

Matthew 15.1-20

Holy Hypocrites

Seen Jesus' CAMPAIGN of PREACHING and HEALING Cause a BIG STIR

Opposition from Jewish RELIGIOUS LEADERS INTENSIFIED

Controversies become SHARPER as Matthew's Narrative Moves Forward

- Dining

The Pharisees...said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Matthew 9.11

- Denial "Why do...your disciples not fast?" Matthew 9.14

- Days

The Pharisees...said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." Matthew 12.2

v. 1 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem...

COME from JERUSALEM: HQ – to SPY on Jesus > Sought to UNNERVE Him  
FOLLOWED Jesus CONSTANTLY LOOKING for Something to CRITICIZE

Matthew's THEN may NOT be CHRONOLOGICAL – Not sure of TIMING

Might mean THEN...let me Tell you THIS COOL THING about JESUS...

### 1. Conflict: Hands

v. 2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat."

Big Shocker!! PHARISEES CAUGHT some Disciples 'DIRTY HANDED'!

SO GLAD ZGC has Sunday School > Dangerous Sermon for KIDS to Hear

Would get Biblical Support for NOT WASHING their HANDS!

**WASHING: NOT for HYGIENE or OBEDIENCE to LAW > TRADITION!**

Jews WASH when Coming Home from MARKET, Defiled by Unclean Gentiles

The shadow of a Gentile falling across a dish or plate made it unclean.

Donald English

**RIDICULOUS: WHO CARES Dirty Handed Disciples > Jesus in House!**

**COMPLETE Denial / Ignoring of MIRACLES & MESSAGES of JESUS**

Tell people about GOSPEL – Greatest News in all of HISTORY

People say “Yeah, but I am Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran....” Who Cares!!!

Was Jesus married to Mary Magdalene? What about Abortion? Gay Marriage?

When we TALK about JESUS and SALVATION – HE is the MAIN Thing!

100’s of yrs BEFORE JESUS > LAW of God thru MOSES commanded...

PRIESTS had to WASH HANDS and FEET before Entering TABERNACLE

The LORD said to Moses, "Make a bronze basin, with its bronze stand, for washing...Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it... when they approach the altar to minister Exodus 30.17-20

WASHING before WORSHIP?...There’s a GOOD IDEA...*here at ZGC?...*!

GOOD INTENTION: Pharisees THEN NOBLE DEFENDERS of Israel’s Law

Sought to REMIND Nation > God’s HOLY, ELECT People – SEPARATED

By 2<sup>nd</sup> C BC Many DEVOUT Jews – Not Just Priests – Began this Practice

Did RITUAL WASHING before their MORNING PRAYERS

“Blessed by Thou O Lord, King of the universe, who sanctified us by thy laws and commanded us to wash the hands. 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC Jewish Benediction for Laymen

DEGENERATED > Source of Spiritual PRIDE and RELIGIOUS ISOLATION

Then IDEA Expanded – (LEGALISM has Voracious Appetite) to ALL MEALS

Washed – HANDS – CUPS – PITCHERS – even the KETTLE!

METICULOUS Detailed Instruction about HOW to Wash Hands PROPERLY  
SOUNDS like Nit-Picking between BAPTIST & PRESBY on Waters of Baptism

If a man poured water over the one hand with a single rinsing, his hand is clean; but if over both hands with a single rinsing, Rabbi Meir declares them unclean unless he pours over them a quarter-log or more” Mishnah, Yadaim 2.1

Pharisees BURDENED and JOYLESS because of LEGALISM > Fruit: DOUBT

## 2. Control: Authority

DIRTY HANDS --- just TIP of Iceberg of DEEPER ISSUE...

a. Tradition v. 2 “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders?”

He who expounds the Scriptures in opposition to the tradition has no share in the world to come. Rabbi Eleazer

It is a greater offense to teach anything contrary to the voice of the Rabbis than to contradict Scripture itself. The Mishna, a collection of Jewish traditions in the Talmud

Saul of Tarsus: “I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was *extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*” Galatians 1.14

We all HAVE Traditions > LIFE Needs them for ORDER and EFFICIENCY  
Welcome to ZGC – Farwells, Welcomes, Greetings, Call to Worship, **Sermon!!**  
Church says have NO TRADITION! – **No Tradition becomes their Tradition**

QUESTION > Do Traditions SERVE Scripture or SUBSTITUTE for It?

