


The Gospel of Matthew

Outward vs. Inward Defilement

Matthew 15:1-20 (pt. 2)



Outward vs. Inward

OT Background (Lev. 11-15)

- the category of “clean/unclean”
 - not a moral but a ritual category; what was “unclean” could not enter the sanctuary
 - dietary restrictions – symbol of Israel’s holiness; belonging to God and separate from the nations

And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, “Hear and understand.”

“Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”

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

But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up.

Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”

And Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain the parable to us.”

And He said, “Are you still lacking in understanding also?”


Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?

But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.

These are the things which defiled the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.”

Matthew 15:10-20



Outward vs. Inward

Principle:

- *“not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man”*



Outward vs. Inward

1. True defilement is not a matter of food

- by this statement Jesus is setting aside the uncleanness laws, including dietary laws, of the Old Covenant (c.f. Mark 7:19)



Outward vs. Inward

Jesus' Fulfillment of the Law

- “cleanness” laws, including food, were outward symbols of the greater reality that Jesus has inaugurated – renewal of God’s perfect order
- the distinction between Jew and Gentile portrayed in the dietary laws has been removed



Outward vs. Inward

2. True defilement is a matter of the heart

- evil words, thoughts and actions are what defile a person before God
- evil words, thoughts and actions come from the heart (the real self)
- man is inherently and pervasively corrupt



Outward vs. Inward

Implications

1. Man's great need is for a new or transformed heart not mere external regulations
2. Your words, thoughts and actions reveal your heart condition