

Introduction:

- Chapter 15 brings us back to confrontation with the Pharisees. This time it is different... these Pharisees are from Jerusalem. "The big guns" are showing up to test Jesus. In Matthew's eyes confrontation show the deception of religion and accuracy of relationship with God.
- The call of this chapter, like the sermon on the mount, is the call to heart connect with God. It brings out the authority of the Word over the traditions of men and establishes what the Word does to and in the heart of a man.

I. Wash Your Hands vs. Wash Your Heart 15:1-20

- A. The introduction to change. Again, the Pharisees from Jerusalem are challenging Jesus.
1. Why do **your disciples** disobey and ignore our tradition of hand washing?
 - a) "the behavior of the disciples is taken as an index to Jesus' own teaching and expectations, since it is assumed that they will behave as their teacher has instructed them." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 578). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 - b) It is not an attack on the disciples but upon Jesus.
 - c) They do not realize that they are open the truth of what real purity is.
 2. Jesus answers their question with a question: Why do **you** by your tradition violate the direct commands of God? Let me point out: This is a question of where the real authority is.
 - a) He does not deal with their question but goes directly to the Word. The fifth command, "Honor your Father and Mother." If you do, you must be put to death.
 - b) But you dishonor your father and mother by your tradition. You make a vow (Mt 5:33-37 Jesus taught not to do that) and say that you do not need to honor your parents you thus nullify the Word with your tradition. You make it powerless with your traditions.
 - c) '*God says*' vs 4 versus '*But you say*' vs 5. Similar to "*you have heard but I say...*"
 - d) You hypocrites! The Pharisees have: "fatally distorted sense of priorities in the service of God. They have put the cart before the horse, and so have missed God's way." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 581). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
- B. Its about the heart. vs 8&9 Jesus introduces Isaiah's prophecy
1. close with lips but far with the heart.
 2. Jesus calls the crowd to him and says listen: "*It's not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth.*" (Matthew 15:11, NLT)

3. This is a major shift: Pharisee to crowd, and straight out truth. What you eat can't defile you but what comes out of your heart can.
 4. Purity is where the chapter started only it had to do with tradition. But Jesus leads everyone back to heart because this is where real purity is. If people are to benefit from this truth, they must "listen and understand," so that they penetrate its true meaning and become true disciples. Again we are reminded of the sermon on the mount.
 5. Jesus sidelines the Pharisees with this verse 11 and especially vs 13. Every planted by God will be uprooted and the if they are blind and you follow you both will end up in a ditch.
- C. The conclusion to the section on change vs 20 "*Eating with unwashed hands will never defile you.*"
1. Peter asks, "Can you explain this?" Gotta love Jesus' response.
 2. From the heart come evil thoughts...
 3. Dirty hands will not defile you. It is not a matter of what you eat but who you are.

II. Putting a Nail in the Coffin of Tradition 21-28

- A. The parts of the passage
1. Canaanite woman.
 2. Not in Jewish territory. The mission earlier was to only the Jew stay out of Samaria and away from gentiles.
 3. Jesus calls her a dog.
 4. She calls Him Lord-this is new to Matthews book. He is introducing another truth.
 5. He heals her daughter.
- B. She challenges Jesus tradition! Which was:
1. He was sent to Jews.
 2. vs 23 His silence was typical of Rabbi or Pharisee to gentile. It is how you treat gentiles.
 3. *"In refusing to accept the traditional Jewish exclusion of Gentiles from the grace of God, she has shown a truly prophetic grasp of the new perspective of the kingdom of heaven."* France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 590). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
 4. I believe Jesus pulls the best out of her both for her sake and for the sake of His disciples. This Gospel will cross racial boundaries. God is interested in the salvation of all me.
 5. The bottom line is this: God wants the heart of all men and tradition will not keep the Gentiles out!!!
 6. Matthew is driving this point home. *"The whole of the second half of chapter 15 thus puts into practice the message of its first half, the relaxation of the Jewish*

"purity" culture which had hitherto kept Jew and Gentile apart." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 591). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

III. Demonstrating the Message

- A. vs. 32 *"And they praised the God of Israel."* How would that have read if Jews were being healed? They praised the God! The God of Israel implies that Gentiles were receiving from God as well. He heals them all.
- B. Jesus then feeds the four thousand. Why would you follow a greater miracle with a lesser one? Jesus feed 5k in chapter 14. Now he feeds 4k. It is to show the heart of God towards Jews and Gentiles. Both feeding miracles are well documented and point to God's heart towards all men.
- C. We are back to the purity message...it is not what goes into a man that defiles him but what comes out of his heart.
- D. Faith is the key to accessing the things of God as was proved by Canaanite woman.

Conclusion:

- Purity is about the heart not traditions.
- The authority of the Word takes precedence over mans words and tradition.
- The heart is what is important to God. It is what is to be near God.
- Anyone can draw near to God...even and Canaille woman. Healing and feeding.