

# Luke 11:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

## Analysis

**Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness** (τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τοῦ πίνακος καθαρίζετε, τὸ δὲ ἔσωθεν ὑμῶν γέμει ἀρπαγῆς καὶ πονηρίας)—Jesus's response escalates from defending his practice to attacking theirs. The contrast between *exōthen* (outside) and *esōthen* (inside) structures his critique: external versus internal, appearance versus reality. Their scrupulous vessel-cleaning ritual (*katharizō*) masks internal corruption.

**Full of ravening and wickedness** (γέμει ἀρπαγῆς καὶ πονηρίας)—the verb *gemō* (full, loaded) intensifies the accusation. *Harpagē* (ravening, greed, extortion) and *ponēria* (wickedness, malice) describe the Pharisees' actual character beneath religious veneer. They rob widows (20:47), oppress the poor, use religion for financial gain—while obsessing over ritual purity.

## Historical Context

Pharisaic purity laws prescribed washing eating vessels to remove ritual contamination from Gentile contact or improper use. Jesus exploits this metaphor: they cleanse ceremonial impurity from cups while their hearts overflow with greed and malice. The accusation of 'extortion' may reference their financial exploitation of common people through Temple taxes and burdensome religious requirements.

## Related Passages

---

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

---

1. What external religious activities might you be using to mask internal corruption?
2. How does Jesus's cup metaphor expose the futility of focusing on outward behavior while ignoring heart transformation?
3. In what areas might you be 'cleansing the outside' through religious performance while tolerating inner wickedness?

## Interlinear Text

---

εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος πρὸς αὐτόν Νῦν ὑμεῖς οἱ  
said And G3588 the Lord unto him Now ye G3588  
G2036 G1161 G2962 G4314 G846 G3568 G5210

Φαρισαῖοι τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τοῦ πίνακος  
Pharisees G3588 the outside G3588 of the cup and G3588 the platter G4094  
G5330 G1855 G4221 G2532

καθαρίζετε τὸ δὲ ἔσωθεν ὑμῶν γέμει ἀρπαγῆς καὶ  
do G3588 And inward part G2081 your is full of ravening and G2532  
G2511 G1161 G5216 G1073 G724

πονηρίας  
wickedness  
G4189

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Acts 5:3** (Parallel theme): But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

**Proverbs 30:12** (Parallel theme): There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

**Matthew 15:19** (Evil): For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

**Matthew 7:15** (Parallel theme): Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

**Genesis 6:5** (Evil): And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**James 4:8** (Parallel theme): Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

**Titus 1:15** (Parallel theme): Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

**Psalms 22:13** (Parallel theme): They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

**Proverbs 26:25** (Parallel theme): When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart.

**Jeremiah 4:14** (Evil): O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?