

Cleanliness is next to Godlessness

I. Slide#1 **Announce:**

- A. **Slide#2 Haiti Fundraiser:** Christian Audio. A portion of proceeds will go to Teachers Conf.
- B. **Slide#3 Children at Risk:** 3pm, New Rm. 45min DVD on Human Trafficking in San Bernardino.
 1. S.B. District Attorney's office put together, esp dealing w/*Teenage Sex for Sale*.
 2. Did you know they have the **Players Ball**? It's an annual gathering/awards of pimps.
 - a) Just held the 38th annual on Dec 8, 2012 at the **Key Club, Hollywood, Ca.**
 3. Also filling dignity bags for Operation Safehouse.

II. Slide#4 **Intro:**

- A. **Story:** So I was placed on a case this week for jury duty. The D.A. questioned me. "Mr. Bell, being a religious man, it says somewhere in the Scriptures, I don't know where, but it says that there must be 2 witnesses to convict, but if we have 1 & its a sure thing, would you have a problem w/that?" I said no. He turned & walked away. I still had the mic. I said "would you like me to explain the Mosaic Law, & what Moses meant by that in Deuteronomy?" We all laughed. He said, "maybe afterward Mr.Bell." I said, "well you asked a preacher!"
 1. This was found in the bible, **but often** people quote things *from the bible*, when that **isn't** its source. People often think *Cleanliness is next to Godliness* is in Scripture. **It's not.** And I think I found a place that says the opposite, so I chose for my **Title:** *Cleanliness is next to Godlessness*.
- B. **Slide#5 Illustration:** Once when I was in Sophia, Bulgaria I found a wonderful deal on an antique pocket watch. It looked old/rustic/cool...**but**, 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...what's most important is...**what is inside!** * Slide#6 *
 - a) This morning, Jesus challenges the religious leaders with what's most important. **Inside or outside? - Mouth or heart? - Washing hands or washing hearts?**
 3. Keep in the back of your minds a few questions: **What is holiness any ways? Does Jesus ever ditch church, & if so when?**
- C. **Slide#7 Outline:** The Delegation; The Degradation; The Defilement.

III. Slide#8 **THE DELEGATION (1-5)** Pharisees & Scribes from Jerusalem

- A. (1) A **delegation** of religious leaders from Jerusalem travel about 100 miles to check Jesus out.
 1. Jesus ministry is **front page news** & has reached all the way down to Jerusalem.

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) **Slide#9** 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. 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) **In a special way** – literally means *w/the fist*. (Exact meaning unknown) Some think *up to the elbow*. (Like a doctor, nurse, surgeon *scrubs in/up*)
- D. **Slide#10 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. As one Rabbi put it, *“The Scriptures are water, the Mishnah is wine; the Gemara spiced wine.”*¹
- 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. **Slide#11 THE DEGRADATION (6-13)** When Lips supersede Heart

- A. (6) **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 David Hewitt, Mark, pg.106.

1. 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!*"
- B. (6b) **Heart is far from me** – You can't **think** your way into the kingdom of God.
1. **Slide#12,13** "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**."²
- C. (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.
- D. **I believe there are a great # of services that Jesus Christ would never attend.**
1. **Worship Music** - some would think of Him not attending because of "style, the volume, or lack of hymns". - **I'm thinking, no**, more like when a bunch of folks that have gotten together and are "**singing**" because, "thats what we do every week." **I think Jesus dismisses Himself. Do you think He sticks around to be polite?** "**You honor Me with singing on the outside, but you plan out your week on the inside.**"
 - a) **Do you think He sticks around for your worship if in fact you hold unconfessed sin & bitterness inside?**
 2. **How about Sermons?** What if the sermon is **a mini self-help seminar** on becoming a better you? That's moralism & its not helpful. - **Any gospel which says only what you must do & never announce what Christ has done...is no gospel at all!**
- E. (11) **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**.
- F. (10-13) **Now Jesus gives an illustration of the point He just made.**

² Jerry Vines, pg.130.

