

## Matthew 15:1-20

### Heart Care

#### (The King and His Kingdom)

Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”

<sup>3</sup>He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? <sup>4</sup>For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ <sup>5</sup>But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God”—<sup>6</sup>then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. <sup>7</sup>Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

<sup>8</sup> *‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.*

<sup>9</sup> *And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”*

PRAY

In the musical “Fiddler on the Roof,” Tevye the main Character was a man struggling with traditions.

A)One of the main songs of that musical was entitled, “Tradition.”

B)Several times, during the play, Tevye would reflect on a specific tradition.

1)He would say that people would ask, “Why do we do this?” and he would have to answer, “I don’t know.”

I had a similar thing happened to me a few years ago

A)Having lunch with a long time attender of our Church –

B)He asked me – why does the worship leader – ask the people to have a seat – after the first song.

1)I don’t know?

C)I don’t know – it was that way when I got here – that is how they did it at CCCM –

1)I think most people prefer to sit –

D)I realized at that moment – that had become our tradition.

1)He asked – what if we gave people a choice! So we did – AMAZED Majority of you stand!

That is the way traditions are – they sort of take on a life of their own – become the norm

A)Problem is we have no idea why?

B) Years at CC Pastor Conferences

1)Pastor Chuck – liked Hawaiian shirts –

C) Sort of became the CC unofficial uniform -

1)Conference: 75% of the Pastors would show up – Hawaiian shirts – picture 1200 guys in Hawaiian shirts

D)We don’t wear suits/ties – we wear Hawaiian shirts (Suit and tie guys are lame)

Many traditions are innocent – they don’t change anything – but the problem with the traditions of Israel was this:

A)They took the place of God’s word.

B)The end of v.9 sums up the problem in this way

*And in vain they worship Me,*

*Teaching as doctrines the commandments (traditions) of men.’ ”*

C)Understand the difference: Tradition is outward; Truth is inward. –

D)Tradition has to do w/ritual;

1)Truth has to do w/reality.

E)Tradition is something you keep;

1)Truth is something that keeps you.

As we come to Chapter 15 in Matthews gospel – things are starting to heat up for Jesus –

A)He is Still drawing enormous crowds.

B)A delegation of religious leaders travel 100 miles on foot from Jerusalem down into Galilee where Jesus was ministering.

C)They are NOT coming to hear Jesus or meet Jesus

1)They are coming to accuse Jesus – find fault with Jesus

**Jesus is healing people – raised the dead – He has fed the 5,000 –**

A) They focus in on the tradition of Washing your hands before you eat!

B) Now that is always a good idea:

C) But this washing was not really about Hygiene it was about – ceremony and tradition.

**This Hand washing command WAS a command for priests to wash their hands before doing their service duties (Ex.30:19; 40:12).**

A) It was a very simple practice that symbolized approaching God with a clean heart

B) This was not a matter of personal Hygiene but more a matter of religious ritual.

1) It was a simple command.

C) But in the same way that they took the simple command to keep the Sabbath and turned it into a burden

1) They did the same thing with this simple command to wash hands

**During the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, oral teachings (traditions) were written down in what was called the Mishnah**

A) A book of 6 divisions: agriculture, festivals, marriage, civil life, crime, & ceremonies)

B) To this was added a commentary called the **Gemara**.

1) Together **the Mishnah & the Gemara** formed the **Talmud**.

C) These contained 248 commandments (“*thou shalt!*”);

1) And 365 prohibitions (“*thou shalt not!*”)

D) And every Commandment – and every prohibition had chapters outlining exactly what each meant –

1) Some of these details turned into full volumes

**They had this whole Section on Washing before eating!**

A) In fact The Jewish Mishnah contained no less than 30 chapters on the cleansing of vessels.

B) They had 65 volumes on washing hands

C) Sound crazy? Well get this- to make fun of the hand washings was worthy of death

1) Neglecting to wash your hands before you eat is guilty of murder

**One such oral tradition that dealt with the ceremonial washing of hands.**

A) The Rabbis taught that at night, a demon called -Shibna would often come & sit upon a man's hands as he slept.

B) They went on to say that if anyone ate with hands that had been sat upon by a demon,

1) the demon could enter into him through the food and take control of him.

C) Therefore, the Rabbis concluded, before eating one needed to wash his hands in the following manner:

**D) The water was first poured on both hands, with the fingers pointed upwards, and must run down the arm**

E) The process was repeated with the hands held in the opposite direction, with the fingers pointing down;

1) and then finally each hand was cleansed by being rubbed with the fist of the other.

**So God says wash your hands before you eat and serve and they turn it into this complicated process**

A) A really strict Jew would do all this, not only before a meal, but also between each of the courses.

**B) SO when these religious leaders come down from Jerusalem –**

1) They were sin sniffers looking for something to accuse Jesus of.

