

Will The Real You Please Stand Up

Matthew 15:10-20

Introduction. 1). We live in a world that gives a lot of attention to the externals of life. What kind of house do you live in? What kind of car (cars!) do you drive? How much money do you make? What is your net worth? Or, getting more personal, what kind of clothes do you wear (name brands of course are a must!), after all, clothes make the man! What about your physical appearance, your shape, weight, abs, muscle tone, waist size, after all it's the "beautiful people" who make it in this world.

2). Jesus would hear all of this and shake His head in sadness and disappointment. He would not be impressed by the way we measure success or determine a person's value. Why? Because Jesus knows what really matters is not the externals but the internals. Jesus knows that the real you is who you are on the inside and eventually, the real you will stand up on the outside as well.

3). Proverbs 23:7 teaches, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." What really and truly matters is what you are on the inside, in your heart, for eventually, whatever is in your heart will flow forth from your heart and flood your life.

4). Jesus was engaged in a sharp and heated conversation with the scribes (teachers) and the Pharisees (v.1). They were ticked off because Jesus' disciples were not traditionalist, they and their Master refused to follow the dictum, "We have always done it this way (v.2)." The issue that, on this occasion, was the point of contention was ceremonially washing ones hands when you eat. The scribes and Pharisees had a real hang-up about this and were convinced that the truly spiritual and godly would not hesitate to go through this ritual. Jesus used this as an occasion to rebuke them in very strong terms for placing their traditions above the clear commandments of God (v. 3-6). In fact, He calls them hypocrites (v. 7, the first recorded instance of Jesus calling the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees hypocrites to their face) and says their hypocrisy was prophesied by Isaiah (Is. 29:13; vv. 7-8). However, Jesus decides to press the issue further because of its importance in defining what true spirituality is. Having talked with the scribes and Pharisees privately, he now calls for the multitudes, the crowd, and makes clear who the "real you" really is. Jesus is emphatic that we understand that real faith and devotion to God is not a matter of religious form, it is a matter of the heart.

I. The Real You Is Who You Are On The Inside. 15:10-14

- Jesus is in a hot debate with these religious zealots. What they are volleying back and forth is of crucial importance. Just what is the essence of true spirituality and godliness? This is conversation everyone needs to hear.

1. It Is A Matter Of Your Heart. 15:10-11

- Jesus calls the multitudes to listen in on the debate. He ushers forth a 2-fold command: "Hear," listen up, give me your ear (pre. imp.) and "Understand" (pre. imp.).
- Defilement or spiritual uncleanness (a word used 13 times in New Testament) is a matter of the real you, the you who lives on the inside. Spiritual or moral pollution is not a matter of washing your hands or what you eat. No, what matters is what is in your heart, because what is in the heart will eventually come out of

the mouth, what is on the inside will eventually come out on the outside for all to see.

- This truth finds a wonderful expression in the Old Testament when Samuel comes to Jesse to see who will follow Saul as King. In 1 Samuel 16:7 the Lord says to Samuel as he begins his inspection of Jesse's sons, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature... For the Lord does not see as man sees; For man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Transition. The real you is who you are on the inside, it is a matter of your heart.

2. It Is A Matter Of Your Father. 15:12-13

- The disciples evidently were taken back by what Jesus said. The Pharisees certainly were. The text says they were offended (Gk. *scandalized*) by what he said. Did he really mean it? Had they heard Him correctly? Jesus assures them that they did and provides an analogy to drive home the point. Those who major on the externals and ignore matters of the heart prove that God is not their heavenly (spiritual) Father. They will be uprooted, destroyed in judgment. In John 8:42-47 Jesus reminds us that we are either children of God or the children of the devil. There is no 3rd category. First John 3:10 conveys a similar message. God knows who are His. God knows what/who He plants. Question: do you know whose you are?

