

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 4TH-5TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

### MAN MADE (MATTHEW 15:1-9)

#### "...APPROACHED BY THE PHARISEES."

Though Jesus had been on the religious community's radar, here we have our first aggressive confrontation.

- Jesus had been approached by local synagogue leaders, but here the "big guns" from the Pharisees hub in Jerusalem confronted and challenged Him.

#### THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR TRADITIONS

The "traditions of the elders" were a collection of oral traditions. Later, a collection of traditions called the Mishnah would be compiled in which whole chapters would be dedicated to just washing hands.

- These traditions were **extra-biblical, so they were irrelevant to Jesus and should be to His followers.**

#### THE AMENDMENTS NEVER END

Though God gave Moses 10 simple commands to communicate with His people, over time **minor changes and additions morphed into major shifts away from the heart and intent of God's Word.**

- Many churches and Christians do this today. **We create traditions that hold more value than the Word.**

#### THIS GARNERED A SNAPPY RESPONSE

Jesus answered the Pharisees' question with a bigger question, "Why do you break God's commandment because of your tradition?"

- Jesus confronted man's traditions over God's commands often. Rather than defending the disciples, Jesus went on the offense by asking why the Pharisees felt their rules were greater than God's.

#### JESUS EVEN GAVE THEM AN EXAMPLE

The Bible says in Ex. 20 that one of the 10 C's is to honor your parents. Part of honoring your parents in Jewish culture was to take care of them financially in their elderly years.

- The Pharisees were telling younger people to give to the temple instead of taking care of their parents; putting their wants above the commands of God.

#### "GOD SAID...BUT YOU SAY"

Now we come to the real problem. Whenever we're told by God to do this but we decide to do that, we run into very dangerous territory.

- How often have we done this on a macro level? How often have we done this individually? **To know what is right and not do it is evil and will not be tolerated by Jesus (J's 4:17).**

#### HYPOCRITES SAY ONE THING AND DO ANOTHER

Let's take it a step further. People who claim to be followers of God but intentionally break His commands are hypocrites according to Jesus.

- *Hypokrites* literally means an actor. This is someone that plays a part but is not really what they're acting like they are. **We've all been hypocrites. So we need to repent and choose to no longer be one.**

#### CLOSE LIPS, DISTANT HEARTS

Jesus quotes a provocative passage from Is. 29. He claims the religious leaders "**honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.**" He also says their traditions and empty words are "in vain" because it doesn't line up with God's Word.

- It's simple: **stick to the Word and live out what you say.**

### A DARK SPACE (MATTHEW 15:10-20)

#### "SUMMONING THE CROWD..."

Jesus saw the confrontation with the Pharisees as a teachable moment for the people. Jesus was going to address the Pharisees' original question about ritual handwashing.

- He begins with "Listen and understand," which is similar to His frequent "for those who have ears" phrase. Again, it is about wanting the truth.

### ANSWERING WITH A PARABLE

V11-13 employs Jesus' new teaching style, parables, to answer the questions of how important rituals are before eating.

- Jesus essentially said that **a person isn't defiled based on what is on the outside, but because of bad things that are already within. And from that inner darkness, comes bad actions.**

#### NOT IF, BUT HOW

Jesus wasn't saying that certain actions wouldn't put distance between people and God, Jesus was disagreeing with the Pharisees on how that happens.

- **We become distant from God by not addressing the sin in our hearts and by neglecting His commands, not man-made religious traditions.**

#### DID YOU KNOW YOU OFFENDED THEM?

After publicly setting the Pharisees straight, the disciples told Jesus that the religious leaders were offended. **Jesus cared more about the illumination of truth than people's feelings.**

- In fact, He took it even further by promising that they would be "uprooted" by God and that their blind leadership would lead people "into a pit (Hell)."

#### WE HURT PEOPLE WHEN WE NEGLECT THE TRUTH

Jesus knew that not sharing the hard truth about hypocrisy and being lost was bad for everyone.

- **Lost people will never find salvation, unless we clearly and biblically identify what is right and wrong. We are doing people an eternal injustice if we don't share the truth with love!**

#### "DO YOU STILL LACK UNDERSTANDING?"

Peter asked Jesus for more clarity on the small parable about what goes into our mouth versus what's already in our hearts.

- Jesus goes on to explain **that a heart without God is evil and things like "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts...and slander" spring up from it.**

#### WE SHOULD BE MINDFUL OF "DIRTY HANDS"

What we do does matter, but we must start with a heart change.

- **Jesus works from the inside out. It is by first addressing the heart that what we do changes. It is by the Spirit residing in our hearts that we have wisdom and discernment to stay away from damaging external forces.**

#### "WELL, I BELIEVE THIS..."

- Not all "traditions of man" are bad, but when they become more important than God's commands, they're wrong.
- A greater problem is biblical negligence. Too many professing Christians say "Well, I believe this..." without checking to see what God says first. **Our thoughts are worthless if they're in opposition to His.**

#### TRUST THE SPIRIT, NOT YOUR HEART

- Where has "following our hearts" gotten us recently, or ever?
- We are actually told in Jer. 17:9 **to not follow our hearts, but to follow the Spirit of God that hopefully resides in our hearts.** A heart without God is self-serving and corrupt and only God can fix it.
- **Jeremiah 17:9-10 (CSB)**
- **Romans 8:14 (CSB)**

#### IT'S A CYCLICAL ADVANCE FORWARD

- A willingness to change leads us to the Gospel.
- The Gospel exposes the darkness and deceitfulness of the heart.
- God is the only One that can change the heart.
- A changed heart produces good thoughts and actions which in turn leads us and others into a deeper relationship with God. It changes everything.