

Grace Mail

In Matthew 15:1-6 he recounts a confrontation Jesus had with the Pharisees over tradition versus the commandments of God. The Pharisees are upset that Jesus' followers break tradition. Jesus responds by pointing out how some of their traditions directly violate the commands of God. It is after this confrontation that Jesus says what we will consider today. The point of this confrontation is our title for this week and next.

God Wants Your Heart (part 1) – Matthew 15:7-8

“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.’”

A hypocrite is someone who says one thing, but does the opposite. This is exactly what Jesus has revealed the Pharisees were guilty of doing. They claimed to follow God, but violated His commands.

How would someone draw near with their mouth? What is Isaiah, and now Jesus, talking about here? To answer this we go back to the book of Exodus. In chapter 19 verse 8 the Israelites declare that they will do all that God has said. Chapters 20-31 contain the instructions of God to Moses. In chapter 24, they confirm the covenant. Chapter 32 is the next event in the narrative. In this chapter, the people rebel and make an idol – the golden calf! This is lip service! They said they would obey but at the very first opportunity they turn away from God! The Pharisee's here in Matthew are doing the same thing. They profess allegiance to God, but deny it by their actions.

What will our story look like?

In “Christianity” right now there are many who claim to know Christ. They sing worship songs and they talk about Jesus...but they don't obey. They draw near with their mouth and honor Him with their lips. However, their heart is not with Him.

Notice the description “draw near”. Have you ever had someone talk about you as if you were best friends when you aren't? That's what is being described. They draw near in speech, but it is a farce. They revere and lift God up vocally, but they don't trust Him, don't really believe in His power. Their heart is not with Him.

God cares more about our heart than He does about outward conformity. He wants your heart! He wants my heart! Draw near to Him, seek Him, pursue Him with a whole heart and the actions will follow. God doesn't want a bunch of fakers. He wants men and women who will give Him their hearts.

Let's take up the challenge to not be guilty of outward conformity, but to give God our hearts!