrance that God created the universe in six days and then “rested” on the seventh day; it is observed from Friday evening to Saturday evening

**ASTONISHED** – greatly surprised or impressed

**RESOLVES** – to decide firmly on a course of action

**GLORY** – great praise and honor

**JUDGE** – form an opinion or conclusion about

**CIRCUMCISION** – pronounced: sur – kuhm – sizh – uhn

**PATRIARCHS** – pronounced: pah – tree – ARKS

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JOHN 7:14-24*

- 14** About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach.
- 15** The Jews were astonished at it, saying, “How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?”
- 16** Then Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine but his who sent me.
- 17** Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own.
- 18** Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him.
- 19** Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?”
- 20** The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?”
- 21** Jesus answered them, “I performed one work, and all of you are astonished.
- 22** Moses gave you circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath.
- 23** If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man’s whole body on the sabbath?
- 24** Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

**INTRODUCTION**

The world is composed of a multitude of races, nationalities, and religions. Your religion may be different from others, but it is important to be respectful. Our perspective and judgment of others may be hindering us from learning new insights into world religions. This is why it is important to educate ourselves. We have to become familiar with what others believe to understand how they compare to our beliefs. So, whenever there are discussions about religion, we can boldly state what we believe from the Word and why.

In today’s lesson, we are exploring Jesus’ teaching in the temple about the source of truth.

*Who do you seek out to answer questions about God and the Word? Why? What is the one topic in the Bible you desire to know more about?*

## **BIBLE STORY**

Today's lesson is from the gospel according to John. John was the son of Zebedee, and brother of James. John was called a "Son of Thunder." The book was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and before John's exile to the island of Patmos. John desired to prove conclusively that Jesus is the Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life. He was a part of Jesus' inner circle.

Jesus faced opposition wherever he traveled. The religious leaders were seeking an opportunity to kill Jesus. Jesus' family members ridiculed him, and many disciples had deserted him. Jesus secretly entered Judea and heard the crowds complaining about him (7:10 – 13). Some accused Jesus of deception, while others praised him. Jesus patiently waited until halfway through the festival of booths (Lev. 23:33ff) before entering the temple to teach. Jesus could reach many by doing so.

The Jews in the temple were surprised by Jesus' wisdom and teachings (v. 15), especially since Jesus was never trained as a disciple of recognized Jewish teacher (rabbi). The Jews were conflicted about Jesus' identity. Jesus responded by letting them know his teachings came from the Father, who sent him (v. 16 – 18). The Father is Jesus' rabbi and godly people recognize this fact. If we are truly seeking to know and obey God's will, we know Jesus is speaking the truth. In John 14:6 and 7 Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Those leaders who desire attention for themselves do not speak the truth. Everything is all about who they are and what they know. They want their own glory.

The Pharisees tried to look holy by keeping the rules they added onto God's laws. Jesus told them that they all broke the law of which they were so proud of as the chosen recipients of the law (v. 19). This truth felt painful to hear. The people accused Jesus of being demon-possessed (v. 20). Some of the people were not aware of the plot to

kill Jesus. Jesus had healed a lame man who was ill for 38 years on the Sabbath (5:1 – 9). Therefore, the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus for violating the Sabbath laws. But when an eight-day old male had to be circumcised, if the day fell on the Sabbath the circumcision still was done to fulfill the law of Moses (vv. 21 – 23). Jesus desired for his opponents to understand sometimes work (circumcision) might be done on the Sabbath, but some work *must* be done immediately on the Sabbath, such as healing the sick. Therefore, Jesus told the people not to judge by human standards because he did not (v. 24; Isa.11:2 – 5).

*Where does the source of all truth originate? How can we distinguish between a self-serving leader versus a godly leader?*

## SANKOFA

Read the article below about former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. Afterwards, discuss his leadership style and identify selfish and/or godly attributes of Mayor Bradley.

Tom Bradley

<http://ame-sac.org/ames-in-history/tom-bradley/>

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

God has created each of us. We are unique individuals with different needs. Often, we learn best when a variety of teaching techniques are used that suits our learning style. What teaching techniques do you prefer? Write your response down and add-on the various other techniques you are familiar with.

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Think about all the stories and events in the Bible. Which one is your favorite? Find it in the Bible and reread it. Each person will have 3 – 5 minutes to teach it to the class. You can use whatever teaching method and props that work for you.

Bible story and/or event: \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching technique: \_\_\_\_\_

## SUMMARY

Jesus is calling us to be mindful of our motivations when speaking and helping others. If we are seeking attention so we can look good and be popular, this is in direct opposition to Jesus' commands. We have to humble ourselves and give all glory to God. Leaders have to understand the Word before they share it and have pure hearts. God can teach us what to say and do when conflicts arise if we ask. Seeking wisdom from God is going to lead us to truth.

Podcasts are excellent ways to communicate with others. By listening to Christian podcasts, we can spiritually grow. You can also compare what they share about Jesus with the Bible to know the truth. This week, search for two Christian podcasts you want to listen to. What is the true message he/she is sharing with the world? How could you develop your own podcast? What will the content consist of?

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

*Prayer: God, you are the source of all truth. We need your wisdom so we can be godly leaders. Thank you for the Word which can be our guide. Amen.*

*Hymn: "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"  
(AMEC Hymnal #75)*