

Matthew 15:1-20

The Teaching of the Ancestors (1-9)

- ◆ Then some Pharisees and teachers of the Law came from Jerusalem to Jesus and asked him, “Why is it that your disciples disobey the teaching handed down by our ancestors? They don't wash their hands in the proper way before they eat!” Jesus answered, “And why do you disobey God's command and follow your own teaching? For God said, ‘Respect your father and your mother,’ and ‘If you curse your father or your mother, you are to be put to death.’ But you teach that if people have something they could use to help their father or mother, but say, ‘This belongs to God,’ they do not need to honor their father. In this way you disregard God's command, in order to follow your own teaching. You hypocrites! How right Isaiah was when he prophesied about you! ‘These people, says God, honor me with their words, but their heart is really far away from me. It is no use for them to worship me, because they teach human rules as though they were my laws!’”
- ◆ This passage is just a snippet of a broad spectrum. The example given of washing hands in a certain way is just one example of many practices that are performed but they don't necessarily serve God in any way. It's not that we should abandon such practices but we shouldn't enforce them as a law that serves God. We may also have certain practices passed down to us that don't serve God, by honouring such practices thinking they serve God we deceive ourselves. Using the given example, washing hands in a certain way doesn't serve God, and when others don't obey such practices they aren't sinning. The Pharisees were trying to enforce such practice(s) as law which is wrong. In this current era we may also have our inherent practices, we shouldn't try to enforce them as law; rather we should teach how to truly serve God by honouring our father and mother as mentioned above and many other lessons taught in the bible. We should worship and serve God with our hearts not just with our word, obedience to certain practices doesn't worship or serve God.

The Things That Make a Person Unclean (10-20)

- ◆ Then Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand! It is not what goes into your mouth that makes you ritually unclean; rather, what comes out of it makes you unclean.” Then the disciples came to him and said, “Do you know that the Pharisees had their feelings hurt by what you said?” “Every plant which my Father in heaven did not plant will be pulled up,” answered Jesus. “Don't worry about them! They are blind leaders of the blind; and when one blind man leads another, both fall into a ditch.” Peter spoke up, “Explain this saying to us.” Jesus said to them, “You are still no more intelligent than the others. Don't you understand? Anything that goes into your mouth goes into your stomach and then on out of your body. But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these are the things that make you ritually unclean. For from your heart come the evil ideas which lead you to kill, commit adultery, and do other immoral things; to rob, lie, and slander others. These are the things that make you unclean. But to eat without washing your hands as they say you should—this doesn't make you unclean.”

- ◆ This passage was well elaborated, what we eat doesn't defile us. We can eat anything we want and we shouldn't judge those who eat what they want. As long as you don't go against your faith, anything you eat is fine (Romans 14:23 – But if they have doubts about what they eat, God condemns them when they eat it, because their action is not based on faith. And anything that is not based on faith is sin.)
- ◆ What defiles us is what comes out of our mouths as it springs from our hearts. Whatever is in the heart (good or bad) will come out through the mouth. If our heart is bad, the mouth will pronounce it and this will defile us. If our heart is good, the mouth will pronounce it and we'll be undefiled people. It's not only the mouth that pronounces what's in our heart but also our body parts through our actions. We need to work on our hearts by asking God for a good heart, learning and practicing bible teachings, learning good from others, choosing good mentors, avoiding watching bad things, acting in love, practicing the golden rule and many other ways we know.