

Silent Killers

Something invisible yet deadly

What are some examples related to...

- Physical wellbeing?
- Emotional wellbeing?
- Spiritual wellbeing?

We invite God to help us see the great danger of silent killers in our hearts...

1

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. **Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.**”

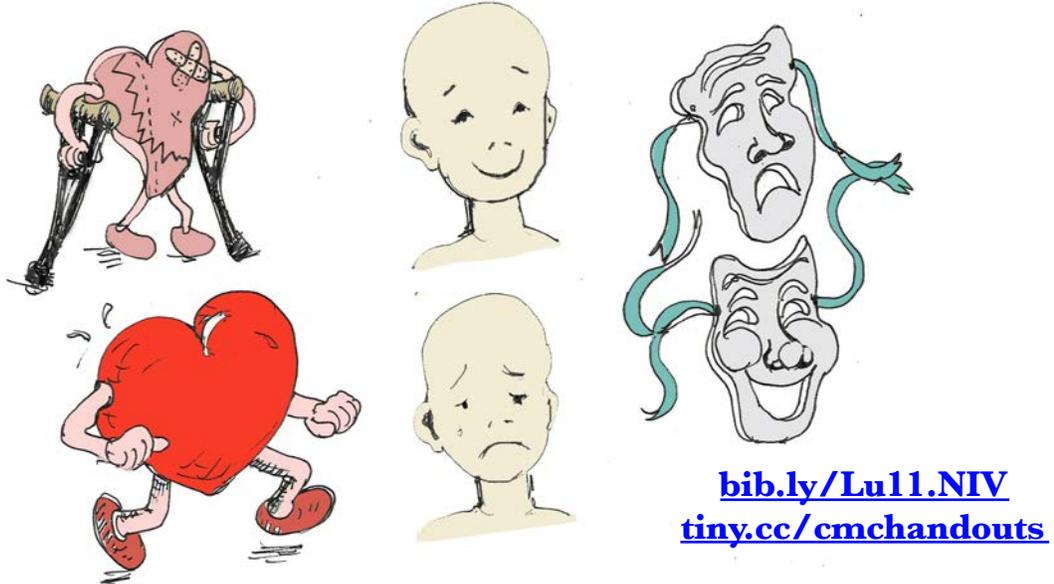
Hebrews 4:12-13

marrow = the inner parts of bones

2

In God's Eyes

Luke 11:37-54



3

Luke

Luke's big purpose

- Shape us as genuine disciples (followers) of Jesus Christ

Luke 11

- God is generous and good, and He loves to give good gifts
- And yet, there are **unexpected dangers for our hearts**
 - There is no neutral ground with Jesus: either for or against
 - A well-ordered life without the Spirit of God is in danger of being filled with evil
 - An unhealthy "eye" can fill one's whole being with darkness
- Even in the most unexpected places...

4

Luke 11:37-38

When Jesus had finished speaking, 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.

Most highly respected people in society
Seen as being closest to God
Super careful about being good
& religious "cleanliness"

5

*Luke 11:37-54***37-38: A meal that turned into a confrontation**

- Pharisees required ceremonial washing after being in public
- Surprisingly, Jesus didn't do that
 - Going directly from the public space to a meal gave the Pharisee the chance to see what Jesus did
- He was even more surprised by Jesus' attack!
 - It seems that neither the Pharisee nor the expert in the law expected to be the target of such a rebuke
- Why include such strong attacks against religious leaders?
 - We are at risk for the same errors

39-44:

- Remember: they were seen as people who were closest to God

45-52:

- We also can be very wrong about who is honoring God

53-54:

- Whether ourselves or others

6

Luke 11:39-44

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.

“**Woe to you** Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

rue = a plant used for seasoning

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Luke 11:39-44

“**Woe to you** Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces.

“**Woe to you**, because you are like **unmarked graves**, which people walk over without knowing it.”

Touching a grave made you unclean

They marked the graves so that wouldn't happen by accident

Yet these religious leaders were the unmarked graves!

