Section: Stand Alone - Matthew 15:10-20

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Greeting:**

Well good evening! My name is Justin Ader and I have the privilege of serving here amongst this church body as one of the deacons, the youth director, and a member of the teaching team. Most of you probably know me by now, but if we have not personally met, it would be my joy to do so, so please feel free to come up after the lesson and introduce yourself. Tonight we are taking a break from the Word of Truth Catechism while our elders are away on their annual retreat. Each year our elders get time away to focus on strategic planning for the church, biblical study, prayer, rest and renewal. So please take a moment in your week to pray for them.

**Introduction:**

Tonight we are going to spend some time looking at the heart of man as we look to the Gospel of Matthew chapter 15 verses 10-20. Studying this passage is important because it teaches a foundational truth about the nature of sin and righteousness. In this passage we see an important truth and that is this: A person’s reception of God’s Word is determined by the condition of their heart. This is important for us as we evangelize the lost. If you have read the parable of the sower, you will understand this important truth. In the parable of the sower there are four different soils that are explained by Jesus. The first three soils—the hard path, the rocky soil, and the thorny soil—all represent people whose hearts are still dead in sin, separated from the triune God. The fourth soil—the good soil—represents people whose hearts have been regenerated by God the Holy Spirit to new life in Jesus Christ. So again, tonight we will be looking at the condition of the human heart and what defiles a person. So please open up your Bibles to Matthew 15. Matthew is the first book of the New Testament, just before Mark and after Malachi. We will be studying verses 10-20, but for context we will start with verse 1. Before we jump in:

Let’s Pray and ask God to give us ears to hear His Word. Pray with me.

Matthew 15:1-20 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 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,” he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. 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; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”

In verses 1-9 we see the context for what comes after when Jesus is about to teach the people and His disciples about what defiles a person. So let me take a moment to unpack what is going on here. In verse 1 we see who is on the scene here; some Pharisees, scribes, and Jesus. For those who don’t know, the Pharisees were an influential religious group within Judaism during the time of Jesus' life. Throughout the gospels we learn that they were hypocritical and proud opponents of Jesus. They were self-righteous and did not practice what they taught. Scribes were smart men who would study the Law, transcribe it (write down what was told to them), and they would write commentaries on it. Scribes would make copies of Scripture and took their job very seriously. The problem with the scribes was that they often went beyond Scripture and would add man-made traditions to what God has said in His Word. In verse 2 these Pharisees and scribes asked Jesus why His disciples break the tradition of the elders. The tradition that was broken was the washing of hands before eating. In Mark’s gospel it says that the Pharisees and all the Jews did not eat unless they washed their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they would come from the marketplace, they did not eat unless they washed. And there were many other traditions that they observed, such as the washing of cups, pots, copper vessels and dining couches. In verses 3-9 Jesus responds to them not by answering their question, but by calling out their hypocrisy. Jesus replied by asking them why they hold high their traditions over the direct commandments of God. Then He gives them an example by saying that God commanded in the Law for people to honor their father and mother, and anyone who speaks disrespectfully of their father or mother must be put to death. Jesus then essentially tells them that they say it is alright for people to say to their parents, “Sorry, I can’t help you. For I have vowed to give God what I would have given to you.” Jesus tells them that by saying this they are essentially saying that people do not need to honor their parents. By doing this, they ignore the Word of God for the sake of their tradition. Jesus then calls them hypocrites and tells a prophecy about them given by the prophet Isaiah which said: This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. You see, the Pharisees’ traditions were held in a higher regard than the Word of God, and Jesus called them out on it. Now look in your Bibles at verse 10-20 which we will study this evening.

Verse 10 And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.” 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? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

This evening I have 2 points to make, with the second point having 2 sub points, which are in your hand out notes:

1. **What Defiles a Person**
2. **The Condition of the Heart**
   1. **Dead Hearts**
   2. **Regenerated Hearts**
3. **What Defiles a Person**

Matthew 15:10-11 And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.”

