

**“Lessons of The Heart” - Mark 7: 1-23 (also Matthew 15)**

**INTRO: THE HEART**

More than brain waves or breathing, the beating of the HEART signifies LIFE.

The HEART is the fulcrum of feeling and faith

The HEART is the mainstream of words and actions

The HEART is the root of intellect, emotions and will

***Proverbs 4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.***

TODAY we mark the words of Jesus in Mark 7:20 where he says: ***“That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.”*** (i.e. proceeding from the HEART)

- 1 The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem,
- 2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.
- 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders;
- 4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.)
- 5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?"
- 6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.
- 7 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'
- 8 "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."
- 9 He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.
- 10 "For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH';
- 11 but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),'
- 12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother;
- 13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."
- 14 After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand:

- 15 there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.
- 16 ["If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."]
- 17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable.
- 18 And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him?
- 19 because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thus He declared all foods clean.)
- 20 And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.
- 21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,
- 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.
- 23 "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

[Matthew continues in 15:20, linking the passage together: "but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."]

#### **VERSE 1 The scribes and Pharisees came from Jerusalem to "trap" Jesus**

- The SCRIBE'S PROFESSION was to interpret the written law and practiced tradition
- The PHARISEE'S SECT was to choose to live out the laws and traditions to the ultimate
- The scribes and Pharisees fully believed that they were doing what God wanted
- The scribes and Pharisees were diametrically opposed to one another

**VERSES 2-5** For the scribes and Pharisees, washing hands was not about good manners or physical cleanliness – it was about spiritual purity.

- The Washing: Palms up and immersed (baptized) in holy water to the wrists; each fist rubbed in the other hand's palm; palms down and again immersed up to the wrist.
- The essential question: Why don't you conform to accepted worship tradition? Clothing, instruments, volume, atmosphere, attitude, etc.

**VERSES 6-9** Jesus will quote from both "The Law" (the books of Moses) and from "The prophets" – the rest of the OT. Here he quotes from "the prophets" – Isaiah 29:13, to be exact.

What they say with their lips, and even do with their lives, sounds and looks good on the surface, but their HEART is far from Him. And God wants our HEART above all.

This is just a reenactment of what happened back in Genesis:

*Genesis 6:5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

In v. 8 Jesus says they are trading God's commandments for their traditions – or, they care more about their ways than God's ways.

In v. 9 Jesus says they care more about their own satisfaction than about God's satisfaction.

**BEWARE that we don't fall into these traps of Satan.**

**VERSES 10-13** As an example of their hypocrisy, Jesus now quotes from "The Law" – specifically the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment in Exodus 20:12, where we are commanded to honor father and mother. "Corbin" = "gift" or "given" – meaning that which is promised to God – was a phrase these spiritual leaders used to avoid giving to father and mother in need. As Jesus says in v. 13, they essentially invalidated the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment by their convenient use of "Corbin" (and then never giving it to God at all, but keeping it for self)

### **CONTRASTING JESUS with the SCRIBES and PHARISEES**

#### Scribes/Pharisees

Pompous

Hypocritical\*

Activity of self

Sacrifice for the Law

Religion

About doing what God wants

#### Jesus

Humble

Sincere

Activity of others

Sacrifice for God

Relationship

About being what God wants

\* A hypocrite: hiding real intentions behind a "mask" of pretended virtue

**VERSES 14-16** are addressed to the multitude who apparently had been "waiting around" for Jesus to finish speaking with the scribes and Pharisees. He states to them the principle of SPIRITUAL DEFILEMENT: WE ARE DEFILED BY THE EVIL IN OUR HEART, NOT BY THE EVIL IN THE WORLD. And specifically, we are not defiled by any food we eat, or by lack of external washings.

**VERSES 17-23** Lastly he addresses the disciples when they get to "the house" – probably Jesus' residence (very likely Peter's house). This shows that these concerns must be ours, as well as a condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew tells us that it is Peter who asks for clarification.

- He asks them, and thus us, essentially: "don't you get this?"
- We are not "defiled" by externals – as evil as they may be and as much as we should avoid them. And no ceremony of washing will ever cleanse us from their harm.
- Rather, we are "defiled" by our own sinful nature – by the evil in our HEART that spews through our mouth. 12 evils are here listed. The implication is that the only cleansing agent is the blood of Jesus applied to our life to cleanse completely from sin and stain.

- Isaiah said it this way in *Isaiah 1:18* Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.
- John said it this way in *1 John 1:9* If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- In searching the Scriptures – see...

## WHAT GOD CAN DO WITH A HUMAN HEART

### **1. HARDENS A HEART**

Exodus 9:12 And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart...

### **2. EXAMINES A HEART**

*1 Samuel 16:7 [to Samuel, regarding David:]... for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*"

### **3. KNOWS A HEART**

*Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts.*

### **4. CLEANSSES A HEART**

*Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

### **5. URNS A HEART**

*Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.*

### **6. WEIGHS A HEART**

*Proverbs 21:2 Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.*

### **7. WRITES A HEART**

*2 Corinthians 3:3... you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.*

## WHAT GOD WANTS FROM A HUMAN HEART

### **1. A SEEKING HEART**

*Deuteronomy 4:29... You will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.*

### **2. A MEDITATING HEART**

*Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.*

### **3. A TRUSTING HEART**

*Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.*

### **4. A BELIEVING HEART**

*Romans 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

### **5. A LOVING HEART**

Matthew 22:37 And He [Jesus] said to him [the man who wanted to know the greatest commandment], " ' YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

***JESUS: "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man."***

**So, give Him your heart, that He might  
EXAMINE, KNOW and CLEANSE IT;  
TURN, WEIGH and WRITE IT**

**SEEK HIM, MEDITATE on HIM, TRUST HIM, BELIEVE HIM and LOVE HIM!**