



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: Luke 11:27-36 (CSB)

Note: The message only covers Luke 11:27-36. Verses 37-54 are extra material.

Luke 11:27-54 (CSB)

27 As he was saying these things, a woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the one who nursed you!” **28** He said, “Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.”

29 As the crowds were increasing, he began saying, “This generation is an evil generation. It demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. **30** For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. **31** The queen of the south will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and look—something greater than Solomon is here. **32** The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at Jonah’s preaching, and look—something greater than Jonah is here.

33 “No one lights a lamp and puts it in the cellar or under a basket, but on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see its light. **34** Your eye is the lamp of the body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is also full of light. But when it is bad, your body is also full of darkness. **35** Take care, then, that the light in you is not darkness. **36** If, therefore, your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be entirely illuminated, as when a lamp shines its light on you.”

Summary:

Jesus pronounces judgment on “this generation.” They demand signs, yet refuse to respond to his words. He points to two Old Testament examples: Jonah’s mission to Nineveh and the queen of Sheba’s visit to Solomon. The Ninevites repented at Jonah’s preaching, and the queen of Sheba

traveled a great distance to hear Solomon's wisdom. In contrast, those hearing Jesus remain unmoved, unwilling to listen or respond.

Both the Ninevites and the queen of Sheba were outsiders, yet they responded with humility and openness, while many among Jesus' own people rejected him. At the final judgment, these foreign witnesses will stand in condemnation of those who refused to respond, for one greater than Jonah and Solomon is here.

Jesus' words bring light, but that light requires receptive hearts—"healthy eyes"—to be received. We are therefore called to openness, allowing his light to fill us completely.

1. Keeping the Word of God – vv. 27-28

- “[the woman’s cry] is a response of faith that stands against the hostility of the ‘Beelzebul’ contingent (v. 15). In one sense, it must have been music to Jesus’ ears. Jesus receives her ‘blessing’ and adds to it. In this context ‘the word of God’ (v. 28) equals the claim that Jesus is the ‘stronger man’(v. 22), who decimates Satan’s kingdom and calls people to be ‘with him’ (v. 23).” Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke 1-13*, p. 208
- “Jesus’ powerful teaching evoked a typical cry of admiration from a woman in the crowd. Fancy being the mother of such a son! But Jesus quickly turns the saying around into another warning, as in the earlier comment about his true family (8:21). **When the word of God is at work, what is required is not applause but obedience.**” N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*, p. 139
- “[Those who keep God’s word} will be part of God’s victory over the power of Satan . The contrast between the two blessings brings out a significant theme in Luke: those who are obedient to God are more blessed than those who are related to the Messiah by blood” NIV Zondervan Study Bible

2. Judgment on ‘this generation’ – vv. 29-32

a. Who is ‘this generation’?

- “‘This generation’ (Matt. 23:36; Luke 11:50, 51), ...is lingo that refers to a Yahweh-opposing, word-of-God-rejecting kind of people. ‘This generation’ is not a time-indicator’ but a character-indicator. ‘This generation’ can take in many ‘generations’ that share the same unbelieving disposition.
- ” Studies of the use of ‘this generation’ in the synoptic gospels confirm that the phrase has a pejorative sense, describing ‘unbelieving, rejecting humanity, unresponsive to God and oblivious to the possibility of facing his judgment,’ a Jesus-hating, kingdom-opposing brood of people. ‘This generation’ alludes to the *type* of people rather than the *time* of people.” Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke 1-13*, p. 214

b. They seek signs

a. The sufficiency of Jesus’ word

- Verses 29-36 focus on the sufficiency of Jesus’ word. In verse 29 Jesus answers the sign-seekers of verse 16 with ‘This generation is an evil generation – it seeks a sign.’ He says no sign will be given except ‘the sign of Jonah’ (v.29b) the stress in Luke is on the communication of truth. ... The emphasis is on properly receiving truth, either the wisdom of Solomon, the preaching of Jonah – or the work and word of Jesus.” Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke 1-13*, p. 208

c. Luke uses male and female pairs (11:31-32)

- “The use of *male-female pairs is present throughout Luke’s Gospel* ...The queen of the South & the men of Nineveh (11:31–32).” [Moyra Dale, “ *Dismantling Socio-Sacred Hierarchy* ,” Priscilla Papers, V. 31, #2 (2017) p. 20]
- The common source of Luke & Matthew; “Q *regularly presents analogies in pairs* ... In [Lk.] 11:29-32 he uses the *examples of Jonah & the queen of the South* .” [David B. Sloan, “ *Lost Portions of Q Found! ...*,” pp. 4-5 & #13] [**Note:** The Male-Female Parallel is between ‘Queen of South’ & ‘Men of Nineveh’ (see below), not Queen of South & Jonah. Rather, Jonah is parallel to Solomon]