NOT Just an ANCIENT DANGER > PRESENT Problem in Church TODAY  
Remember Stories in a SERMON > FORGET SCRIPTURE trying to EXPLAIN

NOT Need to TITHE when Money get is Already-Tithed MISSION GIFTS

Not need to READ BIBLE Devotionally – Studying for Teaching or Preaching

Not need to BELONG to Church in Foreign Country on Mission Service

## b. Trade Down

### 1) Reject God's Word

v. 3 “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?”

Nothing Jesus ever said was as radical in terms of the religion of his day and all human thoughts about religion and true worship as what he told the Pharisees, crowds, and disciples in the first half of Matthew 15. James Boice

Same issue Treated Extensively in Acts, Galatians, Romans, 1 Corinth, Hebrews

AT STAKE: View of GOD HIMSELF & WAY of SALVATION – Critical Issue  
Following JESUS > Demands DIFFERENT View of God, Our Selves, Salvation

### 2) Rules made by Men v. 9 “teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”

In areas where the Law was silent the tradition was vocal... The result was a vast legal complex, oral in form but definite in formulation William Lane

MANY People LIKE Life MORE SIMPLE, Less Thinking, CLEAR Boundaries  
Some Love AUTHORITARIAN Leaders > DICTATE how to THINK and LIVE

Next Door our Apt in Almaty, KZ was Jehovah's Witness / Kingdom HALL  
PACKED with People – Almost EVERY DAY of the Week

More KAZAKHS are Jehovah's Witnesses than EVANGELICAL Xtians

Flash Back to USSR – Someone clearly in CONTROL, Telling WHAT to DO

Evangelical Pastors – “different opinions...let the Lord lead...harmony...”

JW’s – ONE Way Only Way OUR Way – SHARIA Law of Christendom

### 3) Robbed God’s Word of its Power

v. 6 So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.

Perhaps Pharisee’s THOUGHT were PROTECTING Law > Really Weakened

<b>PHARISEES</b>	<b>JESUS</b>
Man’s Traditions	God’s Truth
Outward Forms	Inward Faith
Legalism	Liberty
Many Rules applied by Legal Scholars	General Principles applied by Holy Spirit
Outward Rituals	Inward Holiness
Neglect, Replace the Word	Exalt and Explain the Word

Unfortunately, there are many “evangelical traditions” in churches today, man-made teachings that are often considered as authoritative as the Word of God – even though they contradict His Word. By obeying these traditions, Christians rob themselves of the power of God’s Word. Warren Wiersbe

#### c. Themselves

**MOST SERIOUS Issue for Pharisees: Jesus DISregard of Their AUTHORITY  
And THEIR ROLE as CHIEF Interpreters of LAW of God for Society & Nation**

v. 2 “Why do *your* disciples break the tradition of the elders?”

**YOU’re RESPONSIBLE for their Bad Behavior, Jesus is CARELESS LEADER  
As He Questioned ORAL LAW he brought DOUBT on THEM & their RULE**

TRUE Power in hands of INTERPRETERS and IMPLEMENTERS of Law  
 Make Law in CAPITAL will it be IMPLEMENT in Far Reaches of NATION?

Jesus said: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat...they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see" Matthew 23.1-5

Replaced GOD'S LOVE with SELF Love / God's LAW with Man's Tradition

#### d. Truth Exposed

Washing Hands NOT required by OT - Important part of Pharisees' Teaching  
 Jesus EXPOSED their Highly Revered teaching as Radically Wrong

NO Attempt to Excuse Disciples – Busy crossing Lake, No Time, Opps Forgot!  
 NOT Even a POLITE Debate - "...washings; why think they're so important?"

