

## **Matthew 15:1-20**

### ***Traditions or Truth***

September 12, 2019 – Rev. Rick Lyon

#### **Intro** –

- **God gives you a test and then based on how you do He teaches you lessons**
- **Then He gives another test.**
- **Then He teaches another lesson and on and on it goes.**

The test we looked at last week was the disciples stuck in a storm on the sea.

#### **Don't Lose Your Focus**

**Matthew 14:22** - *Immediately* Jesus *made* His disciples get into a boat and go before Him to the other side, while *He* sent the multitude away.

Then Peter walked on the water. *When did he start to sink?*

- **When he lost his focus...**

In Matthew 15 we meet a group of people who lost their focus.

**v.1** - Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they don't wash their hands when they eat bread.”

**Mark 7:3** - The Pharisees and all the Jews don't eat unless they wash their hands in a *special way*, holding the tradition of the elders.

For the Pharisees, it wasn't enough to wash your hands--you had to wash your hands the right way! (Their way!)

**Mark 7:4** - When they come from the marketplace, they don't eat unless they wash.

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The Bible does talk about hand-washing.

**Exodus 30:17-20** - The LORD said to Moses, “Make a bronze washbasin with a bronze stand. Place it between the Tabernacle and the altar. Put water in it, for Aaron and his sons. When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister to the LORD, they shall wash with water or they'll die.

**Hand -washing wasn't supposed to make them proud, it was supposed to make them humble.**

The Pharisees had lost their focus.

- **They'd turned it all around**
- **They'd forgotten what was important.**

One Jewish teacher wrote: *"Whoever eats bread without first washing his hands is as though he had sinned with a harlot. Whoever makes light of the washing of hands will be uprooted from the world."*

Another wrote: *"A person who despises the washing of hands before a meal is to be excommunicated."*

**v.2** - “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?”

**v.3** - Jesus said, “Why do you transgress the commandment of God?”

What do these phrases have in common.

***What do these phrases have in common?***

- ***"Moderation in all things"***
- ***"To thine ownself be true."***
- ***"God helps those who help themselves."***
- ***"The lion shall lay down with the lamb."***
- ***"Cleanliness is next to Godliness."***

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If we're not careful to read God's Word we can become like the Pharisees:

- **losing our focus**
- **and following traditions instead of truth**

**v.3** - Jesus said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For *God commanded*, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But *you say*, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit (or help) you might have received from me is a gift to God”— then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus *you've made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition*.

But here was the catch:

- ***you* could use that money while you were alive**
- **but when you died you had to give it to the temple**

**v.7** - Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their *heart* is far from Me.

The Pharisees were concerned with having clean *hands* when they should have been concerned about having clean *hearts*.

**v.10** - When Jesus called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear and understand: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.” Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

- **It seems like people who are quick to criticize others are hyper-sensitive to being criticized.**

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**v.13** - Jesus answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father hasn't planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They're blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”

*Do you remember the Parable of the Wheat and Tares that we looked at a couple of weeks ago?*

- **Wheat and tares--good and evil grow side by side in this age**
- **The servants say to the master: "Do you want us to pull up the tares?"**
- **And the master says, "Leave them alone."**

Jesus tells His disciples to do the same thing to the Pharisees:

- **They may judge you harshly and unfairly**
- **But don't follow their lead**
- **Leave them alone**

**v.15** - Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain this parable to us.” So Jesus said, “Are you still without understanding? Don't you understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the *heart*, and they defile a man. For out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands doesn't defile a man.”

**Jesus says the source of our problems is our heart.**

### **Four things that hurt your heart.**

#### **1. Unresolved guilt hurts your heart.**

You remember the story of the Prodigal Son.

When he returned home he said to his father: **"I've sinned against heaven (God) and against you."**

He confessed his sin to God and to the one he wronged.

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The longer you hold it the heavier it feels and the more damage it will do to you and your relationships.

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### **2. Anger hurts your heart.**

**Ephesians 4:26-32** - Don't let the sun go down on your wrath, for anger gives the devil a foothold... Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger... Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you.

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### **3. Greed hurts your heart.**

**1 Timothy 6:9-10** - People who desire to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

### **4. Jealousy hurts your heart.**

Joseph's brothers were jealous of Joseph and it nearly destroyed them.

- **they were riddled with guilt...**

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Rachel and Leah were jealous of each other...

- **Leah was jealous of Rachel because Rachel was Jacob's favorite...**
- **Rachel was jealous of Leah because Leah had children...**
- **and neither one was happy**

King Saul was jealous of David and it did destroy him.

- **Saul has killed his thousands and David his tens of thousands.**

**Hebrews 13:5** - Be content with what you have because God has promised, "I'll never leave you or forsake you."

**Hebrews 12** - Run with endurance the race that is set before you, looking to Jesus.

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