

Be Reformed – Open the bible: study, dig and ask what the main point of the passage is

Be Charismatic – Expect the Holy Spirit: ask God to speak, minister, build up and lead us to maturity

Be Community – Love God's people: share vulnerably, apply, pray and build each other up

Be Missional – Win the world: apply lessons to outreach, make content accessible to non-Christians

Matthew 15:1-20

1 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." 3 He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' 5 But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," 6 he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. 7 You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

8 "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 9 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

10 And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: 11 it is not what goes into

the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person." 12 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" 13 He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. 14 Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit." 15 But Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us." 16 And he said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

Study Guide 31 July 2011 – A Heart After God



Summary

The scriptures constantly talk about God looking for true heart worshippers. He does not care for the outward form of Christianity, but the inward witness of it. How can we tell if we are far from God in our hearts even while we follow the external form of faith?

First, we compare ourselves to others, because this is how we justify ourselves. Second, we major on minor, secondary, non-biblical things. Culture and tradition are always subject to the gospel. The Pharisees preserved traditions but profaned God's revealed will.

Third, we find 'spiritual' ways to reject God's will. Fourth, we are easily offended. This is because we are invested in our preferences and traditions. When they are threatened, we become offended. Fifth, we are preoccupied with how much we have done for God.

The Pharisees failed to see that the root of the problem was the heart. They imagined that by controlling the exterior they could perfect the inside, but our hearts can only be made clean by the work of God – the perfect blood of Christ.

Key points

The external outworking of a true Christian life is the result of a heart made clean by God.

Questions

- >>Can you always judge a person's heart by his actions?
- >>What do you think makes a Christian a Christian?
- >>List some issues or practices in your Christian life that have very little to do with the core of the Gospel. Do they disobey God's command in any way?
- >>Is it important to do good? Why or why not?
- >>What aspects of your culture could be holding you back from being open to what God wants you to do?

Final thoughts

A new heart is all that the world can hope for! All the effort and resources in the world will not solve our problems. Jesus came to give us clean hearts.