The word defile simply means to make one unclean or impure. Jesus tells the people and His disciples that what goes into the mouth doesn’t make a person unclean or impure. Think about what goes into our mouths: Food and drink. The reason Jesus brought this up was because God gave the nation of Israel dietary restrictions, which we read about in the Old Testament. There were certain animals and parts of animals that were considered unclean and were not to be eaten or touched, otherwise you would be considered unclean (defiled). This list of unclean animals is found in Leviticus 11. We don’t have time to read it all, but some of the things that were prohibited in these dietary laws were pork, shrimp, shellfish, other types of seafood, most insects, scavenger birds, and various other animals. Those who did not follow this law were considered ceremonially unclean for a certain period of time and could not be in the presence of God. Should we still follow these dietary rules today? The answer is no. This dietary law was part of what we call positive law. Positive laws are laws and commands based on the will of God for a particular people, a particular purpose, and a particular time. The dietary rules were never intended to apply to anyone other than the Israelites. They were for a particular people (the Israelites), for a particular purpose (to make the Israelites distinct from other nations), and for a particular time (before Jesus fulfilled the law). This purpose ended when Jesus declared all foods clean in a parallel passage to ours today in the gospel of Mark.

Mark 7:19b Thus he declared all foods clean.

Even though Jesus declared all foods clean, some still struggled with this as we see with the apostle Peter in Acts; long after Jesus died, was resurrected, and ascended to Heaven. Peter is shown a vision from God to reach other people of different nations who in the Law would have been forbidden. In that vision, Peter is hungry.

Acts 10:9-15 The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.”

When Jesus died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament law. This includes the laws regarding clean and unclean foods. It is no longer about Israel as a nation being distinct from all other nations. The dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles has been broken down by Christ.

Ephesians 2:14-16 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

So now we have some context and can understand what Jesus means when He says that it’s not what goes into the mouth that makes a person unclean. All food is permitted for us to eat. A quick side note here is that Jesus is not teaching about stewardship of the body. In other words He’s not saying that you shouldn’t wash your dishes or your hands before you eat, or that you should feel free to eat whatever you feel like eating. He is specifically pointing to the fact that these external things are not the root of our defilement. But, in the second part of Matthew 15 verse 11 Jesus tells us what makes a person unclean. It’s what comes out of our mouths that defiles a person. What are some things that come out of our mouths besides occasional bad breath? Careless words, corrupting talk, crude jokes, swear words, our tone of language, and so on. A theologian of the past, John Gill, said, “It is sin, and that only, which takes its rise from the heart, lies in thought, and is either expressed by the mouth, or performed by some outward action, which defiles a man.” What comes out of our mouths shows the condition of our heart.

1. **The Condition of the Heart**
   1. **Dead Hearts**

Matthew 15:12-20 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? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

At this point in verse 12, Jesus had entered a house and left the people. Jesus was alone with His disciples in this house. The gospel of Mark tells us this detail. The disciples ask Jesus if He knows that what He said offended the Pharisees. Jesus doesn’t answer their question, instead He tells the disciples the truth about the Pharisees. These so-called religious leaders will be overthrown by God. Jesus calls them “plants” that His Father has not planted, therefore they will be uprooted and cast aside. This is harsh language, judgment type language. Those who do not belong to Jesus Christ will be uprooted and taken away.

John 15:1-2, 6 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

This is what Jesus is telling the disciples about the Pharisees, that they are false teachers. In verse 14 Jesus tells the disciples to ignore the Pharisees and leave them alone. Jesus calls the Pharisees blind guides which in the Old Testament meant that they had no knowledge of the truth. These Pharisees are spiritually blind and their hearts are dead in sin. They don’t belong to God. What they are doing in their teaching is leading other blind people to destruction. Jesus says that if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit. In verse 15 Peter asks Jesus to explain what He meant back in verses 10-11. Then in verse 16 Jesus asks the disciples why they still don’t understand. They have been with Him awhile and have seen many things and heard many teachings, but yet they were still not getting it. However, what’s cool to see here is that Jesus doesn’t dismiss them like He does the Pharisees. Jesus takes the time to explain to them what is meant by what He said previously. So let’s see it again.