1. First Jesus quoted from **Isaiah** & now He'll pull from **Moses**...How can the Pharisees argue with the **Law & Prophets**?
- G. **Slide#14 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) **Oh, Jesus is concerned about us taking care of our parents!**
 3. And this was just 1 example of **many**, claimed Jesus (13).
- H. Note the digression here: *4 layers of thin blankets that smother*:
1. **Replacing** (7)(heart for lips); **Neglecting** (8)(God's commandments); **Then, Rejecting** (9)(God's commandments); **Invalidating** (13)(no effect regarding the Word of God).
 2. **Aren't these the steps of most "Cults"?** – Teachings that are built around a prophet or prophetess whose writings eventually **replace** the Word of God.
 3. What a **false confidence man's traditions** have given to so many **sincere** people.
 - a) **As if** what you do on the **outside**, will somehow change the **inside**.
- I. **So what is the balance or safe place with tradition?**
1. **Slide#15 Learn from what other Christian communities have learned over the years** (i.e. traditions of old)
 2. **Never put it on the same level as the bible.**
 3. **We must constantly differentiate between what is Scriptural & authoritative & traditions, which may or may not be relevant or helpful at any given time.**
 - a) (eg. **Scriptural** - the church meets weekly on the 1st day of the week. **But tradition** dictates time & location, & what we do when we meet)
 4. **Scripture is God-breathed; Tradition is man-made!**
 5. **Scripture is from God & is Authoritative & Primary; Tradition is from man & is secondary & must remain flexible.**
 6. **Traditions must always be subordinate to God's Word.**
 7. **We must constantly assess our traditions in the light of Scripture.**
- J. **Slide#16blank What traditions will we hand down to the next generation, yet consider them doctrine?**
1. Will we at Calvary require **the next generation** to **wear Hawaiian shirts**?
Lead worship w/an **acoustic guitar**? Use **aluminum communion trays**?
Have **male** worship leaders? Have a **Dove** as their logo?
 - a) **None of these are bad** (maybe Hawaiian shirts) **but will it be required of the next Calvary gen?**

2. One generation, **Your hair's too long**. The next generation, **Your hairs to short**, it makes you look mean, like a white supremacist.
3. We shouldn't pass on **Non-Essentials**; we must pass on **Jesus**.

V. Slide#17 **THE DEFILEMENT (14-23)** Think Internal not external; Think Potential b4 Actual

- A. The issue? – **Outward** religious traditions vs. **Inward** living faith.
 1. Slide#18 Imagine the disciples requesting of Jesus, **“Lord, teach us to wash!”**
- B. (15) William Barclay calls this “well-nigh the most revolutionary passage in the N.T.”
 1. Dr. Vincent Taylor said, “[Jesus’ pronouncement]...was destined to **free** Christianity from the *bondage* of legalism.”
- C. Sin is **Internal** before it is **External** (17-19)
- D. Slide#19a (19) It is the **heart** that must be changed. - External rituals cannot do that.
 1. The capacity for **fellowship w/God** is not spoilt by **outward things** like unclean hands **but** by **personal sin**.
 2. Prov.4:23 **Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.**
 - a) NLT **Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.**
- E. Slide#19b Sin is **Potential** before it is **Actual** (20-23)
- F. (21,22) 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.
 - a) Slide#20 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.***³
- G. Slide#21 blank (23) 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. 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 Our Daily Bread, April 21, 1997

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) “We are not *sinner*s because we *sin*; we *sin* because we are *sinner*s!”

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!*” – No, anger was already there in your heart & this just gave it opportunity to come out!

I. So, what’s the remedy?

1. It’s not *education, culture change, social reform, nor revolution*, but regeneration.

2. The **heart** can be purified only by **faith**.

J. Slide#22,23 Wrap up: Your choice: Keep polishing your broken watch; or receive a new mainspring, from **The Watch-Maker**, for your heart today.

1. Ezek.36:26 I will give you a **new heart** and put a **new spirit** within you; I will take the *heart of stone* out of your flesh and give you a **heart of flesh**.