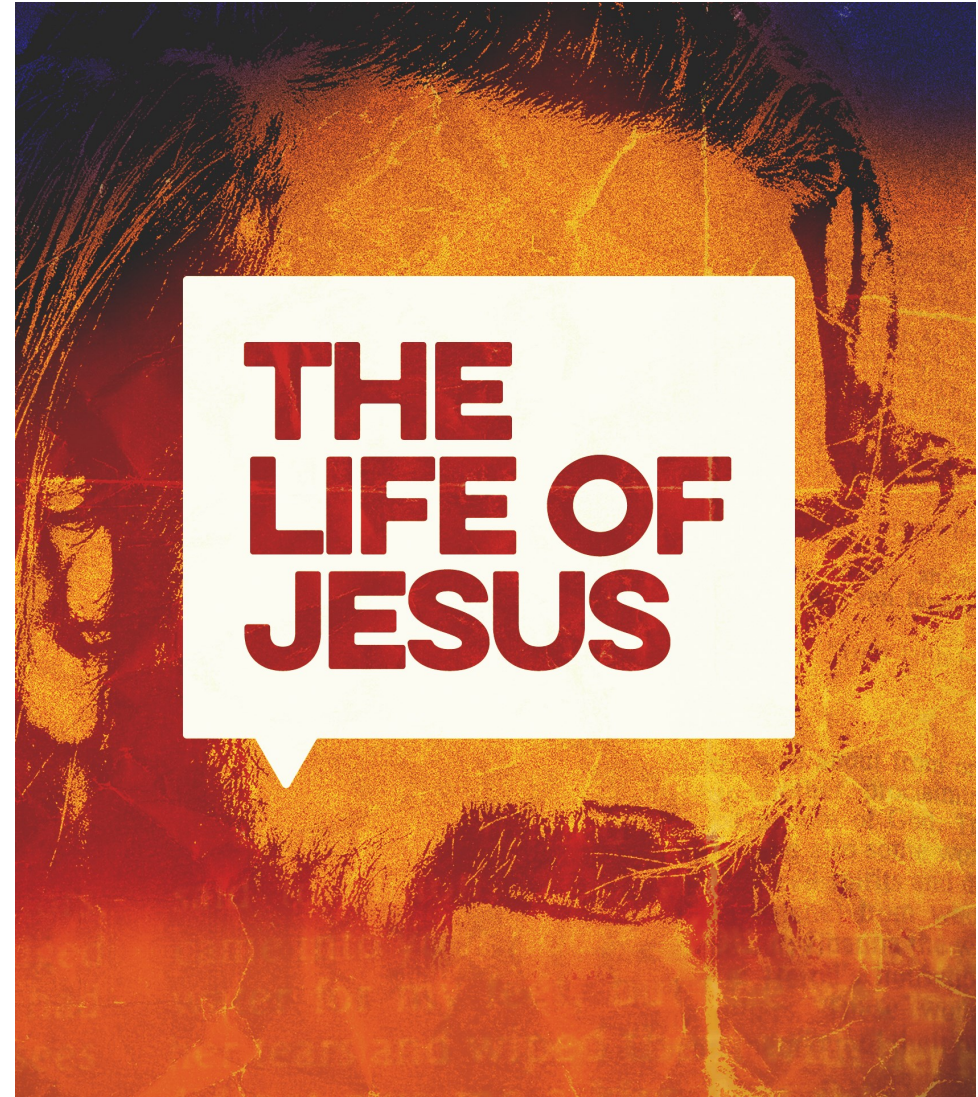


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SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

NORTH: Feb. 25 | **SOUTH:** March 4 | **CHAPEL:** March 11



JESUS & THE RULES THAT COUNT

Pastor Paul Nynas



This study guide was written by the Pastors at Hope Lutheran Church in Fargo, ND. Find this resource and others at [FARGOHOPE.ORG/RESOURCES](https://fargo.hope.org/resources)

JESUS & THE RULES THAT COUNT

READ: Matthew 15:1-20

As you read through the gospels, you see that Jesus continually gets frustrated with the religious leader's greater concern for rules based on tradition instead of the things that matter. In this text, Jesus is confronted by the Pharisees because some of his disciples have not washed their hands before eating. It is not that Jesus does not care about hygiene, rather he is calling them out on just one of their hypocritical practices. For example, a Jewish son could formally declare his earnings as a gift to the temple instead of using them to support his elderly parents. The dedication of this gift could be done rashly or under religious persuasion. The money given did not have to go to temple activities but could be used by the religious leaders as they willed. To make it simple, greed was coming before the most basic command of honoring one's father and mother.

Jesus then goes on to explain that what goes into our mouth does not make us unclean, but rather what comes out of our mouth reflects what is in our hearts. Jesus hates religious hypocrisy, calling us instead to put our focus on what matters.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What jumps out at you as you read this text?
2. What is a current example you've seen of someone more concerned with religious tradition than the intent of God's law?

3. What does it mean that what comes out of your mouth makes you unclean?
4. What comes out of your mouth?
5. How is our heart made pure?
6. What are the rules that really matter to you?
7. What are the rules that really matter to God?

PRAYER

Lord, forgive us when what has come out of our mouths does not honor you. Let us never put tradition before your love. Help us so that no unwholesome, quarrelsome, venom or gossip will come out of our mouths. Purify our hearts and tongues. In Jesus' name. Amen.