



Matthew 15:1-20

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING: SEEING THE HEART

The **heart** is the center of life...the core of being...the spring of action. The **heart** suggests, resolves, designs and sets the whole train of life in motion. The **heart** gives the impulse and the force, and yet out of the **heart**, thus initiating and working, proceeds all this mischief of sin. By the **heart** is meant mainly the affections, but it often includes the understanding and the will, it is, in fact, the man's vital self. Sin is not an extra that comes to us and afflicts us like robbers, breaking into our house at night, but it is a tenant of the soul, dwelling within us as in its own house. This evil worm has penetrated into the kernel of our being, and there it abides. Sin has intertwined itself with the warp and woof of our nature, and none can remove it but the Lord God Himself. As long as the **heart** remains unchanged, out of it will proceed that which is sinful... The nest in which sin is born and nurtured is the **heart** itself, we always carry about with us by nature that which will surely be the cause of sin unless we look well to it, and cry daily for grace to conquer it. This evil nature of ours is an always present danger; it is a powder magazine which at any moment may explode. **Oh! For grace to keep our hearts with all diligence!** (Proverbs 4:23) —Charles H. Spurgeon

The Messiah has come. The kingdom has been offered. The nation has rejected it. Thus, beginning in Matthew 13, there is a shift in Jesus' teaching and in His ministry. Though Jesus will continue to minister to the multitudes, His focus is now on training His disciples.

Jesus has taught His disciples several key truths in Matthew 14:

1. We live in an immoral world.
2. We face an impossible task.
3. We have an omnipotent Savior.
4. We can easily be side-tracked by popular movements.
5. We will encounter fear-producing storms in life.
6. We can walk on water if we keep our eyes on Jesus.

In 15:1-20, Jesus trains His disciples with two more key truths.

1. WE MUST BEWARE OF THE DANGERS OF RELIGIOUS _____ (15:1-14).

Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

- Focusing on the _____ more than the _____.
- Focusing on _____ more than _____.

The question of ritual purity has arisen in various ways already... Jesus has touched a leper...visited Gentile territory with its herd of pigs...touched a dead body, and... [had] social involvement with "tax collectors and sinners"... The present discussion, therefore, though introduced by what seems to us a relatively trivial objection, went to the heart of Jesus' ministry.

—R. T. France

A man is rarely to be found, who pays an excessive attention to human inventions in religion, who does not put more trust in them than in the grace of God.

—Martin Bucer (1491-1551)

Mishnah (AD 70-200). A collection of rabbinical oral law believed to be passed down from Moses' day.

Gemara (AD 200-500). Additional comments on the Mishnah by rabbis in Israel and in Babylonia.

Talmud. The Mishnah and Gemara together. There are two versions: the Jerusalem Talmud (AD 400) and the Babylonian Talmud (AD 500).

- Focusing on _____ more than _____.

- Focusing on _____ more than the _____.

“These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship of Me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.” (Isaiah 29:13)

- Focusing on my offended _____ instead of responding to God’s revealed truth and receiving His redeeming grace.

2. WE MUST ALWAYS SEE THE ABSOLUTE _____ OF THE HEART (15:15-20).

Jesus’ teaching in these verses would be mind-blowing to the Jews of His day. He essentially abrogated the Jewish dietary laws and their entire understanding of ritual cleanness (cf. Mark 7:19). Ultimately it is not what is outside us that defiles us; it is what is inside (the heart).

- My _____ reveal my heart.
- My _____ reveal my heart.
- My _____ reveal my heart.
- Thus, my greatest need is for a _____ heart (Ezekiel 36:26).

My Personal Response:

- In what ways can I tend to think and act like a religious legalist?
- What do the words coming out of my mouth reveal about my heart?
- Am I truly willing to let God expose, cleanse, and change my heart?

The Corban practice [Mk. 7:11] was that of pledging money or other material resources to the temple to be paid upon one’s death.

These funds could therefore not be transferred to anyone else but could still be used for one’s own benefit while one was still alive.

—Craig L. Blomberg

What you are in public never blinds God to what you are in private.

—John Blanchard

Pride is a burden. The labor of self-love is a heavy one indeed. Think for yourself whether much of your sorrow has not arisen from someone speaking slightly of you...

The heart’s fierce effort to protect itself from every slight, to shield its touchy honor from the bad opinion of friend and enemy, will never let the mind have rest.

—A.W. Tozer

An ignorant and unfaithful ministry is the greatest plague God can send amongst a people.

—Matthew Poole (1624-79)

Although it may not seem so now, this passage, when it was first spoken, was well-nigh the most revolutionary passage in the NT.

—William Barclay

We have within us the beginning of every sin under heaven.

—J. C. Ryle

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 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.

—Ezekiel 36:25-26