**C) Something to attack him with – HAND WASHING!**

<sup>2</sup> “Why do Your disciples transgress **the tradition of the elders?** For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”

A) This is interesting: Jesus doesn't even answer their question – in his mind it is like so ridiculous

**B) Instead He is going to take them to task on a bigger issue – bigger problem –**

1) Another area where they had twisted God's command and created a way of not taking care of their aged parents.

<sup>3</sup> He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" <sup>4</sup> For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' <sup>5</sup> But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"—<sup>6</sup> then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

**C) Jesus points to the heart of their problem – it was a heart problem.**

1. "**You break the command of God** for the sake of your tradition" (v. 3).

**Catch this: The Pharisees accused him of breaking the tradition of the elders,**

**A) but he accused them of breaking God's commands** because of their traditions.

**B) The issue Jesus raised was a particularly despicable practice of that time.**

**C) The fifth of the Ten Commandments, said that a man must "honor [his] father and mother"** Ex 20:12)

**D) And One chapter later Exodus states, "Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death"** (Exod. 21:17).

**E) It was a Capital crime to disrespect your parents - Punishable by stoning**

1) Youth detention centers were empty – a Rock on the coffee table at home kept everyone in line

**These verses lay out a specific divine command to a universally recognized human obligation**

**A) To provide for one's parent when a father or a mother is in need.**

**No social security – no retirement homes**

**B) It was a child's loving obligation to take care of your parents in old age.**

**C) But the Pharisees had devised a way of avoiding this obligation.**

1) They even had a word for it: *corban*.

**D) Corban referred to a gift dedicated to God, and it worked this way.**

1) If a parent approached one of these people asking to be helped and the person did not want to help, all he had to do was say "**corban,**"

**E) Meaning that the money that might have been used to relieve the parent's need had been dedicated to God and was no longer available.**

**What made this practice even worse, the greedy and uncaring son did not even have to give the money to God.**

**A) It was enough that he had promised to give it.**

**B) He could give it later, on his deathbed perhaps, or not at all.**

1) In this way the parents of such men were dishonored and God's law was broken.

**C) Made the commandment of God of no effect – with your tradition**

**D) Traditions can be harmless** unless they take the place of Scripture.

**E) That was the problem in Israel.**

**The heart of the problem was a HEART PROBLEM!**

<sup>7</sup> Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

<sup>8</sup> *"These people draw near to Me with their mouth,*

*And honor Me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.*

<sup>9</sup> *And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' "*

**A) Lip service – honor me with their lips- heart is far from me**

**B) Now Before we are too hard on the religious leaders – Aren't we at times guilty of the same**

1) We sing – I surrender all – Holding on to things

**C) We sing Lord reign in me – in our hearts we are saying except in these areas**

**D) We sing I love you Lord and we hate our brother**

**1) God says : How can that be**

**E)At the HEART OF THE PROBLEM IS A HEART PROBLEM.**

**JESUS gives some further insight beginning in V.10**

10 When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear and understand: 11 Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

13 But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.

14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.” (Reasons when we went into Eastern Europe 1989 – Pastor Chuck wisely said- don’t focus on the Older people – stuck in their religions – focus on the Youth- Exactly what we did – God blessed it

**15 Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain this parable to us.”**

16 So Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? **18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.** 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. 20 These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

**Here is the point: Jesus wants the crowd and the people to understand**

**A)Not what goes into your mouth that defiles you spiritually-**

**B)What goes into the mouth travels to the stomach – then it is eliminated – comes out in the Toilet**

**1)So what you eat is not the ISSUE**

**C)LISTEN Eating vegan might be better for your Physical Health**

**1)But it doesn’t make you more spiritual**

**D)Doctor warned me – Strokes run in your dads side of the family – be careful – Eat better**

**1)Eating Better – is good for you Physically**

**E)But spiritually speaking the issue is on what Comes out of your mouth – not what goes in.**

**1)What comes out reveals where the heart is at.**

**See You can appear to have it all together on the outside – Look good**

**A)Show up to Church with your 10lb Bible – You have the lingo down – PTL Bro**

**B)You know the songs backwards and forward**

**C)But then what comes out of your MOUTH – especially in those moments when heat is turned up reveals where your heart is really at.**

**D)The Pharisees knew the word of God – they knew the traditions**

**1)Their traditions had supplanted the word of God –**

**E)Problem was their hearts were wicked – their worship was in Vain**

**I know Christians – they know the Bible backwards and forwards.**

**A)But they are critical and unloving – prideful and Judgmental**

**B)Their hearts betray them – their hearts are nothing like JESUS**

**C)The heart reveals what is inside of the man – out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks:**

**D)God is most concerned about our HEART!**

**There was a little boy who was in the hospital Here in So Cal –**

**A)He was on life support and it wasn’t looking good.**

**B) In another hospital room there was a little 8 year old boy who was in need of a heart transplant.**

**C) Well the boy who was brought in who was on life support – his heart was a perfect match.**

C) The Doctors came to the parents who's little boy was brought in on life support – and said – I know this is terribly hard – and not the best time to talk about this but please forgive us – things we have to do –