→ They made people unclean without either one knowing it

→ Like a doctor who is spreading the virus

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Luke 11:37-54

37-38: A meal that turned into a confrontation

39-44: Jesus rebuked the Pharisees

- Jesus was shockingly inappropriate culturally!
- They appeared to be honoring God
- **They emphasized certain external rules**
 - Must wash after being around spiritually common people
 - Made biblical rules stricter to prevent breaking the Bible
- Certainly Jesus knew what He was doing when not washing
 - Rather than explaining His actions, He rebuked them!
- God made both inside and outside, so both matter
 - **Justice (horizontal) and loving God (vertical) are much bigger!**
 - Sometimes Christians argue against doing justly!

45-52: • Hypocrites = inside is not the same as outside

- That is **every one of us!**
- **They paid little attention to inner, unseen issues**

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Luke 11:45-52

One of the **experts in the law** answered him, “Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also.”

Jesus replied, “And you experts in the law, **woe to you**, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.

Experts in understanding the Old Testament laws

Experts in understanding Jewish traditions that “built on” Old Testament laws

Created “fences” around Old Testament laws to prevent people from doing anything close to wrong

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Luke 11:45-52

“Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your ancestors who killed them. So you testify that you approve of what your ancestors did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. Because of this, God in his wisdom said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.’ Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.

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Luke 11:45-52

“Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.”

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Luke 11:37-54

37-38: A meal that turned into a confrontation

39-44: Jesus rebuked the Pharisees

45-52: **Jesus rebuked the legal experts**

- They expected that Jesus wouldn't rebuke them!
- About the **prophets**
 - They appeared to honor the prophets
 - Yet they are just like their ancestors in opposing the prophets
- About the **Bible**
 - They appeared to honor the Bible
 - They could "prove" their position by quoting the Bible
 - **Yet they were blocking the Bible's value for people!**
- Not gathering with Jesus, they were scattering
- One can "prove your case" using the Bible

53-54: and yet still be opposing God

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Luke 11:53-54

When Jesus went outside, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might say.

besiege = attack him with many questions

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Luke 11:37-54

37-38: A meal that turned into a confrontation

39-44: Jesus rebuked the Pharisees

45-52: Jesus rebuked the legal experts

53-54: The Pharisees & legal experts plotted against Jesus

- Storytelling: mentioning the start of the meal and the end of the meal completes this unit
- These religious leaders were opposing Jesus just like their ancestors opposed the prophets
- They responded to the rebuke of God by opposing God even more
 - A picture of sin in our hearts...

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The Big Idea

**God sees and values
both what is internal/invisible and what is external/public,
which puts every single one of us in great need
of the grace of God**

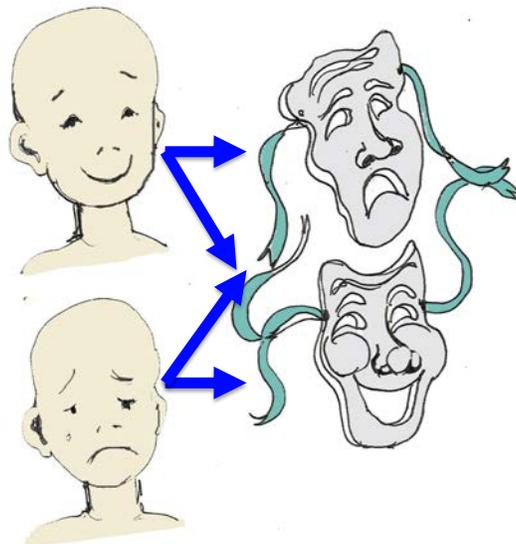
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People appear one way to the world



