

## When Cleanliness is next to Godlessness

### I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2-5 THRIVE. *Children @ Risk* - R&R. Crafters. REAL.
- B. Slide6 Concert @ CCBC, Dunamis. (concert/evangelistic/outreach). *Free rock concert. Free parking. Free Gospel.*
- C. Slide7-10 Read Notes:

### II. Slide11 **Intro:**

- A. Slide12 What do these phrases have in common? *Moderation in all things* (Aristotle, Doctrine of the Mean). *To thine ownself be true* (Hamlet). *God helps those who help themselves* (Aesop's Fable, Hercules & the Wagoneer). *The lion shall lay down with the lamb* (Is.65:25). *Cleanliness is next to Godliness* (John Wesley, quoted in 1 of his sermons, already in existence) *People often think they are found in Scripture*
  - 1. **They are not.** And actually I think we have here in our text today a case that shows the **opposite** to be true for this last phrase. So, I chose for my Title: Slide13 *Cleanliness is next to Godlessness.*
- B. Slide14 Once when I was in Sophia, Bulgaria I found a wonderful deal on an antique pocket watch. It looked old/rustic/cool...**buuut**, it only ran for a few days...*if that!*
  - 1. No matter how often I **wound it** or how many times I **changed the hands**...it just didn't help. **[it did have correct time twice a day!]**
  - 2. **The most important thing about a watch is to tell time.** So, what I learned that day, when it comes to watches...Slide15 what's most important is...**what's inside!**
    - a) This morning, Jesus challenges the religious leaders with what's most important. **Inside or outside? Mouth or heart? Washing hands or washing hearts?**
- C. **Outline:** The Delegation; The Degradation; The Defilement.

### III. Slide16 **THE DELEGATION (1,2) Pharisees & Scribes from Jerusalem**

- A. A **delegation** of religious leaders from Jerusalem travel about 100 mi to check Jesus out.
  - 1. Jesus ministry is **front page news** and has reached all the way down to Jer.
  - 2. These men **didn't** come to see if Jesus was the Messiah...**but instead** to find **a fly in the ointment**...& to this end...they were masters.

- a) **Slide17a** They could be straining their water & find the smallest gnat, **but** somehow miss the camel.
- b) They were majoring on minors...*straining out a gnat*, **while** minoring on majors... *swallowing a camel*. And being so busy with **small** details, they never dealt with **the important matters**. (Lev.11:4,23 **both** were forbidden as food)
- B. **Slide17b** This was not a matter of **personal hygiene** **but** of **religious ritual**.
1. They ate w/their hands so of course they'd wash up before a meal, **but** this was dealing with ***their prescribed ceremonial washing!***
- C. (3) **They wash their hands in a special way** (Mrk7:3) – literally means *w/the fist*. (Exact meaning unknown) Some think *up to the elbow* (Like a doctor, nurse, surgeon *scrubs in/up*)
1. **We should ask ourselves in what ways do we love tradition more than God?**
    - a) Maybe when we allow **politics** replace our **dependence on God**.
    - b) Maybe when we place our dependence on our favorite **political party leader** thinking they will become the way of accomplishing *the kingdom* here on earth.
    - c) Maybe when we believe *living good moral lives* can become **the way to God**.
    - d) Maybe when we believe worshiping God is about what we **do or don't consume**, **rather** than having love for God in our Hearts.
    - e) Maybe when we believe that how much we have **accumulated** equals how much God loves us. [**be careful of humanmade laws**]
- D. **Slide18a** **Traditions of the elders** – The Mishna at the end of the 2nd century said, ***Tradition is the fence around the Law.***
1. I think **the Law** needed protecting about **as much as a lion in a field** needs protection around him.
- E. During the late 2nd century AD, these **oral teachings** (*traditions*) were written down in what was called the **Mishnah** (a book w/6 divisions: agriculture, festivals, marriage, civil life, crime, & ceremonies)
1. To this was added a **commentary** called the **Gemara**.
  2. Together the Mishnah & the Gemara formed the **Talmud**.
  3. These contained **248** commandments (*thou shalt's*) & **365** prohibitions (*thou shalt not's*)

4. Slide18b As one Rabbi put it, The **Scriptures** are water, the **Mishnah** is wine; the **Gemara** spiced wine.<sup>1</sup>
- F. The Jewish Mishnah contained no less than **30 ch.'s** on *the cleansing of vessels*.
1. This Hand washing ritual came from the command for **priests** to wash their **hands** (Ex.30:19; 40:12). It was a reminder to come to God **clean** (i.e. w/clean hearts)
  2. All **pious Jews** started doing this about **200 yrs before** Christ.
  3. So, by Jesus day, it was *firmly entrenched as a requirement* for those who wanted to be clean.
    - a) They completely lost the original idea of **clean hearts**.

#### IV. Slide19 **THE DEGRADATION (3-9)** *When Lips supersede Heart*

- A. (3-6) Now Jesus gives an illustration of the point He just made.
1. Jesus will quote from **Isaiah** in vs.8,9, but 1st He'll pull from **Moses**...  
How can the Pharisees argue with the **Law & Prophets?**
- B. (5) **But you say...**
1. **Illustration:** You've seen many moms place a **very thin blanket** over their babies in their strollers (keep the sun off). But what would happen if they just kept placing **blanket after blanket**. It doesn't matter how **thin** these blankets are...the baby would **suffocate**.
    - a) Over the years the Pharisees had overlaid the **biblical teaching** w/vast amounts of *spoken teaching blankets & oral tradition blankets*.
    - b) Though admirable, the original aim of **protecting** the baby, became its **demise**.
- C. Slide20 **Corban** – Mark explains to his Roman audience this **Hebrew** word *a gift to God; devoted to God*.
1. If a son wanted to avoid his responsibility, of caring for his parents in later life, he simply needed to declare his money **Corban**...dedicated to God.
  2. So, by observing what **man allowed** they could avoid what **God required**.
    - a) **Ps:** Jesus is concerned about us taking care of our parents.
  3. And this was just 1 example of **many**, claimed Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> David Hewitt, Mark, pg.106.