3. It Is A Matter Of Your Eyes. 15:14

- Jesus uses a second image or analogy: the folly of a blind man trying to lead others. Because they prided themselves on knowing and obeying the law, the scribes and Pharisees described themselves as "guides of the blind." Jesus denounces them in strong language and says the persons who are really blind are they. Let them along (aor. imp.). They are blind (4 times in this verse) and they will lead others with them into a ditch (*NIV*, pit) of destruction.
- "Leave them alone." What terrible words to hear from the Lord. The tribe of Ephraim heard similar words of judgment in Hosea 4:17, "Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone." Spiritual legalist who major on the externals of religious ritualism are also joined to their idols. Jesus says, "Let them alone." They are blind, willfully blind. All they will do is lead themselves and others into the pit of destruction. There comes a point when if a person refuses to see, there is little or nothing you can do.

Transition. The real you is who you are on the inside.

II. The Real You Will Be Revealed On The Outside. 15:15-20

- It is easy to suspect that the religious leaders heard Jesus' message loud and clear. Incredibly it appears that the disciples did not. Peter, acting as spokesman for them, asks Jesus to explain the parable (v. 15). Jesus expresses shock, amazement and perhaps grief at this question and asks, "Are you still without understanding? (*NIV*, "are you still so dull?"). I would expect others perhaps would not get the message, but you?! One has to wonder if there were times when Jesus felt like a total failure. Still, he presses on and provides for the disciples and for us important insight into what real and genuine spirituality is.

1. Pay Great Attention To The Things That Matter Most. 15:15-19

- After hearing Peter's question (v. 15) and expressing His disappointment at it (v. 16), Jesus explain further the main point which He made in v. 11.

A. Some Things Are Hard To Understand.

15:15-19

- Steeped in religious legalism, formalism and ritualism as taught by the religious hypocrites/leaders of their day, the disciples, as well as the common people, struggled to hear, see and understand what real godliness and spirituality is. Jesus realizes this and so He expands His explanation of v. 11. Food goes in the mouth, into the stomach, is digested, and the waste eliminated (lit. “is cast into the latrine or drain”). It comes in, goes out and is gone. That is the end of things as far as what you eat.
- In contrast, some things do come up from within and out of the mouth that defile you, that pollute your life. Its source? The heart, the real you on the inside. Understand, genuine spiritual life is a heart matter. Ceremonies, rituals, other external practices; baptism, giving, church attendance, these are not the things that prove you are God’s child or a spiritual person. Some people do all of these things and are lost, evil, mean and wicked. It may be hard to understand given our tendency to measure spirituality by the things we do, but the bottom-line is, “what is the condition of your heart?”

B). Some Things Are Impossible To Hide.

15:19

- Eventually the real you will stand up. You may hide who you are for a while but you can’t do it forever.
- From your heart will inevitably come out what is in it. Generally following the latter portion of the 10 commandments Jesus notes 7 examples (His list is not exhaustive) that an evil heart will produce:
 - Evil thinking
 - Murders
 - Adulteries
 - Fornications (*porneia*)
 - Thefts
 - False witnesses
 - Blasphemies
- Jesus’ point is simple. Guard your heart. Cultivate a godly heart, for what a person truly is will be seen by what he says and does. If your heart is a toxic waste dump, rest assure it will leak out. It is corrosive and it will seep through the walls of your heart and out into the open for all to see.

Transition. You see, some things are impossible to hide.

2. Pay Small Attention To The Things That Matter A Little.

15:20

- The thing that defiles and corrupts a man or woman is not unwashed hands, but an unwashed heart. What ultimately matters is not the forms and rituals of religion, but the condition of your heart, the real you on the inside.
- Should we give attention to matters of religion? Sure, and with a view to cultivating religious practices that honor God and help us grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, when everything is said and done, we should hear the words of our Lord found in Matt. 5:9, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Conclusion. Jesus said in Luke 6:45, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth evil.”

It really is a matter of the heart. Make certain yours is a heart that belongs to Jesus, for from it, the real you will stand up.