



WOULD YOU DARE?

February 2020

...a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed that Jesus did not first wash before the meal. 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. You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? But now as for what is inside you—be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you."

Luke 11:37-41

Have we been reading our Bibles too casually? Did we miss appreciating what it must have meant for Jesus to go up against the Pharisees the way he did? Think of the great courage that must have taken! Would you dare to face leaders with such power?

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The Pharisees were influential legal experts. At the time of Jesus they were reported to number around six thousand. They were a formidable group. Even Herod the Great was careful not to offend them.

In the scripture above, Jesus criticized the behavior of some of these individuals. I believe even Jesus would have needed courage to do so. The Pharisees fiercely opposed him, shadowing him wherever he went, trying to slip him up with the questions they asked him.

Jesus was divine, but human too. He had feelings not unlike ours. He, too, needed to go to his Father to summon courage once in a while. Remember his prayer in Gethsemane as he faced crucifixion? With sweat like drops of blood falling to the ground, he prayed, *“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me...”* (Luke 22:42)

Jesus despised the proud and hypocritical attitudes common to the Pharisees and could not let them go unchallenged. He gave them this warning:

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others.” (Matthew 6:1-2)

As followers of Jesus, do you have the courage to stand up for what you believe, as he did? Do you dare? Do you dare to go against those more powerful than you?

Jesus’ followers are called to emulate his determination to fight for what’s right. What’s the point of following him if we don’t see anything wrong with the world we live in? What’s the point of following him if we’re content to live in a world of injustice? Why did Jesus come anyway?

Jesus’ invitation in Matthew 11:28-30 keeps coming to mind. *“My yoke is easy. My burden is light.”* He’s asking us to join him.

Do you dare?

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