"SPIRITUAL DEFILEMENT"



Matthew 15:10-20
5/20/2018

INTRODUCTION: Verses 10-11

***Hear and understand the true source of defilement.**

I. Spiritual Defilement is <u>MISUNDERSTOOD</u> by Legalists Who Base Spirituality on <u>EXTERNAL MAN-MADE RULES</u> (v. 12-16)

II. Spiritual Defilement is a <u>MATTER</u> of the <u>INSIDE</u> Not the <u>OUTSIDE</u> (v. 17-18)

III. Spiritual Defilement is <u>MANIFESTED</u> by the <u>POLLUTION</u> That Comes Out of the <u>HEART</u> (v. 18-20)

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The key thought in verses 10-20 centers around the word *"defile"* which occurs five times in verses 11, 18, and 20.

To be *"defiled"* is to be contaminated, to be polluted. When you are defiled, you feel unclean, unholy, ungodly. You feel dirty, stained.

V. 10
"He called the multitude" - After being confronted by a select group of Pharisees and Scribes, Jesus brings the hot issue out to the general public -- to teach them a vital lesson lest they fall into the Pharisees and Scribes' trap.

"Hear and understand" - Hearing is of no value if you don't comprehend.

Jesus' call to listen carefully and to pay close attention introduces a message of great importance (MacArthur, p. 457).

V. 11
In the context, the Pharisees and Scribes were accusing Jesus' disciples of violating their sacred tradition and defiling themselves by eating with unwashed hands (unceremonially impure hands) (15:2).

True defilement as God sees it does <u>not</u> occur when a little dirt goes down the throat into the stomach. (Ill. My Granddaughter Margaret – Everything goes into the mouth; Sand, Dirt, Dog poop; you name it!)

"<u>Into</u> the mouth. . . <u>out of</u> the mouth" - It is <u>not</u> what <u>enters</u> your mouth that pollutes you, but what <u>exits</u> your mouth that pollutes you (James 3:6 - *"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."*)

It is not food that defiles (which will be a predominant false doctrine in the last days - I Tim. 4:1-5).

A man is <u>not made unclean</u> by things; (*"there is nothing unclean of itself"* - Rom. 14:14); he is made unclean because of his polluted heart. It is he himself who takes things and does unclean things with them.

***Hear and understand the true source of defilement.**

I. Spiritual Defilement is MISUNDERSTOOD by Legalists Who Base Spirituality on EXTERNAL MAN-MADE RULES (v. 12-16)

V. 12

"After they heard this saying" - When Jesus rebuked their tradition and teaching that one is not defiled by a failure to ceremonially wash his hands before eating. The truth often hurts!

Anyone who is easily offended reveals a lack of love for God's Word.

"*Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them"* (Ps. 119:165).

The disciples were no doubt worried that problems would result because of their master's bold repudiation of the Pharisees' tradition; they also were perhaps worried that because of Christ's contradiction of their tradition, the Pharisees and scribes would not come to trust in and follow Christ but would be repulsed and repelled from Him.

If God's truth drives anyone away, it is because they were not open to it.

Preaching the Bible "as it is to men as they are" will either:

--Drive away those whom God has not planted
--Draw together those whom God has planted

One thing is true, Jesus was not afraid of the Pharisees (cp. Mt. 23:13-30).

V. 13

Many religious teachers (like the Pharisees of old) look like a real "plant" for God. They appear to be "good seed." They may even be very religiously impressive or attractive (II Cor. 11:15).

However, unless God planted them, they will not remain. They either planted themselves or some other men planted them into ecclesiastical work, but God did not. He must call a man into the ministry.

"Shall be rooted up" - to be pulled up by the roots. Their semblance of stability will one day be removed. They, like "chaff," will be blown away (Ps. 1:4-6).

These *"plants"* are the "tares" that were planted by Satan, but will one day be *"gathered up and burned with fire"* (Mt. 13:40-42).

V. 14

"Let them alone" = Leave them; don't bother with them; i.e. don't associate with them, separate from them.

God's people have no business fellowshiping with religious leaders who have forsaken the Bible. The saved are not to work with those who hold man-made tradition as their authority. Unless they show an obvious openness to submit to Biblical truth, God's people should not waste their time debating them.

The command is *"Come out from among them"* (II Cor. 6:17), not "stay in among them."

They were blinded by their ***"tradition"*** (v. 3-9); by their man-made religious rules and regulations.

They can't see, and the ones they lead can't see. As Isaiah said, *"Their eyes they have closed"* (Mt. 13:14-15).

Only one who sees can lead the blind.

Before you seek to advise someone else, make sure you know the truth and can back it up with solid evidence in God's Word (Ja. 3:1).

V. 15

"Declare unto us this parable" - Clearly explain what you mean by verse 11.

V. 16

Even the disciples lacked spiritual discernment.

II. Spiritual Defilement is a MATTER of the INSIDE Not the OUTSIDE (v. 17-18)

V. 17

I am in favor of cleanliness in food preparation! Clean hands, clean utinsels, clean cooking environment etc. However, to conduct a religious ceremony by cleaning your hands in a finger bowl before each bite is quite extreme!