- “We observe a consistent, most likely deliberate, pattern of *significant pairing of female & male characters* in... the Gospel of Luke...[e.g.,] 11 :32 *Men of Nineveh* [&] 11:31 *Queen of Sheba* .” [Margaret E. Kostenberger, *Jesus & the Feminists*, pp. 208-10]

d. The Sign of Jonah

a. A call for repentance

- “Jesus speaks of ‘the queen of the south’ (see 1 Kings 10:1-13) who will be raised and appear at the last judgment to condemn ‘this generation.’ She came from way down Yemen-way to hear ‘the wisdom of Solomon’ (God’s truth through him) and, Jesus asserts ‘Something greater than Solomon is here (v. 31). The ‘something greater’ is the kingdom of God already arrived and in their face in the work and preaching of Jesus (v. 20). Similarly, the men of Nineveh will condemn ‘this generation’ at the judgment ‘because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and indeed something greater than Jonah is here’ (v. 32). The emphasis is on properly receiving truth, either the wisdom of Solomon, the preaching of Jonah – or the work and word of Jesus.” Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke 1-13*, pp. 208-209

b. In Luke the sign of Jonah refers to repentance as a response to the word preached.

- Additionally, “the sign of Jonah” draws attention to the need for a concrete response of repentance, as was the case of Nineveh in response to Jonah’s message.” ESV Study Bible

c. In Matthew the sign of Jonah refers to Jesus’ death and resurrection as well as the need for repentance Matt 12:40

- “The sign of Jonah refers first to Jonah’s “three days and nights in the belly of the great fish” (cf. note on [Matt. 12:40](#)), which foreshadows “the Son of Man” being “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,” i.e., a reference to Jesus’ death and resurrection (cf. [Luke 16:30–31](#)).

e. The Queen of the South

a. The queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10)

- Woman of standing, wealth
- She herself had knowledge/wisdom, checking out Solomon
- Seeking more, ask questions
- Tell me more, an inquisitive mind
- Everything about Solomon amazed her, not just wisdom but everything about his life and the life of Israel
- Responded “blessed be the Lord your God!”
- How we live, how we greet, how we care

b. A call to hear the word and wisdom of Jesus

- “A gentile queen craves the wisdom Solomon imparts, a pagan city believes the threat Jonah proclaims, but the word of someone ‘greater’ than both is not received by ‘this generation’ in its darkness.” Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke 1-13*, pp. 208-209
- “The queen of the South (the queen of Sheba; [1 Kings 10:1–13](#) ; [2 Chron. 9:1–12](#)) will condemn this generation because she came a long distance to see Solomon and hear his wisdom ([1 Kings 10:1–4, 7](#)), whereas something greater than Solomon (the Son of God and his wisdom; cf. note on [Matt. 12:42](#)) has come to them and the people reject this and ask for a sign.” ESV Study Bible

f. How Solomon was viewed in Jesus’ time by the Jews

- In the context previously mentioned about casting out demons, Solomon is mentioned being understood in that time as an exorcist. Yet Jesus is greater both in wisdom and in casting out demons.
 - “Craig Evans (*Jesus & his Contemporaries* , pp. 307-8) argues that the...saying ‘Something *greater than Solomon* is here’ (Luke 11:31/Matt. 12:42) may be *related to Solomon’s power over demons* . If so, this would suggest, that *Jesus* was seen by Matthew as *having more power over demons than the fabled Solomon*’ .” [Amanda Witmer, *Jesus, Galilean Exorcist* , pp.45-46 #120]
 - In Josephus’ “ *Antiquities* 8:42-49 there is a certain Eleazar who performed an *exorcism employing Solomon’s name*, incantations, and a ring with a root prescribed by Solomon. In this way, *Josephus presents Solomon’s exorcistic ability* as a technique against demons & designated for healing. *This proves that Solomon was viewed within an exorcistic & healing...context in Josephus’ time* , and thus could have been known in this way during *the time of the making of Matthew’s Gospel* .” [MICHAŁ KLUKOWSKI, ‘Jiří Dvořáček , *Son of David in Matthew’s Gospel* ,’ Review in *Biblical Annals*, Vol. 7/2 (2017) 278-9]
 - In Luke shortly after Jesus was challenged about his exorcisms, & some were seeking signs (Lk. 11:16b) “Jesus declares that an evil generation will only receive the sign of Jonah [Lk. 11:29-32] ... Not only has *Jesus* claimed to be greater than Jonah, who survived a remarkable ordeal and went on to call an entire pagan city [Nineveh] to repentance, he *has claimed to be greater than Israel’s greatest monarch*,

Solomon. This comparison...is highly significant in the present context, for *in the time of Jesus, Solomon was regarded as the greatest exorcist who ever lived*. That *Jes us could claim to be 'something greater than Solomon'* [Lk. 11:31] *is quite remarkable*." [Craig A. Evans, *Jesus & the Spirits*, p. 14]

