

THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM IS THE HEART ITSELF
(Matthew 15:1-20)

I. The heart corrupts God's word (vs. 1-6).

- A. The Pharisees had an oral law called the Mishnah.
 - 1. It was an oral interpretation of the Law of Moses that came to replace that Law in many respects.
 - 2. It was expanded to have over 4,000 rules and regulations that covered every aspect of life.
 - 3. One such aspect was that of outward cleanliness.
 - 4. They believed in hand washing for many reasons.
 - 5. Some of them even felt that demons sat in your hands during the night and if you ate food without washing you ingested them.
 - 6. Also, they did not want to defile their body by touching food with hands that had touched something a sinner may have touched.
 - 7. They believed what you brought into the body defiled it.
- B. They were concerned here because the disciples of Jesus had not washed their hands before eating.
 - 1. Jesus immediately pointed out their hypocrisy and sinfulness by showing how they abused the Law.
 - 2. They taught that things that could be used to benefit needy parents could be said to be a gift to God, thus rendering them unavailable to the needy parent.
 - 3. They were trying to find loopholes to keep their valuables.
 - 4. This made them look spiritual and religious, but inside they were greedy and spiteful towards their parents.
- C. The real problem is the heart will corrupt God's word on its own.
 - 1. It will take the truth and twist it, just as Peter said some did during his day (2 Peter 3:16).
 - 2. The heart will make it please us if we let it.
 - 3. We will find a preacher or a teacher who tells it like we want it or a version that reads like we want it.
- D. The heart has to be silenced and God's word elevated to its rightful place as the standard of our lives to overcome this.
 - 1. We've got to get to the point where it is God's word over all else.
 - 2. No longer is it our will, but God's will that must rule.

II. The heart conceals from us who we really are (vs. 7-14).

- A. Jesus goes on to quote Isaiah 29:3.
 - 1. He tells them their hearts have deceived them into thinking they are right with God.
 - 2. They believed they were something they really weren't.
- B. Jesus called them "hypocrites," which means, "actor, pretender."
 - 1. They believed they were serving God.
 - 2. Their hearts had concealed from them that they were actually serving themselves.
- C. Jesus reminded them of two things we really need to hear.

1. A religious showing does not indicate spiritual worship.
 - a. Just because you showed up dressed right and acted right doesn't mean you truly worshiped.
 - b. It may mean you are simply religious and not redeemed.
2. Genuine worship is grounded in God's word.
 - a. Just because you went does not mean you worshiped.
 - b. Just because you did it like it's always been done here doesn't mean it was pleasing.
 - c. You and I worship God when we do that which pleases Him, with the right heart and action (John 4:24).
 - d. You worshiped when your heart was atuned to God's word and desired to praise Him, not just go through the motions.
- D. These Pharisees believe they knew God but they didn't even know they were blind and headed for judgment and doom.
- E. Our hearts will deceive us (Jeremiah 17:9).
 1. God's word never lies it only leads in truth.
 2. It does such because it is truth (John 17:17).
 3. God's word is a mirror that reveals to us who and what we really are spiritually speaking.

III. The heart confesses who we really are (vs. 15-20).

- A. What the heart conceals from us, it reveals to others.
 1. It is not the external things that save us alone.
 2. It is the internal things of the heart being in line with the will of God.
- B. It is not what we eat or drink that defile us, it is what comes forth from the heart that does so.
 1. When the inside is right the outside will be as well, not the other way around.
 2. Every sinful thing we do begins in our hearts.
- C. If our hearts are right with God we will love Him and keep His commandments (John 14:15),
- D. Our attitudes and our actions say far more about us than we realize.
 1. The heart is a window to the soul as some say.
 2. When the heart is right there is love for God and not mere ritualism.
 3. When the heart is right there will be actions that speak far louder than our words.
- E. There will be real worship offered to God.
- F. There will be true praise offered to God.
- G. There will be real change in our lives when the heart has been changed by God's word.

Not an original outline, but author unknown.