Quite bluntly, Jesus is saying: *"From the mouth to the belly into the sewer."*

What's the big deal about being concerned about that which is going to be purified (purged) in the stomach and intestines (Mk. 7:19), digested, utilized, and then emptied into the drain or latrine? It's not going to be ceremonially clean when it exits the body, so why be so unnecessarily worked up about it entering your body with ceremonial cleanness.

Whatever enters the mouth passes through the system and "comes out in human waste. [But] food never touches the heart" (Mk. 7:19) (Wiersbe, p. 54).

V. 18

Not only does what comes out of the mouth defile, but it reveals a defilement deeply rooted in the heart.

(EX: One vomits because of a problem in the stomach; so one speaks evil because of a problem with the heart) (SEE: Mt. 12:34-37)

Where is the problem. . . the black smoke pouring out of the exhaust pipe, or the motor with cracked rings?

The heart (*kardia)* refers to the innermost core of our being. Our thoughts, feelings, and decision-making ability; the control center for our intellect, emotion, and will. The seat of our motives. That which triggers our words, thoughts, and actions.

The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

Such teaching about God's concern for the heart should not have shocked the Jews, because in their Old Testament God said:

"The Lord looks at the heart" (I Sam. 16:6-7)
"Serve the Lord with all your heart" (Dt. 10:13)
"Circumcise your heart" (Dt. 10:16)

III. Spiritual Defilement is MANIFESTED by the POLLUTION That Comes Out of the HEART (v. 18-20)

V. 18

Note: that the word *"heart"* is singular, whereas the things that proceed out are in the plural (V. 18-19).

Reason: Many evil sins can come from the same heart.

What are the culprits that defile us? What villains march out of our hearts and defile us?

First on God's list of defiling sins is the sin of evil speech. The tongue is the first area that discloses (uncovers, reveals, manifests) the condition of our hearts.

Where your mouth is, that's where your heart is. One's mouth is a mirror (perfect reflection) of their heart.

"The mouth is the most dominant revealer of internal pollution, because it is through our words that hatred, deception, cruelty, blasphemy, and most other evils are most clearly manifest" (MacArthur, p. 458).

Sins of the Tongue:

--Gossip (reveals a hateful heart)
--Yelling (reveals an angry heart)
--Vulgarity (reveals a foul and vain heart)
--Boasting (reveals an arrogant heart)
--Criticism (reveals a jealous or unforgiving heart)

Eph. 4:29 -*"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."*

5:4 -*"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."*

V. 19

"Evil thoughts" come from the heart.

"And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Mt. 9:4).

In Gen. 6:5 it is recorded: *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*

"Evil thoughts" - Morally sinful thinking. *"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."*

Thoughts that defile:

1. Lustful thoughts (reveals a covetous heart)
   Lust = Adultery

2. Vengeful thoughts (reveals a vindicative heart)
   Anger = Murder

3. Vain thoughts (reveals an empty heart)

"You are not what you think you are; You are what you think"

"Murders" - to intentionally take the life of an innocent person.

--Abortion is murder
--Suicide is murder
--Homicide is murder

Murder is always motivated by what is in the heart. (anger, jealousy, selfishness, etc., are the catalyst to murder).

"Adulteries" - marital unfaithfulness (used of sexual affairs after marriage). This is such a serious sin that the Old Testament required the death penalty for offenders (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24).

"Fornications" - Used of sexual relations before marriage (I Cor. 7:20.

This word (*pornea*) would also include every form of immoral sex: homosexuality, bestiality; pornography, incest, rape, masturbation, etc.

"Thefts" = Stealing what does not belong to you.

Stealing reflects:
--a discontented heart (not satisfied with what you have)
--a covetous heart (envious of what others have)
--a deceptive heart (most stealing occurs in the secret or in the dark)
--a dishonest heart (does not believe in God's principle of *"work"*
- Eph. 4:28
- *"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth")*

"False witness" - Those who testify falsely; those who tell lies; those who twist the truth.

Lying and insincerity are related twins. Both are forms of hypocrisy. The intent of the heart is to deceive.

The motive for lying is most often selfishness (people lie for self-preservation, self gain).

You are never more like the devil than when you lie (Jn. 8:44 - *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."*)

A lie is never justified. It is never right to lie. Lies don't come in two colors either! A half truth is a whole lie.

"Blasphemies" - to slander or speak evil of:--God (the Father, Son, or Spirit)
--Truth (the Bible)

Such blasphemy shows that the person does not fear God!

Mark 7:20-23 gives a more extensive list of defiling sins (included are: covetousness, wickedness, lasciviousness [sensual lewdness], evil eye [envy and jealousy], pride, and foolishness).

CONCLUSION:

If you are unsaved, you need Christ to dwell in your hearts
(You need a new heart - Jer. 31:33 - But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people).

If you are saved:

1. Ask God to <u>purify</u> your heart

   Ps. 51:10 - *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."*

   (cp. Mt. 5:8)

2. Guard the <u>gates</u> to your heart

   Prov. 4:23 - *"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."*

   Eye gate - Ps. 119:37
   Ear gate

3. Feed the <u>Word</u> to your heart

   "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Ps. 119:11).

   "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rev. 12:2).

The reason we should be "undefiled" is so that we might:

--know the will of God (Rom. 12:1-2)

--be more like Jesus (Heb. 7:26)

--be usable for the Master (II Tim. 2:21)