Instead, He Attacked Pharisees Forcefully & Directly

Entire understanding of Religion was Wrong, Hearts were "Far From" God

Pharisees CLAIM their Authority reached all the way back to MOSES

Jesus sees HOW CAREFULLY they Follow COMMANDS Moses Gave > 5<sup>th</sup>

vs. 4-6 For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God"'

Jesus refers to FORMULA of Dedication used by the Jews then

**Corban** – Devoting something from normal use to sacred use. NOBLE THING

Person Makes VOW > Then All FUNDS are DEVOTED to GOD

Loop Hole - Property REMAINS in YOUR HANDS, You BENEFIT & ENJOY  
 THEN Parents NEED HELP > Priest's say NO! Is CORBAN – Not for Them

v. 6 ‘...he need not honor his father’ – KIDS!! Do NOT get any IDEAS Now!

Thanks to LEGAL Loop Hole: ESCAPE Duty to BOTH God & to Parents

v. 6 So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God

Jesus NOT saying HEY, WE'RE BOTH Wrong – Both Law Breakers!!

Not at All! Jesus IGNORES a Silly Rule Made by MAN

Pharisees IGNORE SACRED Scripture breathed out by Living God

### 3. Center: Hearts

CALLED Crowd to TEACH New IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE

v. 10 And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand...

CROWDS would be INTERESTED: Much of Life run by RULES of Pharisees

Gov't Announces TAX INCREASE > Lots of PEOPLE begin TALKING

Authoritarian Control of Religious Leaders, Oppressive Atmosphere over all Life

#### a. Determinative

Pharisee: MOTHER of DEFILEMENT, EXTERNAL: Sin thru Physical Contact

Assumed THEY were PURE, SINLESS > by their Meticulous SEPARATION

May APPEAR Devout > HEARTS are FAR from God

vs. 11,18 “...it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person”

Jesus DISTINGUISHED between the STOMACH and the HEART

FOOD NEVER enters a Man's HEART

SEMITIC World: HEART is CENTER of Human Personality, Directs all of Life  
Above all else, guard your *heart*, for it is the *wellspring* of life. Proverbs 4.23

v. 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? --- **TMI Jesus!! Too Much Information**

FOOD is DIGESTED, But SIN DEFILES/ Food DEPARTS but Sin DESTROYS

v. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

Washing concerns HANDS > MORE Important Issue WORSHIP of the HEART  
Jesus goes on OFFENSIVE > They're NOT Protecting LAW – POLLUTING It!

vs. 7,8 You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ““This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me...”

Hypocrite – Actor's MASK / LIPS said one thing > HEARTS said Another

## b. Desperate

v. 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.

The evil in our desires usually does not lie in what we want; but that we want it too much...every one of us, from his mother's womb, is an expert at crafting idols... *The human heart is a factory of idols* John Calvin

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?  
Jeremiah 17.9 KJV

v. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.



The world's major pollutant is words... Words are the toxin of today. Our bad words show our bad heart. Douglas Sean O'Donnell

SIN is NOT SOCIETAL – Cannot BLAME BAD PARENTS, Schools, Friends  
 NOT GENETIC – People are Not BORN Gay, Drunk  
 NOT Superficial – ONLY OUTWARD, Cannot be WASHED AWAY

Knowing God without knowing our own wretchedness makes for pride. Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair. Knowing Jesus Christ strikes the balance because he shows us both God and our own wretchedness. Blaise Pascal

### c. Details

vs. 12-16 Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.” And he said, “Are you also still without understanding?”

The disciples...like most Jews at the time, held the Pharisees in high regard and wanted to be certain of exactly what Jesus had said that offended them so badly. D.A. Carson

Disciples: CLOSER Relationship to Jesus than Crowds but Lacked INSIGHT  
 Disciples SURPRISED! THEY TOO has FALSE View of Sin and Righteousness  
 Like CROWDS – were FOOLED by SUPERFICIAL PIETY of Pharisees

Jesus must have FELT VERY ALONE > Opposed by Religious Leaders  
 Doubted by His Family - Followed by Crowd for Wrong Reasons  
 Leading Disciples who Partially Understood, SOMETIMES!