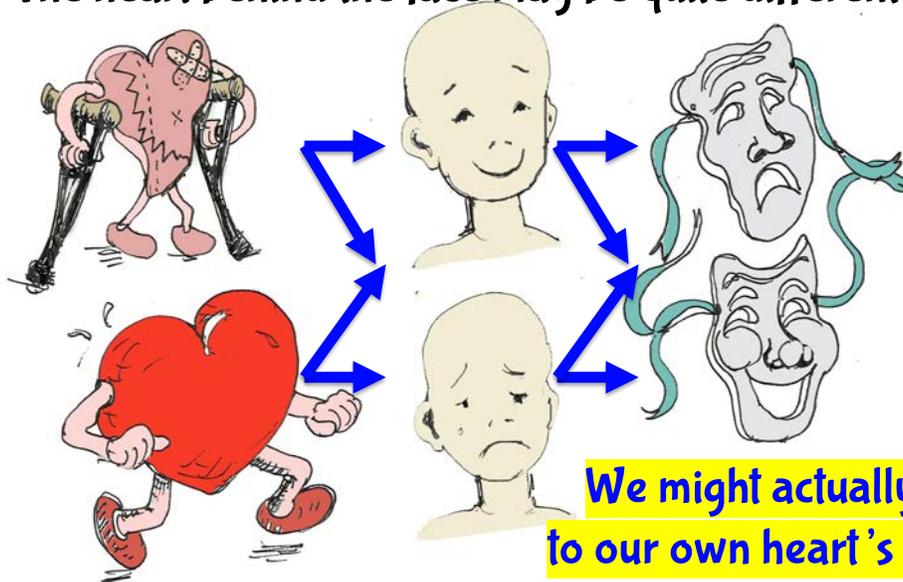
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People appear one way to the world The face behind the mask may be quite different



18

People appear one way to the world
 The face behind the mask may be quite different
 The heart behind the face may be quite different



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The Big Idea

**God sees and values
 both what is internal/invisible and what is external/public,
 which puts every single one of us in great need
 of the grace of God**

- **there are visible killers with visible symptoms**
 - **dishonesty, slander, substance abuse, laziness, sexual sin, ...**
- **there are invisible killers that are silent and hidden killers**
 - **pride, lust, greed, bitterness, "socially acceptable" anger, ...**
 - **invisible killers are a far greater danger for "mature" Christians!**

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Visible rules

Why we often like (certain) visible rules

1. Security in being able to judge others
 - Outrunning a bear
 - As long as there are people worse than I...
2. Find peace in the clarity of seeing good and bad people
3. Sense of security in things we can control
 - I may struggle with angry thoughts, but at least I don't kill anyone!
 - "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment." *Matthew 5:22*
4. I can (sometimes) clean myself up to be more presentable to people, to myself, and to God (I imagine)

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Visible rules

Why we often like (certain) visible rules

Yet these rules hide the silent killers all the more!

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Application

Value both internal/invisible and external

- **God cares about our hearts (internal):**
 - “But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. **People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.**”” *1 Samuel 16:7*
- **God cares about our actions (external):**
 - “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith **but has no deeds**? Can such faith save them?” *James 2:14*
- **“From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth—he who forms the hearts of all, who considers **everything they do.**” *Psalms 33:13–15***

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Application

Value both internal/invisible and external/visible

- **Just like the Pharisees, we are so often convinced that what we can see is all that really matters**
 - In other people
 - In ourselves
- **Yet God also looks at the heart and what is unseen**
- **And that should bring a holy fear**
 - About how we judge and praise other people
 - About how we judge and praise ourselves
 - “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” *Hebrews 4:13*

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Application

Use external action to pursue internal growth

- “But now as for what is inside you—be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.” *Luke 11:41*
- Don't wait for heart change to engage in action change
 - Rather, use change in action as a tool to change our hearts
- So...obey God's commands in faith, trusting that He will change our hearts to delight in His ways.
- For example...
 - To grow in generosity → give
 - To grow in loving your enemy → pray for and do good to them
 - To grow in rejoicing → choose to rejoice now
 - To grow in forgiveness → choose to forgive now

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Application

Humbly confess and take action to follow God

- “The real thing to fear is not what other people think but what God will declare in the courts of heaven on the Day of Judgment.”
- Pointing out people who are less good than us is no help
 - Even if we can 'prove' our rightness **from Scripture**, we might still be completely wrong!
 - Human praise can be a deadly yet silent killer
- Jesus is the standard by which we will be praised & rebuked
 - We all desperately need the wisdom and the grace of God!
- Our hidden sin (attitudes, will, desires) are silent killers!
- Being guided by human praise or critique will kill us

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The Big Idea

**God sees and values
both the internal/invisible and the external/public,
which puts every single one of us in great need
of the grace of God**

**We desperately need God's work to transform
how we see ourselves and each other**

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“Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there is **any offensive way in me**, **Confession**
and **lead me** in the way everlasting.”

Action

Psalm 139:23-24

- **Value both internal/invisible and external/visible**
- **Use external action to pursue internal growth**
- **Humbly confess and take action to follow God**

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