

## *Straight from the heart, Matthew 15:1-20*

*We Christians work diligently to find or establish doctrines and rules which distinguish us from others: not just from other people who are not Christian, but also from other Christians. If comparing ourselves to other sects and denominations we dictate qualities within ours which sets us apart or above. If comparing ourselves individually we do the same with respect to others within our own fellowships. Jesus, in this passage, condemns the Pharisees for this very elitism which we, knowing better, still seek, and in this he calls us to examine the condition of our own hearts.*

### **Pharisees and rules (they seem to go together), v.1-9.**

- A short, sharp exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees, v.1-3.
  - The Pharisees again finding fault. \_\_\_\_\_
    - Parallels: Matthew 9:10-13, 12:1-8. \_\_\_\_\_
    - “Tradition.” \_\_\_\_\_
    - Etiquette takes precedence over sense. \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus gets to the heart of the matter, v.4-9.
  - He exposes it through a particularly onerous tradition.
    - Invalidating a commandment with a tradition, Ex. 20:13 \_\_\_\_\_
    - Offensive words: *doron* (gr.)v.5. \_\_\_\_\_
    - *Corban*, Mark 7:11. \_\_\_\_\_
  - They betray the condition of their hearts by:
    - The vanity of their declaration. \_\_\_\_\_
    - Replacing God’s law with human rules. \_\_\_\_\_
    - Trying to “look good.” \_\_\_\_\_
  - In the end, it’s a trick. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Jesus refocuses the dialogue on his true audience, v.10-11.**

- *Hear and understand* (v.10)
  - *Not what enters . . . but what proceeds out of the mouth:*

#### **What is happening here?**

- This represents a complete change in the concept of righteousness. \_\_\_\_\_
- This doesn’t just overthrow the notion of ritual cleansing, but the entire doctrine of righteousness. \_\_\_\_\_

### **An aside regarding religious elitism, v.12-14.**

- The disciples concerned that the Pharisees were offended.
  - *Lit., were caused to stumble.* \_\_\_\_\_
  - Parallel: Luke 11:37-53. To Pharisees and lawyers. \_\_\_\_\_
    - 11:43, to Pharisees, “PC” elitism. \_\_\_\_\_
    - 11:52, to lawyers, for obscuring truth. \_\_\_\_\_

### **The real point of this dialogue, The Heart, v.15-20.**

- *Don’t you get it?* He says.
  - What we consume does not defile us (though it may harm us.)
  - What comes from our mouth reveals our heart. \_\_\_\_\_
- So what comes from the heart?
  - Evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Why did he not mention anything good coming from the heart? (Jer. 17:9) \_\_\_\_\_
- Even our man-made rules are corrupt and ill-fashioned, v.20.
  - They only address appearances. \_\_\_\_\_
  - We honor position, appearance, etiquette, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

*Just as James said, “show me your inert faith without evidence” and Paul wrote “without love, all your showy spirituality is just noisy clanging,” Jesus had made it clear that a corrupt heart cannot be corrected by external shows of “righteousness.” We cannot become righteous on our own, our self-centered hearts won’t let us – but they may trick us (Jer.17:9). In this passage, Jesus is patiently moving his disciples toward an understanding of their personal spiritual ineptness, and toward their ultimate requirement to submit to the heart change that only he can accomplish.*

**Where do we get stuck in the rules?** What do we see in our own behavior that demonstrates what Jesus was condemning?

- Protecting our personal “righteousness.” \_\_\_\_\_
- Assuming our “standards” for others. \_\_\_\_\_

**But, more importantly, where do we see evidence of the “heart change” in us.**

- In our behavior? \_\_\_\_\_
- In our thoughts and attitudes? \_\_\_\_\_