Matthew 15:17-20 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

Jesus tells the disciples that it isn’t food that makes a person unclean. Food goes into the mouth, then travels into the stomach and is digested. After a time of digestion, it goes into the toilet. Food into the mouth and body only stays temporarily, and then it is gone. But, Jesus says that what comes out of the mouth, meaning our words and actions, comes from our hearts. Our hearts prove a person to be clean or unclean. If the words of our mouth show our heart to be unclean, our unclean condition is permanent—unless Someone delivers us from it. Jesus says that out of our hearts come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, and slander. Why is this? Why is the heart of fallen man so evil? This is what I want to discuss for the remainder of our time, so listen closely.

Sin has corrupted the heart of every man. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and everything on the earth, including mankind. God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and then formed Eve from the rib of Adam. This is how the first two humans were created by God.

Genesis 2:7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

Genesis 2:22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Adam and Eve were created good, blessed, and with no sin. They were in the garden of Eden and God gave them a command to not eat of one specific tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 1:31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Genesis chapter 3 is what we call the fall of mankind. It is where we see sin enter the scene. But what is sin? Sin is disobeying God; sin is any disobedience in heart or deed to God’s perfect law and commands. Disobedience in heart means to have the wrong state of mind, motivation, or desire behind what we do or feel. What motivates you to help the old lady to her car at the grocery store? Is it so she gives you thanks and recognition so that you feel good about yourself? This would be a sinful motive. Is it in faithful obedience to God’s good law to love your neighbor? Then it is not sin. Now, disobedience in deed means doing or saying what God forbids, or not doing or saying what God commands. For example: God commands us to not steal and if we do steal, we’d be sinning by being disobedient in deed. So how did sin enter into creation then if everything God had created, including Adam and Eve, was good? Satan, the chief of all fallen angels who opposes God, tempted and deceived Eve to disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit, then she gave it to Adam, and he also disobeyed God. Adam and Eve did not fully trust God’s word, so they were vulnerable to temptation.

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent (Satan) was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”

Genesis 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Some might still ask, but why does Adam’s sin affect everyone to ever live after him? It is because God chose Adam to act as the representative of the entire human race. With the test that God set before Adam, He was testing the whole of mankind. In this, Adam accurately represented us. The term we use for Adam being our representative is the “federal headship” of Adam. God chose Adam as the Federal Head (representative) of all mankind. Because Adam failed to obey God’s commands perfectly, all those he represented receive the results of his disobedience. Given God’s perfect wisdom, we can never argue that Adam was a poor choice to represent us. God’s choice of Adam as the first Federal Head was an infallible (perfect) choice; Adam represented us accurately. After the sin of Adam, all people (including you and me) are born dead in sin, born sinful by nature, enslaved to sin, and practice sin willingly and continually; therefore, all are due the just penalty of God’s perfect wrath. To say it more plainly, Adam's perfect representation means that if God chose any other man, they would have done the same thing. I would have done the same thing in Adam’s shoes. None of us would have done it differently no matter how much we like to think we would have. Adam perfectly represented us and therefore God is just to hold all born of Adam under Adam’s representation, guilty of sin.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