- "Jesus' invocation of [*Solomon* (11:31)] actually *makes sense in the context of Luke 11:14-28* [the whole Beelzebul controversy], since in the Ancient Jewish mind *S olomon's reputation* as a sage [wise man] *par excellence* would not have been separable from *his exorcistic abilities*." [Nicholas Perrin, *Luke*, p. 223]

g. Two contrasts bring greater judgment

31 The queen of the south will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to **hear the wisdom of Solomon**, and look— **something greater than Solomon is here**. **32 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it**, because they repented at **Jonah's preaching**, and look— **something greater than Jonah is here**.

a. Two examples are given where others either repented or sought out wisdom.

b. Jesus is greater than both and they won't listen to him.

- "These two examples present two sets of contrast: (1) Since even Gentiles such as the Queen of the South ([1 Kgs 10:1-13](#) ; [2 Chr 9:1-12](#)) and the people of Nineveh ([Jonah 3:1-10](#)) responded to God, Israel's failure to repent deserves even greater condemnation. (2) Since Jesus is "greater than" both Solomon and Jonah, he deserves even greater respect." NIV Zondervan Study Bible
- "Even though the Ninevites were wicked, they at least repented at the preaching of Jonah (see note on [Matt. 12:41](#)). How much greater condemnation, then, for those who refuse to repent at the teaching of Jonah's Lord, who is greater than Jonah. Jesus is both the ultimate wise man ([Luke 11:31](#)) and the ultimate prophet ([v. 32](#))." ESV Study Bible

3. How are their 'eyes'? – vv. 33-36

a. What is a healthy eye?

- "" Good eyes" admit light (v.34); bad ones do not. The implication is that the individual is responsible for receiving light. The eye is thus a "lamp", not in the sense that it emits light, but that through it (subject to the individual's will) the body receives light. The real source of light is outside the body; if we think we can generate our own light, we must beware lest that inner "light" prove to be darkness (v. 35)." The Expositors Bible Commentary, p. 954
- "An eye that is healthy describes a spiritually healthy way of looking at things. A bad eye, or evil way of looking at things, results in a life full of moral and spiritual darkness." ESV Study Bible.
- "The seemingly repetitive verse [v. 36] resembles in its repetitiveness and its subject Ephesians 5:13-14a. Its meaning becomes clear in the light of vv. 34-35. The body is only completely lighted when a lamp shines on it from the outside." The Expositors Bible Commentary, p. 956
- "The final sentence is then an encouragement to embrace and live by the light while there's time. A day is coming when everything will be lit up... and on that day those who have allowed the light to illuminate them fully will shine brightly." N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*, p, 142
- " **The purpose of the truth brought through Jesus is to give light (v. 33), but the danger can lurk in the 'receiving apparatus'** (vv. 34-36). If one's eye is 'single' (*haplous*, healthy), all will be focused and clear; but should the eye be 'evil,' then the whole body is dark and in darkness. One small item controls the whole. In that case, it's not that there isn't light, but that the 'looker' is in such sad shape that he can't see the light." Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke 1-13*, pp. 208-209
- "Jesus made an analogy between receptivity to His ministry and the ability to see. Receptivity is like having healthy eyes; one can see well (light enters the body). The warning to ensure that the light in you is not darkness is paradoxical, not illogical. Jesus intended examination of the heart's spiritual receptivity." The Apologetics Study Bible.
- Everyone's eye either receives light or closes off the light

b. What is the light?

- "The passage makes more sense, especially where Luke has placed it, as a warning to 'this generation', his contemporaries. They must watch out in case they fail to see the light that was there in their midst." N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*, p, 142
- "There's plenty of light coming through the revelation in Jesus, but if one's eye is 'evil', he simply won't 'get' it." Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke 1-13*, p. 209

c. Receiving light so there will be no darkness

- "People must receive light so that they will no longer be filled with darkness." NIV Zondervan Study Bible
- Receive and be filled with light (harken back to last week)
- Receiving the light = keeping the word
- You have heard. What will you do with this?

d. Don't be deceived

- **35** *Make sure that the light you think you have is not actually darkness. NLT*
- Be filled with light, not darkness

e. Light brings hope and judgment

Luke 11:37-41

37 As he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him. So he went in and reclined at the table. **38** When the Pharisee saw this, he was amazed that he did not first perform the ritual washing before dinner. **39** But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and evil. **40** Fools! Didn't he who made the outside make the inside too? **41** But give from what is within to the poor, and then everything is clean for you.

