



The Gospel of Matthew

Outward vs. Inward Defilement

Matthew 15:1-20 (pt. 1)

Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying,

“Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”

And He answered and said to them, “And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?”

For God said, “HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,” and “HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, LET HIM BE PUT TO DEATH.”

But you say, “Whoever shall say to his father or mother, ‘Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given to God,’

he is not to honor his father or mother.” And thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME.
BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.”

Matthew 15:1-9



Outward vs. Inward

Background

- the issue of “ritual purity”
 - *tradition of the elders* – the oral law developed by the rabbi’s to explain and apply the Law
 - *hand washing* – ceremonial washing to remove defilement before eating so the food would not become defiled



Outward vs. Inward

1. The Authority of God’s Word

- Jesus distinguishes between the word of God and the traditions of men
- Laws that go beyond Scripture often serve to invalidate the word of God



Outward vs. Inward

2. The Exposure of Hypocrisy

- outward forms of worship without a genuine heart of faith is “vain worship”

“Bring your worthless offerings no longer,
Incense is an abomination to Me.
New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies –
I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.”

I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me.
I am weary of bearing them.”

Isaiah 1:13-14

“I hate, I reject your festivals,

Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies.

Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them;

And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings.

Take away from Me the noise of your songs;

I will not even listen to the sound of your harps.”

Amos 5:21-23



Outward vs. Inward

2. The Exposure of Hypocrisy

- outward forms of worship without a genuine heart of faith is “vain worship”
- worship that conforms to the precepts of men and not God’s word is “vain worship”



Outward vs. Inward

Application

1. Beware of putting your trust in outward forms of religion while your heart is far from God
2. Beware of public expressions of worship devoid of heart engagement with God