Not only is mankind cursed because of Adam’s sin, but also the rest of creation. Creation is cursed and broken because of sin. We see that all around us do we not? Droughts, hurricanes, earthquakes, dangerous animals, and so on. So after Adam and Eve sinned, they were kicked out of the garden of Eden. In the rest of Genesis we see sin getting worse and worse. We see Cain kill Abel—the first murder. Then we see God send a flood to wipe out all the people because of sin with the exception of Noah and his family who were saved by God and stayed on an ark that Noah built. God made a covenant with Noah, a promise to never flood the earth again. Next, we see that sin is still present, Noah and his family were not perfect, they still had a sin nature from Adam. Then we see Abraham come on the scene and God’s covenant with him. We then learn about Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Eventually we get to Moses and the law given to him as the Ten Commandments as well as hundreds of other laws that we see beginning in Exodus carrying on through Deuteronomy. You may be asking, what is law? Law is the requirements on man often expressed through commands that God has given. We often categorize these laws as the universal moral law (Natural Law) and positive law. The universal moral law are unchanging laws and commands based on the right and character of God, to which man is held accountable for all of life. Universal moral laws are written in the hearts of all people, leaving them without excuse in disobedience. This means that we all have no excuse not to follow God’s commands. We can’t say to God, well you made me this way. An example of the moral law can be found in the Ten Commandments or in Matthew 22 when Jesus summarizes the Ten Commandments into two, love God and love neighbor. Now, positive laws on the other hand are laws and commands based on the will of God for a particular people, a particular purpose, and a particular time like I previously mentioned. Again, an example of positive law would be in Leviticus where the Israelites were not allowed to eat certain things, like pork. This commandment was specifically for the nation of Israel as part of the Old Covenant statutes. These types of positive law do not apply to those in the New Covenant. Hear this clearly church, pork is ok for us to eat today and I am thankful for that because I love bacon! So let me ask the question, can mankind perfectly obey God’s law? The answer is no. Because of sin, fallen man cannot rightly obey God’s law. So why did God give the law then if we can’t obey it? Because God’s law displays His perfections and glory, informs all mankind what is required of us, and reveals our sin and our desperate need for Someone to deliver us from our sin. We as Christians need to know what the Law is because it is foundational to our understanding of the gospel, sanctification, and the character of God. The Law reveals God’s holiness and our sinfulness, it drives us to Christ, it guides our Christian life, it helps us discern right from wrong, it is key to the covenantal framework of the Bible, it informs evangelism, and it shapes our worship and church life. This is where we get to the good news—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

* 1. **Regenerated Hearts**

When God created the heavens and the earth, and everything on the earth, He wasn’t oblivious as to what would happen with Adam falling in sin. In fact, prior to this happening, the Triune God—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit—had a plan to redeem people. This is called the covenant of redemption. The covenant of redemption is the plan and decree made before creation between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit to graciously redeem the chosen ones from sin and punishment based on the work required of Jesus. All of creation is set in the context of this divine plan.

Ephesians 1:3-11 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

Jesus, who is God the Son, came over two thousand years ago to accomplish the work that was required of Him. He was conceived in the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born into the world. Jesus took on a human nature yet remained eternally, fully divine at the same time. This means that Jesus is one person, fully God and fully man. He came to establish the New Covenant which is the covenant by which God saves the elect—those chosen in eternity past to be saved. What makes Jesus’s life different from every other person? Three things: He is God the Son (none of us are), He doesn’t have a biological dad (all of us do), so he does not have an inherited sin nature, and He obeyed God’s law perfectly having never sinned (we sin daily). Where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded!

1 Peter 2:22 He (Jesus) committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

Jesus lived a perfect life and never sinned. Because of this He was the perfect sacrifice to satisfy God’s divine wrath towards sinners in place of His chosen people. Jesus was badly beaten, mocked, and murdered through a horrific, humiliating death hanging from a cross.

1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Jesus died on the cross for His chosen people. He did not die for everyone. When it says He bore ***our*** sins he is talking about we who are the elect. That is who Peter’s audience is, Christians, as stated in his greeting. We see this in Scripture, starting with Jesus’ priestly prayer.

John 17:9 I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

Jesus remained dead and in the grave, but on the third day He rose victoriously from the grave defeating both sin and death. Right now Jesus is alive, and His body is exalted in heaven, where He is preparing a place for His redeemed people and interceding for them in the presence of God the Father. This brings us to the question that I am sure we have all had or currently struggle with. If I am born spiritually dead in sin, separated from God because of my sin, how then can I be redeemed and reconciled back to God? The short answer is, only by the grace and power of God. We have talked about God the Father choosing individuals to be saved, and God the Son (Jesus) coming to accomplish the work required in order to satisfy God’s wrath, but we haven’t talked yet about the role of God the Holy Spirit in the salvation of sinners. Because of our spiritually dead hearts, we need the Holy Spirit to first give us new spiritual life and the gift of saving faith. The Bible says that none is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. The Bible also says that the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. What this means is that unless you are given a new heart with new desires, you will never pray a prayer of faith or ask Jesus to be your savior and Lord. We are desperate for a new heart, and I am not talking about the one beating in our chest right now. I am talking about a new desire, a desire that is not for sin, but for God. A person changes from being spiritually dead to spiritually alive by God’s will alone and according to His sovereign timing. The Holy Spirit causes each elect person to be born again, giving new life and saving faith in Jesus. We call this regeneration. Regeneration is new birth or becoming born again. Let me attempt to illustrate regeneration this way even though nothing on earth can compare to how God regenerates us: Imagine a dry, lifeless seed resting in the soil. At first glance, it appears dead—motionless, buried, and incapable of producing life on its own. Yet, unseen to the eye, something miraculous is happening. As water soaks into the soil, the seed begins to soften. Slowly, it cracks open, and from within, a tiny shoot emerges. Pushing through the dirt, it stretches upward toward the light, breaking through the surface as a living, growing plant. What was once seemingly lifeless has now been transformed into something vibrant and full of potential. This is like regeneration. Before Christ, we are like that seed—dead in sin, unable to bring forth life on our own. But when the Holy Spirit indwells a person, like water nourishing the seed, He softens our hearts, brings us to life, and causes us to grow in faith.