**Down the hall is an 8 year old boy who is desperately in need of a heart transplant and your son's heart is a perfect match. –**

**We want to ask you if your son doesn't pull through, if he doesn't make it / can we have your consent to give his heart to this 8 year old boy**

**A) The parents talked and said – yes they would do that – but on one condition.**

**B) We want to meet the other parents and we want to see the boy before he leaves**

C) The other parents agreed – the heart transplant was successful and before the other boy was released from the hospital the parents of the boy who died came into the room

**D) The mom of the boy who survived said we could never thank you enough – we are forever in your debt**

1) Then she asked – why did you want to meet with us – why did you want to see our son

**The mom whose son died – said: Can I bend down and put my ear on your son's chest**

**A) And hear my son's heart beat one more time – is that ok – The mom of the boy said sure**

**B) That mom put her head down on that little boy's chest and heard the heart of her son beating in that little boy**

**C) That is what God the father wants to do- he wants to lean down and hear the heart of his son beating in our chest**

**D) He wants to see the heartbeat of his son – played out in our lives –**

1) He wants to see it in our priorities

**E) He wants to hear it in our conversations**

**So as we close today: I want to answer this question:**

**How do I take care of my heart?**

**Prov. 4:23 “Keep or Guard your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”**

**Prov. 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do. NLT**

**In Jewish Culture – they didn't just see the heart as the place of emotions**

**A) The heart was central to who a man was and what He did.**

**B) The "heart" was considered the seat of the will and thought-life.**

**C) the core of your decision-making process.**

1) The heart is the command center of our life.

**Think of it this way: If your life was a ship, your heart would be the bridge.**

**A) If your life was a NASA rocket, your heart would be mission control.**

**B) If your life was an airplane, your heart would be the tower or cockpit.**

**C) Our heart is the part of us that charts our course, and sets direction.**

**1) That is why it is to be GUARDED/ PROTECTED!**

**EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED TO IT**

**So when a man is protecting something: Car – watches out over it!**

**A) Parks away from others – Clean – makes sure running right**

**B) There is a focus! –**

**C) And please notice also the sort of "attitude" with which this "action" of the protection of the heart is to be taken: "with all diligence".**

**D) Talking about making this a priority!**

**In the Hebrew text, Solomon uses a word related to DILIGENCE which describes**

A)Protecting a Dangerous Prisoner – Seriousness  
Not half hearted!

B)This is serious Business - Satan is after your heart

C)**#1 Guard your heart**

**#2 Hide God's word in your heart Psalm 119:11**

*Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.*

A)This book will keep you from Sin – but sin will keep you from this book.

B)People who fall into sin – common factor – weak devotional life.

C)God's word taken to the heart – **real sincerity is like an X-RAY MACHINE**

1)Reveals what is wrong –

D)God's word when taken to the heart – in Sincerity is like a Surgeon's scalpel

1)Cuts and eliminates

**#3 Routinely ask God to search your heart – Psalm 139:23,24**

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;*

<sup>24</sup> *And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*

A)This speaks of someone who realizes – how deceitful the heart can be – Jeremiah 17:9 **The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. -**

**B)This speaks of a heart posture that is willing to be open with God**

1)Lord examine me – Show me –

C)The Problem with the religious leaders in Israel was they were just playing games

1)Rituals and Routines – they had no idea their hearts were really far from God

D)**Their worship was in VAIN – worthless**

**But if we are open to come to the Lord – and say God search my heart – He will tell you.**

A)Like when married – sincerely come to your spouse and say:

B)Is there anything I could be doing better

1)Is there anything – I could change

C)Is there anything that is driving you crazy?

D)You come in sincerity – and your spouse is open with you that can be huge for your marriage

**SO too – You approach God in Sincerity – Lord is there anything I need to change?**

A)Is there anything I can do differently?

**B)Anything thing that is Wrong – HE LOVES you and he will tell you – HUGE**

1)AND he will help you Change.

C)Problem is most of us don't want to do that!

**#1 Guard your heart**

**#2 Hide God's word in your heart**

**#3 Routinely ask God to search your heart**

**#4 Love God with all your heart**

A)The first 3 fall into place when this is the heart

**Close: Evangelistic**

A)Perhaps you are here today: Don't know Jesus – Walked away from Jesus

B)He loves you with all of HIS HEART

1)WHY He left heaven.... Cross.... Resurrection

C)Your problem today is a Heart problem – Sin

1)Jesus can give you a clean heart today  
His blood

D)Whether problem is sin and guilt or religion and pride

E)Same remedy – JESUS

1)Good NEWS - Broken heart .... will not despise