4. Hypocrisy in keeping outward traditions – 37-41

- "Keeping the traditions that [the Pharisees] had added to Scripture was like cleansing the outside of the cup but leaving the inside . . . full of greed and wickedness (cf. note on [Matt. 23:26](#)); for "greed," cf. [Luke 16:14; 20:47](#) . Those things that are within are the things in a person's heart. If the believer first offers his heart to God, then everything is clean; that is, God will accept the good he does ("alms . . . that are within") even if he does not follow the outward ceremonial washing required by Jewish traditions." ESV Study Bible

Luke 11:42-54

42 "But woe to you Pharisees! You give a tenth of mint, rue, and every kind of herb, and you bypass justice and love for God. These things you should have done without neglecting the others.

43 "Woe to you Pharisees! You love the front seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.

44 "Woe to you! You are like unmarked graves; the people who walk over them don't know it."

45 One of the experts in the law answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things you insult us too."

46 Then he said, "Woe also to you experts in the law! You load people with burdens that are hard to carry, and yet you yourselves don't touch these burdens with one of your fingers.

47 "Woe to you! You build tombs for the prophets, and your fathers killed them. **48** Therefore, you are witnesses that you approve the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their monuments. **49** Because of this, the wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' **50** so that this generation may be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world — **51** from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. "Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible.

52 "Woe to you experts in the law! You have taken away the key to knowledge. You didn't go in yourselves, and you hindered those who were trying to go in."

53 When he left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to oppose him fiercely and to cross-examine him about many things; **54** they were lying in wait for him to trap him in something he said.

5. Six woes towards the Pharisees and the religious lawyers – vv. 42-54

a. Imbalance v. 42

- "In vv. 41-42 Jesus offered a positive corrective that clearly shows he did not oppose strict attention to religious duties but rather the neglect of caring about people that strict religionists often fall into." The Expositors Bible Commentary, p. 956
- "The first woe targets their hypocrisy in tithing every herb (such specific detail is not mentioned in [Lev. 27:30-33](#) ; [Deut. 14:22-29](#) ; [2 Chron. 31:5-12](#) ; see note on [Matt. 23:23](#)), but neglecting justice and

the love of God.” ESV Study Bible

b. Ostentation v. 43

- “The second woe focuses on their love of the best seat (as illustrated in [Luke 14:7–11](#) ; cf. note on [Matt. 23:6](#)).” ESV Study Bible

c. Uncleaness v. 44

- “The vivid simile in v. 44 is an example of Jesus’ use of irony. Though the Pharisees avoided touching a grave for fear of ritual defilement, they themselves, through their own unrecognized corruption, were defiling those who came into contact with them.” The Expositors Bible Commentary, p. 956
- “The third woe compares them to unmarked graves. According to OT law, coming in contact with a grave made a person unclean (see [Num. 19:16](#) ; cf. note on [Matt. 23:27–28](#)). But if the grave was in the ground and had no marking, people might walk over it and become unclean without knowing it. Likewise people who follow the Pharisees are deceived, for they become “unclean” before God without even knowing that the Pharisees have led them astray.” ESV Study Bible

d. Impossible demands v. 46

- “The first woe [of the second set of woes] involves the lawyers (cf. [v. 45](#)) loading people with burdens by interpreting the law in light of their extrabiblical traditions and making it hard to bear. Worse still, they do not touch the burdens themselves, i.e., they make no effort to help people keep these laws (see notes on [Matt. 23:3](#) , [4](#)).

e. Intolerance vv. 47-51

- “The second woe involves the lawyers’ hypocrisy in building monuments to the prophets, although it was their fathers who killed those same prophets, and they themselves continue to “kill and persecute” them ([v. 49](#)). The unusual expression Wisdom of God probably means “God in his wisdom” or “God, speaking to express his wisdom.” From the blood of Abel ([Genesis 4](#)) to the blood of Zechariah ([2 Chron. 24:20–22](#)), i.e., from the beginning of the first book to the end of the last book in the Hebrew Bible.” ESV Study Bible
- “Jesus asserted that the same spirit that caused the ancestors of the scribes to reject and murder God’s prophets animated the scribes’ rejection of Him. They demonstrated their collusion by building tombs for the prophets their ancestors murdered. The scribes, of course, would object that their monuments to the prophets implied the opposite.” The Apologetics Study Bible

f. Exclusiveness v. 52

- “Jesus directed his final woe against the experts in the law at their sin of taking away not just physical but eternal life. Those who should have opened the meaning of the OT with their ‘key’ not only declined to use it themselves but prevented others from ‘entering’. The implied subject of “knowledge” is probably the kingdom of God, which people were seeking to “enter.” The Expositors Bible Commentary, pp . 956-7
- “The last woe condemns the lawyers for their interpretations of Scripture that deprive the people of the key of knowledge needed to understand God’s plan of salvation. Not only do they refuse to enter into God’s plan and be saved, but their distorted interpretations keep others from truly knowing God.” ESV Study Bible