1 Peter 1:23-25 23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 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. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

A person is first regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and then they respond to the gospel in faith. The gospel—this good news of Jesus—is the means to salvation. Jesus, God the Son, came and took on flesh, lived a sinless life, died a horrific death, and rose victoriously from the grave in order to cleanse and transform our defiled hearts, something we could never do on our own. This is truly great news! In order to respond to this good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, you must first be born again with ears to hear this good news. It is only by grace that a person is saved through faith. It is not your own doing, but it is the gift of God. Just as Adam is the head of all who are dead in sin, Jesus is the new federal head for all whom God grants saving faith. If you have been saved, you have a new federal head - Jesus!

**Application:**

Matthew 15:10-20 focuses on Jesus’s teaching about what truly defiles a person—not external rituals like handwashing, but the condition of the heart. As we prepare to close, allow me to share some points of application with us all so that we can put to work what we learned in this passage of Scripture dealing with the heart of man.

1. Guard your heart: Jesus teaches that sin originates from within. Examine your thoughts, desires, and attitudes to ensure they align with God’s will.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

1. Words reveal the heart: What you say reflects what’s inside you. Speak with grace, truth, and love, being mindful of how your words impact others.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

1. True holiness comes from within: External religious practices are meaningless if the heart is impure. Prioritize genuine faith and inner transformation over mere rituals.
2. Beware of legalism: The Pharisees focused on outward cleanliness but ignored inward corruption. Don’t let traditions replace true obedience and devotion to God.
3. Repent of sin at the source: Jesus lists sins like evil thoughts, slander, and pride as heart issues. Confess and seek God’s help in transforming your desires.
4. Spiritual blindness leads to destruction: Jesus calls the Pharisees “blind guides.” Be discerning about who you follow and ensure their teachings align with Scripture. That includes me right now.
5. God looks at the heart, not rituals: No amount of religious activity can purify an unrepentant heart. Seek the Lord for true cleansing and righteousness through Christ.
6. Be thankful for the grace of God in saving you and giving you a heart to hate sin and love His law, even when you don’t obey it as you should, remembering that it is not you or your righteous deeds that cleansed your heart in the first place, and your own deeds are not required in order for you to remain clean one you have been washed by the Holy Spirit.

**Conclusion:**

Matthew Henry said, “The heart is the root; and if that be corrupt, nothing that passes through it can be clean. Sin is the filth of the soul, and it is that which defiles it.” So let me ask you to take a moment to examine yourself, what is the condition of your heart? Are you still satisfying a desire for sin? Or have you taken up a new path towards God and desiring only Him? If you have not turned from your sin and trusted your life to Christ, right now is the time to do so. We are not promised the next minute of our lives. We are here now and can vanish in an instant. Do you belong to Christ but struggling with a desire to honor Him? Be encouraged Christian, that in Christ, you are not defined by outward rituals or past failures, but by the transforming work of His grace in your heart. Though sin flows from within, God has given you a new heart, and Christ paid for that sin in full at the cross. As you walk with Him, He continues to purify and renew you, shaping you into His image. Let your words and actions reflect the cleansing He has already done, and trust that He is faithful to complete the good work He has begun in you. I am praying for us all to know Jesus, trust in Him, and live out our days for His glory.

Let’s Pray.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. (2 Cor. 13:14). You are dismissed to groups.