Pattern in Matt – Jesus' Public Proclamation followed by Private Explanation  
 Matthew describes HOUSE as Place of Rest and Revelation

IMPORTANCE of SMALL Groups: We need Encouragement & Enlightenment:

*“What was BLAIR getting all sweaty about last Sunday??!”*

#### 4. Church: All Peoples

a. Fractured World Matthew writes on TWO Levels:

1. Historical Event of Jesus confrontation with Jews
2. Relevance to Jews & Gentiles in Early Church

Matthew INTERPRETS Jesus for the CHURCH of his Day

CHALLENGE of Early Church: BE ONE Church > True Unity of Jew & Gentile

Jewish APOSTLES Raised on LAWS of SEPARATION from Leviticus 11

Peter still kept KOSHER Household TEN YEARS after PENTECOST

Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." Acts 10.14

Church in ROME > Struggled with MEAT Sacrificed to TEMPLE IDOLS

Paul EXHORTS: Apply PRINCIPLES of Jesus: Focus on HEART, Not Stomach

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit Romans 14:17

Jesus teaches there are two places to look for spiritual purity or impurity – the heart and the mouth (not the hands or the stomach). But notice that Jesus does not speak of the good things that come out of human hearts...

Douglas Sean O'Donnell

c. Washed and Free!

Even as Christians we want MORE LAWS and RULES to Follow

Last Sunday preached to INDO Cong. Afterward had Q & A

Can we go to CLUBS? Watch this TV Show?

VERY BUSY week checking out NEW CLUBS with New INDO Homies

Jesus response to BAD LAW was Not MORE Law

Law can be like Training Wheels on Bike / Guard Rails on Super Highway

Help us BE SAFE and GO STRAIGHT – but NO POWER to SAVE

God wants our LOVE from the HEART to lead to OBEDIENCE

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. *Love* the LORD your God with all your *heart* and with all your soul and with all your strength. These *commandments* that I give you today are to be upon your *hearts*. Deuteronomy 6.4-6

My ANSWER to Lifestyle Questions – Check Commands and Conscience

Some Behavior CLEARLY Forbidden / Lots of Life has NO Bible Verse on it

Ask the Lord for a CLEAN HEART and CLEAR CONSCIENCE

Jesus, “Cool New Show, pull up a Chair and Watch it with Me!!”

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

Going to CLUB for Glory of God, Advance the Gospel, Build up Brethren?

Need to Reach People in Clubs – Too Loud in Clubs to HEAR the Gospel

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139.23,24

PROBLEM of 1<sup>st</sup> C Pharisees TOO CONCERNED about Law & Behavior

Problem of 21<sup>st</sup> C Evangelical Church Not Concerned ENOUGH about LAW

After this dialogue the breach between Jesus and the scribal establishment is irreparable.

R.T. France

Jesus has SHAMED them, they will find the BEST WAY to SLAY Him!

EVIL Plan will lead to Eternal Plan of God UNFOLDING –

Their ANGER will lead to ATONEMENT

Terrible DEED of Killing Jesus will DELIVER Terrible Sinners

DEATH on Cross will be Swallowed Up by POWER of the Resurrection

Believing in God's Gift in Jesus – NOT Being by being RELIGIOUS

Our Hands and Hearts are DIRTY – God makes ALL Things New in Christ

GOOD NEWS of GOSPEL > God gives HEART TRANSPLANTS in JESUS

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. *Ezekiel 36:26,27*

Jesus taught that God graciously saves sinners. But the Pharisees argued, if that is so, men will live as they please; they will flout the law of God and still be able to enjoy the salvation of God. If only they had been able to see their own hearts clearly they might have seen the reverse is always the case: it is the man who has been accepted by God's grace who devotes the rest of his life to pleasing him. The man who has no assurance that he is accepted by God will always live a lie, pretending to be better than he is – either before God or men. Sinclair Ferguson

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Matthew 15.<sup>1</sup> Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,<sup>2</sup> “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.”<sup>3</sup> He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?<sup>4</sup> For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’<sup>5</sup> But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,”<sup>6</sup> he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.<sup>7</sup> You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:<sup>8</sup> “‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;<sup>9</sup> in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”<sup>10</sup> And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand:<sup>11</sup> it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.”<sup>12</sup> Then the disciples came and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”<sup>13</sup> He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.<sup>14</sup> Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”<sup>15</sup> But Peter said to him, “Explain the parable to us.”<sup>16</sup> And he said, “Are you also still without understanding?<sup>17</sup> Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled?<sup>18</sup> But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.<sup>19</sup> For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.<sup>20</sup> These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”