

**MATTHEW (THE KING, HIS KINGDOM AND ME)
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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 26 – A Matter Of The Heart

MONDAY

OPEN

We're living in a culture today that is very, very interested in what we're putting into our mouths. As a matter of fact, a number of best sellers are books that have to do with dieting. They have to do with eating. Why? Because we're consumed with our bodies. And yet the problem today is we are not concerned about our hearts. We don't care about what's coming out of us. We care more about how we look. And that's why our culture's in trouble. We'll talk about it.

PART ONE

Jesus and His disciples got in a boat and came across the Sea of Galilee, to Gennesaret. As usual the word spreads. The crowds knew that He was here, and many followed Him just hoping that they might touch the hem of His garment, the tassels on His cloak, so that they might be healed. Well the Pharisees and the scribes heard about it and they came up from Jerusalem,

up to the Galilee. And it says in Matthew chapter 15, **“Then some [of] the Pharisees and [the] scribes came to [Him] from Jerusalem and said, ‘Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.’” (Matthew 15:1-2)** Once again they are upset with Jesus. Once again they are trying to trap Him. Once again they are trying to discredit Him. And so they’re saying, “Why is it that Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They eat bread without washing their hands.” You know, as you go around the Galilee, as you go around Israel, and you go into many restaurants, and I was in a grocery store today here in Israel, and there up at the top of that grocery store there was a cup with two handles, a cup with two handles where, if someone was going to eat something and they were an Orthodox Jew, they would take that cup and rinse one hand and then use the handle to rinse the others. It’s a ceremonial washing. Well this was a washing that the elders had come up with as part of their tradition of serving God. And so the Pharisees and the scribes are very upset with Jesus because they notice that the disciples just pick up bread and eat it without going through a ceremonial washing. “[Jesus] **answered and said to them, ‘Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?’” (Matthew 15:3)** I love it. It’s Jesus’ style. Usually He does not answer their question. Rather, in turn, He returns a question back to them to show them where they are, to show them what their status is when it comes to righteousness. And so He says, **“...Why do you yourselves transgress...,”** now listen to what He says, **“...the commandment of God...?”** That’s the Law. You could draw a Ten Commandment kind of symbol right there. **“...Why do you ... transgress the [the Law, the Torah] for the sake of your tradition?” (15:3)** Now “tradition” is going to become a key word here. And so what you want to do is you want to mark it. I simply underlined it in a squiggly little orange line. And then He goes on to say, **“For God said, ‘Honor your father and [your] mother,’ and...‘He who speaks evil**

of father or mother is to be put to death.” (Matthew 15:4) They were to be stoned. He’s quoting Exodus chapter 21 verse 17 and Leviticus chapter 20 verse 9. He takes two Scriptures and puts them together and they have nothing to do with the tradition of eating and washing your hands because it’s not in the Word of God. But what He wants them to see is here they are, and they’re supposed to be the teachers of the Law. They’re supposed to uphold righteousness, and yet what they are doing is they are literally, in a sense, breaking the Law to keep the tradition. You say, “Well how are they breaking the Law?” Well He’s going to show them. He’s saying, “You’re breaking the Law when it comes to your parents.” Now we know that Exodus, the Law, said that they were to **“Honor your father and your mother....” (Exodus 20:12)** That’s one of the Ten Commandments. And then in Exodus chapter 21 verse 17 he’s explaining that Law. What he does is, he gives the basic Ten Commandments in Exodus chapter 20. And then after that he begins to explain that. He begins to give the details. And so he says that [“Whoever speaks evil of the father or the mother is to be put to death.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 15:4) And he says that in Leviticus chapter 20 verse 9. He says, **“But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever I have that would [have helped] you has been given to God,’ he is not to honor his father or mother. And by this you [have] invalidated the word of God [by] ...your tradition.’ ” (Matthew 15:5-6)** In other words, He says “Okay, here’s the Word of God. Here is your tradition. And so what you say to your parents when you’re supposed to honor them, when you’re supposed to care for your parents, when you’re supposed to protect them and shield them and treat them with great respect and care and love,” He’s saying, “You’re saying, ‘Okay.’” **“Corban”** is the word. **“Corban:”** I have taken this and I have dedicated it to the Lord. And because I have dedicated it to the Lord it cannot be used for my mother or for my father.” Now what had happened was the Jews had come up with this tradition of corban, or taking something and dedicating it to God in order to

