

WHO IS DEFILED?

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Mark 7:1-5 says, “Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?” These Pharisees and scribes believed that physical dirt going inside the body would defile a person before God. Jesus called these spiritually blind people hypocrites and taught the truth concerning who is defiled in God’s sight.

Out of the heart of men

The notion that physical dirt on one’s hands defiles a person before God could scarcely be further from the truth and reveals a total misunderstanding of what is most important of all. Jesus taught that it is not what goes into a man that defiles him, but what comes out of him (Matt 15:10-11; Mark 7:14-16). We are not defiled by physical dirt that gets inside our physical body, but rather by spiritual wickedness that is within our spiritual heart. Our Lord said, “Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; *because it entereth not into his heart*, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, *out of the heart of men*, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: *all these evil things come from within, and defile the man*” (Mark 7:18-23). Physical dirt does not defile a man before God, but the inner man, the heart, does defile a man before God. The Pharisees cleaned the outer man but not the inner man (see also Matt 15:10-20; 23:25-28; Luke 11:39-41), as they were utterly blind to the inner man (Matt 15:14; 23:26).

The heart is the source

We all have an outer man and an inner man (Luke 11:40; Rom 2:28-29). The outer man is only temporal, but the inner man is eternal (2 Cor 4:16-18). Our inner man contains our spiritual heart (Rom 2:29; Eph

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3:16-17). The spiritual heart is the source of what we actually think, say and do. Proverbs 4:23 says, “*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*” Matthew 12:34-35 says that “*out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.*” Luke 6:43-45 similarly says, “For a good tree brings not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil.*” In Romans 7:15-25, the apostle Paul describes a war that he was fighting against his flesh. From what Christ taught, we understand that the flesh does according to what is in the heart (Matt 15:16-20). Therefore, in order to “keep under our body, and bring it unto subjection” (1 Cor 9:27), our hearts need to change. We need the evil purged out of our hearts (Acts 15:9). It is the evil that is in the heart that causes us to think, say, and do evil things. When that evil is purged out, then we are prepared to do according to the good that has been formed in the heart (Matt 12:35).

Spiritual sight

The Pharisees had no sight of the inner man and what truly defiles someone before God. Being spiritually blind, they could not “see” the inner man at all, but only the outer man (Matt 15:14-20; 23:16-28). Therefore, their sin remained (John 9:40-41). Therefore, in Matthew 15:14, Jesus warned his disciples about the Pharisees: “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” If we cannot “see” the spiritual heart and what pertains to it, then our heart will not be purified, and then we will not be able to do God’s will and then we will be spiritually defiled (Matt 15:10-20). Therefore, we need to be able to see spiritually. Spiritual sight requires our having the *will* to do God’s will (John 7:17; Rom 12:1-2). That is why God is working in us *both to will and to do* of His good pleasure (Php 2:13). Our goal is to fulfill the great commandment and love God with *all* the mind, heart and soul (Matt 22:37-38). Then we will truly be undefiled in His sight.