KOSHER HEARTS

Matthew 15:1-20
Introduction

Cleanliness is next to godliness. Where did that idea come from? It may be from the Old Testament where cleanliness was intended to teach people about holiness.
The problem was that the Jewish leaders added to God’s Word other restrictions and they became so focused on externals that they missed the mark.

Holiness is primarily a matter of the heart. How do we avoid that danger?
I. Hold to the Scriptures as our highest authority.

MATTHEW 15:1-9
Jesus disciples were accused of breaking the “oral law”. The priests believed it was just as binding as the Torah (the first 5 books of the Old Testament).

- Mishnah – written around 200 A.D.
- The Gemara – a Jewish commentary on the Mishnah.
Jesus answers their question with a question of his own about the law. What they had done in the oral law was to provide a way that someone could evade their responsibility to care for their parents. Even more serious, they elevated their tradition over the Word of God. There is no higher authority than God’s Word.
God’s Word is

• Eternal – Matthew 24:35
• Powerful – Hebrews 4:12
• True – John 17:17
• Transforms our mind. – Romans 12:1-2
God’s Word is being challenged every day.

• Morally – Marriage, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, abortion.
• Doctrinally – Salvation, Universalism, Hell, the Authority of Scripture.
• Traditions of Men
• Cults and Extra-Biblical Teaching
What does the Scripture say?
What do we believe about the Bible?
Jesus said we are to teach and obey everything that he commanded the disciples. Matthew 28:19-20
Martin Luther said, “Unless I am convinced by Scripture and by plain reason and not by Popes and councils who have so often contradicted themselves, my conscience is captive to the word of God. To go against conscience is neither right nor safe. I cannot and I will not recant. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me.”
II. Be careful who you follow.

MATTHEW 15:10-14
We can understand why the Pharisees were offended.

Think of what Jesus said about them.

• Their entire understanding of Scripture and the oral tradition was wrong.
• Their hearts were far from God.
• Their worship of God was in vain.
• They were hypocrites and blind guides.
• They did not belong to God. My Father has not planted them.
These were the most highly regarded religious men of the day.

Follow those who follow Christ.

- Who hold to the authority of Scripture.
- Who teach that Jesus is the only way of salvation.
- Who teach that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone.
III. Remember that holiness is a matter of the heart.

MATTHEW 15:15-20
Even Peter was slow to understand. Jesus told them plainly. It is what is on the inside that matters most to God. No amount of washing can make a man clean before God.
We can’t make ourselves holy by our religious works or good behavior.

Only God can make us holy.

- We are saved by grace. What we need is a new heart.
- We are sanctified by grace. We need to walk with God every day in the power of the Holy Spirit.
“12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” Philippians 2:12-13
“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” Hebrews 12:14
Conclusion

Don’t settle for anything less than the real thing when it comes to your faith.
Hold to the Scriptures.
Follow those who follow Christ.
Walk in obedience day by day.