protect it. And so they would have what their parents needed. They would say, “corban” over it and they would keep it in their house and continue to use it and have the benefit of whatever that was. It might have been a chair. It might have been a bed. It might have been money. It might have been perfume. It might have been food or whatever, and they just say, “corban” so then it’s dedicated to God. And because it’s dedicated to God it cannot be given to their parents, so they’re free. It’s just like what happens in the land right now. God told the Jewish people that every seven years they were to give the land a Sabbath rest. Okay, so they don’t do that anymore. Now this is why they had to go into captivity for 70 years, because for 490 years they had not given the land a rest. So what do they do in Israel now? They take the land and the seventh year they rent it out to an Arab who in turn can use the land. It’s something that is a tradition that helps them escape the Law. And this is what these people were doing. So he says verse 5; let me read it to you again. **“But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,’ he is not to honor his father or...mother.’ And by this you invalidated the word of God....” (Matthew 15:5-6)** And I would mark the “Word of God” there, like we mark it with an open Bible, **“...for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites [you hypocrites], rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you.” (Matthew 15:6-7)** And then He quotes Isaiah 29:13. **“This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain [in vain] do they worship Me....” (Matthew 15:8-9)** Their worship of Me is empty. It is useless. It is invalid teaching because they’re **“...teaching as doctrines....,”** now listen carefully, **“...the precepts of men,” (Matthew 15:9)** not the [“precepts of God, by which we get understanding,”] (PARAPHRASE, Psalm 119:104) but it’s **“...the precepts of men. [And] after Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, ‘Hear and understand. It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds from the mouth, [that] defiles the man.” (Matthew**

15:9-11) So what does He do? Now He takes it back full circle. And He's going to take it back full circle because they're criticizing Him, because the disciples are eating their bread and they're not washing their hands first. And then He wants them to know, ["Listen, so you eat bread, you don't wash your hands. You take that bread into your body. That's not going to defile you. It's not what goes into the mouth that defiles you. Rather it's what comes out of the mouth that defiles you."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 15:11) And what was defiling them was their traditions. They were holding to the precepts of men, which they in turn overrode the Word of God, the commandment of God. Now as we look at this, Beloved, I want us to go back to Isaiah chapter 29, verse 13 because in Isaiah chapter 29 in verse 13 it's translated a little bit different. And I think that as we look at it here it'll go even deeper into our soul. It says in verse 13, **"Then the Lord said, 'Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service....'" (Isaiah 29:13)** In other words, it's what their mouth is saying. Their mouth is saying these words. They're giving lip service to Me. He says, **"...But they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me....,"** listen carefully, **"...consists of tradition learned by rote."** (Isaiah 29:13) In other words, it is just a performance. It is just a ritual. It is not something from the heart. It is not something that they are passionate about. Rather it is a routine. It is a ritual. Now the question is, Are you serving God out of ritual and routine and tradition or are you [loving Him with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength?] (PARAPHRASE, Deuteronomy 6:5) It's a matter of the heart. It's a matter of the heart. And it's a matter of the Word. And so you and I have to stop and think about what has happened to you in your worship of God? Are you going through the motions? Are you going through the routine? Can you stand up and say the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles Creed or whatever you do and look around and think about a hundred different things? Or is it from the heart? When the words come out of your mouth are they a matter of rote

and tradition or are they a matter of a passionate heart? We'll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

I'm standing on the shores of the Galilee and this is where Jesus would draw so many crowds. And after Jesus finished talking to the Pharisees who had challenged Him, because His disciples were eating bread without washing their hands, Jesus then turns and addresses the crowd. There's a lesson that He does not want them to miss. Now the Pharisees are going to miss it. I mean, their hearts are set against Jesus Christ. They do not want this man to rule over them. And yet there's a multitude listening. So many times I find that when I'm witnessing on a plane, or I'm standing in a public place sharing with one individual, that there are many around me that are listening. And I realize that my audience is bigger than I think. And what an opportunity that is to share with others what the Word of God has to say. Well that's what Jesus is about to do in verse 10 of Matthew chapter 15. It says, **"After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, 'Hear and understand. It is not what enters into the mouth that 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 does not plant [will] be uprooted.'**" (Matthew 15:10-13) Now their minds automatically should have gone back to the parable of the wheat and the tares. Remember, He told about the good man, the Son of Man that planted wheat in his field. But while he was asleep an enemy came and the enemy was the devil and he planted tares in the field. (See Matthew 13:24-30) And so what Jesus is saying is, He's taking that parable, He's taking this incident and the offense that the Pharisees are taking to the teaching of Jesus and He's tying them together. And what He's saying is this, **"...Every plant which My**

