

DIRTY DISHES AND WHITE TOMBS

Matt. 23:25-28

INTRODUCTION

- A. He teaches best who gets the information to the learner in the most understandable way.
- B. In this text we have an example of Jesus' masterful teaching
 1. Can you imagine a housewife scrubbing and polishing the outside of her cups while allowing the inside to remain filthy.
 2. Think about a beautiful tomb or mausoleum
 3. How perfectly this illustrates attitudes in religion then and now - which are all too prevalent

DISCUSSION

I. GOD LOOKS ON THE HEART 1Sam 16:7

- A. The heart controls the life
 1. Out of the heart are the issues of life Prov 4:23
 2. As he thinketh in his heart so is he Prov 23:7
 3. Sin comes from within Matt 15:18-20
- B. The outside may be camouflaged - the inside is the real - the determining part
- C. If the heart is really pure, the conduct will be also

II. THE CASE OF THE PHARISEES

- A. What were they concerned about most
 1. Conspicuous dress (phylacteries - small strip of parchment with part of the Law written on it and either on the forehead or on the left arm next to the heart as a reminder of the borders) – all for same purpose; chief place at feast and in synagogues; special titles Matt 23:5-7
 2. Ceremonious searches to proselyte men Matt 23:15
 3. Pious sounding declarations Matt 23:16-22
 4. Pompous memorial to the prophets Matt 23:29-34
- B. Look at the evidence of corruption within
 1. Unwilling to help others bear burdens Matt 23:4
 2. Attitude toward parents Matt. 15:1-6
 3. Justify oaths Matt 23:16-22
 4. Sought to slay Jesus Jhn 5:18

III. PRESENT DAY EXAMPLES

- A. Attitude toward religion in general
 1. More than 78% of U.S. population call themselves "Christian", that is, claim membership in some church, yet other surveys show that only about 25% of Americans are devoutly religious.
 2. Crime and violence is on the increase – from under 300,000 prisoners in 1972, to 2 million by the year 2000. Grew seven-fold in 28 years
 3. Immorality and ungodliness on the increase as seen in unlawful marriages, homosexuality being approved by civil authorities, etc 1Cor 6:9-10

3. People run in droves to join some church - go to or send their children to Sunday school, give to charities, Etc. But they drink Eph 5:18; Lk 21:34; dress immodestly 1Tim 2:9; are unfaithful in marriage Matt 19:9, are dishonest in business Titus 2:10 on and on we could go talking about many who profess to be religious.

B. Which church

1. In relation to this most folks are interested in the outside of the cup: (a) which is the nearest (b) which is the easiest (c) which is the biggest (d) which has the most social activities etc.
2. The inside of the cup is what we should be considering
 - a. Is this church scriptural in name Acts 4:12
 - b. Is it scriptural in origin Acts 2
 - c. Is its teaching scriptural Gal. 1:6-9
 - d. Is its practice scriptural Acts 5:29
 - e. Is its work and worship scriptural Eph 4:11-13; Jhn 4:24
 - f. show all together

C. In our worship

1. One good way to tell just how people feel toward the church is to look at contribution compared to the total income of its members 1Cor 16:1,2; 2Cor 9:6,7
 - a. What people give many times is a good indication of how they feel inside. One can give generously and still give grudgingly
 - b. Not many people give generously for show
2. Lord's supper: "outside" we break bread on the first day of the week Acts 20:7 - "Inside" but do we discern the Lord's body and blood 1Cor 11:29
3. Singing: "outside" we sing without mechanical music - "inside" but do we sing with the spirit and understanding making melody in our hearts to the Lord 1Cor 14:15; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16
4. Prayer: "outside" pray for the lost, orphans, widows, brethren, etc. "inside" but is this really our heart's desire Rom 10:1 Do we do anything about it?
5. Teaching: We teach that we must speak as the oracles of God 1Pet 4:11 "inside" but do we?

CONCLUSION:

- A. We need to start today to clean up the inside of the cup as well as the outside.
- B. We need to purify our hearts then the outside will be pure
 1. Hearts are purified by faith Acts 15:9
 2. Souls purified in obedience 1Pet 1:22
 3. Sins washed away in baptism Acts 22:16
- C. How about you; are you just whitewashing the outside?