D. Note the *digression* here: 4 layers of thin blankets that smother:

1. **Replacing** (8, heart for lips). **Neglecting** (3,4 God's commandments). **Rejecting** (6, God's commandments). **Invalidating** (9, in vain you worship Me).
2. What a **false confidence** **man's traditions** have given to so many **sincere** people. **Sincere**, but sincerely wrong.
  - a) **As if** what you do on the **outside**, will somehow change the **inside**.

E. (7) **Hypocrites** – You folks have turned religion into **play-acting**.

1. **We** are **hypocritical** when we talk about **love** but never love; Talk about **forgiving** but never forgive; Talk about **witnessing** but never witness.

F. (8) **Honor w/lips**, but not **heart** – Jesus says, *I'll tell you why My disciples don't keep your traditions* – Look what Isaiah said would happen when tradition takes the place of truth.

1. **Slide21** There is a **big difference** between **tradition & truth**...
  - a) **Tradition** is outward; **Truth** is inward. **Tradition** has to do w/ritual; **Truth** has to do w/reality. **Tradition** is something you keep; **Truth** is something that keeps you.
2. What a tragedy that **religious people** would ignorantly practice their religion & **become worse** for doing it.
  - a) Jesus doesn't say, *well as long as you're sincere!*

G. (8b) **Heart is far from me** – You can't **think** your way into the kingdom of God.

1. **Slide22** Christianity is a **rational** faith, a **reasonable** faith, but you do not get into the kingdom **head 1st**. You get into the kingdom **heart 1st**.<sup>2</sup>

H. **What traditions will we hand down to the next generation, yet consider them doctrine?**

1. We shouldn't pass on **Non-Essentials**; we must pass on **Jesus**.

V. **Slide23 THE DEFILEMENT (10-20)** *Think Internal not external; Think Potential b4 Actual*

A. The issue? **Outward** religious traditions vs. **Inward** living faith.

1. Imagine the disciples requesting of Jesus, *Lord, teach us to wash!*

B. **Sin is Internal** before it is **External** (10-18)

C. (11) William Barclay calls this is *the most revolutionary passage in the N.T.*

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<sup>2</sup> Jerry Vines, pg.130.

- D. Sin is **Potential** before it is **Actual** (19,20)
- E. Here Jesus gives us a catalogue of **13 ugly sins**. It is an X-ray of the human heart.
1. All of these sins lurk as a **potential** inside of all of us.
  2. So Jesus calls for **purity/holiness** on the **inside from** a changed **heart** from God
- F. **Slide24** In the forests of northern Europe & Asia lives little animal called the **ermine**, known for his **snow-white fur** in winter. *He instinctively protects his white coat against anything that would soil it.* Fur hunters take advantage of this unusual trait of the ermine. They don't set a snare to catch him, **but** instead they find his home, which is usually a cleft in a rock or a hollow in an old tree. They smear the entrance and interior with **grime**. Then the hunters set their dogs loose to find and chase the ermine. The frightened animal flees toward home **but doesn't enter** because of the **filth**. Rather than soil his white coat, he is trapped by the dogs and captured while preserving his **purity**. *For the ermine, purity is more precious than life.*<sup>3</sup>
- G. **Slide25a** Some, like the Pharisees of old, have a very **defective theology** of man & sin **and think** that man is intrinsically/inherently **good**???
1. And because of this they treated **symptoms** w/their *legalism*, **rather** than dealing w/the **root problem**!
  2. **Slide25b** Yes the bible deals with the **fruit** of sin; **but** better...it deals w/the **root** of sin. It doesn't only deal w/the **flow** of sin; **but** the very **fountain** of sin.
  3. **The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately/incurably wicked; Who can know it? - For the wages of sin (not sins) is death.**
    - a) **Slide25c** *We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners!*
- H. Spurgeon, If sin had not been **in** you, it could not have come **out**. All the trouble in the world does not put sin **in** the Christian. It brings it **out**.
1. You might think, *My wife makes me so angry!* – **But no**, anger was already there in your heart **&** this just gave it opportunity to come out.
- I. **So, what's the remedy?**

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<sup>3</sup> Our Daily Bread, April 21, 1997

1. It's not *education, culture change, social reform, nor revolution*, but *regeneration*.
  2. The **heart** can be purified only by **faith**.
- J. **Slide26a Wrap up:** Your choice: Keep polishing your broken watch; or receive a **new mainspring**, from **The Watch-Maker**, for your heart today.
1. **Slide26b** Ezek.36:26 **I will give you a new heart & put a new spirit** within you.
  2. **Slide26c** Any gospel which says only what **you must do** & never announce **what Christ has done...is no gospel at all!**
    - a) We **believe** with the heart, **love** from the heart, **sing** from the heart, **obey** from the heart, **give** from the heart, and **pray** from the heart. [www](http://www)
  3. We must constantly remind ourselves that **true religion** comes from **this new heart**.