heavenly Father [does] not plant shall be uprooted.” (Matthew 15:13) At the end of the age, the wheat and the tares are going to be separated from one another. So then He makes this statement. **“Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind....” (Matthew 15:14)** They’re groping around in their blindness and the ones that they’re leading, that are behind them, are blind also and it’s just the [blind following the blind and both of them are going to fall into the ditch.] (PARAPHRASE, 15:14) **“[And] Peter said to Him, ‘Explain the parable to us.’ [And] Jesus said, ‘Are you still lacking in understanding also?’ Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach...?” (Matthew 15:15-17)** You put it in the mouth. It goes down the esophagus. It goes into the stomach. From the stomach it goes into the intestines. [“And from the intestines it’s eliminated.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 15:17) You put it in one end and it goes out the other. Don’t you understand that? And then He says, **“But the things that proceed out of the mouth....” (Matthew 15:18)** It’s not what goes into the mouth that’s important. That’s going to be eliminated. Rather it’s what’s coming out of the mouth that is absolutely crucial. And this is what He says. **“But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart....”** Now this is a very important Scripture. **“...Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.” (Matthew 15:18-20)** He says, “You’ve got to understand the heart in all of this. You’ve got to understand that it’s not what’s coming into the body and out of the body. Forget the tradition of the elders. Forget this tradition of washing the hands. It doesn’t mean a thing.” Rather, it is an issue of the heart. In Proverbs chapter 4, and I’d like you to go there if you’re able to in your Bible, because I think it’s an important Scripture. And by the way, I draw a heart over “heart.” It says in Proverbs chapter 4, verse 23, **“Watch over you**

heart with all diligence.” (Proverbs 4:23) Another translation says, “Guard” your heart **“...with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)** In other words, this is where your character comes from. It’s a matter of your heart. Your behavior is stimulated by your heart. You bear false witness against someone. Why? Because you’re angry with them or because you want to demean them, or because you want to make yourself look better, so you bear false witness against them. But it begins in the heart. And so Jesus takes this incident with the scribes and the Pharisees and turns it into an incredible lesson, not only for the crowd that was standing around Him that day, but for you and me, Beloved. We are to guard our hearts, for out of our hearts are the issues of life.”] (PARAPHRASE, Proverbs 4:23) And so we come back to Matthew. And as we come back to Matthew chapter 15 God’s word to you and to me today, Beloved, is this **“...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 [that] defile the man.” (Matthew 15:18-20)** When you look at our society today, what you see is you see a crooked and evil and perverse generation. Am I being nasty? No, I’m being realistic. Because what did we read? We read that it’s the things that come out of the heart that defile the man. And then He describes them. Evil thoughts; we’re full of evil thoughts. Murders; we are a society that not only murders physically, but we murder with our tongue. We destroy people. Adulteries; we are a generation of adulterers and fornicators. We are sexually immoral and we think nothing about being immoral. We are a society where you can’t trust anything because— and you’ve got to lock it up and you’ve got to have all sorts of security because everybody’s stealing. We’re a society of false witnesses, and perjury is done day after day even in the courts. We are a society of slanderers. And you hear it. You hear it from newscasters. You hear the innuendos as we cut people down. And what does it show you? It shows

you, Beloved, the status of the hearts of men and women, teens and even children. O Precious One, may you and I live differently. May we serve the Lord with a pure heart? Remember what we saw in the Sermon on the Mount. **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)** Ask God to cleanse your heart. Ask God to show you if there’s any deceitful or wicked way in you. And if there is get rid of it, Beloved, because if you don’t, it will defile you. It’s not what goes in the body and out of the body that’s really the issue. It’s what comes out of the heart. What is coming out of your heart? I’m going to examine mine. Will you examine yours?