

We Need Transformation

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[0:00] please take your Bibles and turn to Matthew's Gospel Matthew chapter 15 Matthew chapter 15 chapter 15 if you need a Bible the chair in front of you black Bible pull that out go to the back of that Bible and find page 12 page 12 in that black Bible you'll find Matthew chapter 15 we'll do the first 20 verses this morning Matthew chapter 15 verses 1 through 20 I'll read and then we'll jump in with both feet Matthew chapter 15 verses 1 through 20 then coming to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes said why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders for they do not wash their hands when they eat bread and answering he said to them and why do you yourselves transgress the command of God for the sake of your tradition for God said honor your father and mother and the one who speaks evil of father or mother shall be put to death but you say whoever shall say to father or mother anything of mine you might have been helped by is Corban given he's not to honor his father or his mother and you invalidate the word of God for the sake of your tradition hypocrites rightly Isaiah prophesied of you saying this people honors me with their lips but their heart is far far away from me but in vain do they worship me teaching as teachings the precepts of men verse 10 and after calling the multitude he said to them hear and understand not what enters into the mouth defiles the man but that which proceeds out of the mouth this defiles the man then the disciples coming to him said do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this word but answering he said every plant my heavenly father did not plant shall be uprooted let them alone they are blind guides of the blind and if a blind man guides a blind man both will fall into a pit verse 15 and Peter answering him said explain the parable to us and he said are you still senseless also do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and goes into the latrine but that which comes out proceeds out of the mouth come from the heart and those defile the man for out of the heart come evil thoughts murders adulteries fornications thefts false witness slanders these are that which defile the man but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man

Thomas A. Terence is president emeritus of the C.S. Lewis Institute which he served from 1998 to 2019 prior to working at the institute he was co-pastor of a multiracial church in Washington D.C. Terence he grew up in the 60's went to church regularly I believe it was in the south he made a profession of faith when he was 13 and during that time he decided to be a person who was fighting for God and country and yet in his mind fighting for God and country meant embracing far right extremism with its hatred of blacks Jews communists socialists and liberals he continued that trend into his late teens and twenties as far as he was concerned these had to be stopped at all costs so one night he and an accomplice attempted to bomb the home of a Jewish businessman in Meridian Mississippi but the house was staked out by a police SWAT team the accomplice he was with was killed he was shot four times at close range with shotgun fire when he got to the hospital the doctor said it'd be a miracle if he lived 45 minutes he says this in a quote about himself quote but God had mercy on me and miraculously spared my life if ever if ever there was a time to repent of my sins and turn to Christ it was then but I was dead in my trespasses end quote story continues on he was sentenced to 30 years in the Mississippi

State Penitentiary which I guess at that time was just horrible one of the worst in the country he actually made a plan and he carried it through a plan to escape he escaped but two days later he was found by the FBI an inmate that was with him was killed by gunfire which actually should have been him he went back to prison to a solitary cell he says this in a quote quote when someone is blind and dead in sin rational considerations alone can't bring them to life end quote he tried to get catch up on his reading and all the anti-semitic literature and then somehow it started to turn towards reading western civilization books and then western civilization philosophers ended up reading the gospels believe it or not and God did an amazing work in his heart there in solitary

confinement he says this quote unbeknownst to me a group of women had read about me in the newspaper and I had been praying weekly for two years that God would save and use me for his glory the leader of this prayer group was the wife of the

FBI agent who orchestrated my capture in Meridian not long after I started reading the gospels my eyes began to be open and then he quoted from Jonathan Edwards quote a divine and supernatural light imparted to the soul end quote my many sins began flooding to mine he continues and with them conviction repentance and tears of confession one night I knelt on the floor of my cell and prayed a simple prayer to Jesus asking for forgiveness and offering my life to him if he wanted it it felt like a thousand pounds had been lifted from my shoulders something changed inside of me and I haven't been the same since he continues I woke the next day to find that I was now spiritually alive and God was real to me I had an immediate appetite to read the Bible pray and live for God the more I read the Bible the more I grew

[7:51] God gave me love for people I once hated and has helped me to change in many other ways miraculously I was released from prison in 1976 after serving eight years and from 1978 to the present I've been an active I've been active in ministry end quote now that's a transformation praise the Lord but whether you're like Thomas Terence or a kid who grows up in the church this is what we all need to bow down and worship Jesus the Messiah King of Israel we need transformation this is what this passage is about here in chapter 15 we need transformation to be a person who's going to bow down and worship

Jesus who is the Messiah King of Israel you and I need to be transformed from the inside out we need transformation or to put it in a statement we need God to bring a transformation to our hearts only a transformed heart can bow down in word obeying God submitting Jesus devoted worship only God can change the heart and not only does he do this with the unsaved but as Jesus followers as his own on Wednesday nights we've been going through that book real change we've been talking about that the gospel is not just for the unsaved it's for the saved that's how we grow that's how we change it's by the gospel truth don't be duped and deceived into thinking the gospel is just for the unsaved no Christian it's for you so you can be changed and transformed by the power of the spirit by the gospel impurity does not come from missing some physical ritual or regulation on ceremonial cleanliness cleanliness is not next to godliness okay nobody answered okay never mind it's like a little quote plaque there if some of you were older maybe you remember that okay never mind impurity comes from within evil is in our hearts and not just in villains it's in everyone Jesus comes into contact with these Pharisees now in the initial part the Pharisees it was a good thing they treasured the law they wanted to study it diligently they desired to obey God so they wanted to obey the law and they wanted to help God's people obey it but unfortunately instead of having God's word as authoritative they began to have their traditions as authoritative they ended up going too far putting their traditions way ahead of the word of God there needs to be transformation not tradition so let's put this passage up in the two parts we're actually going to look at verses 10 through 20 first because first we're going to see our need for a transformed heart there is internal impurity verses 10 through 12 our need for a transformed heart because we have internal impurity and we'll talk about the Pharisees coming to

Jesus we'll talk about that I'll make that connection blah blah blah so Jesus ends up talking with the Pharisees they confronted him blah blah blah and then here he turns to the crowd with the Pharisees still there in verse 10 he took the opportunity to teach the crowd notice what he says here in verse 10 hear and understand that's important that word understand remember Jesus used that in chapter 5 remember Jesus used that in chapter 13 when it comes to hearing the word you must understand it so that's why he says hear and understand verse 11 it's not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man but what proceeds out of the mouth this defiles the man true purity is not about keeping some ritual that protects your mouth from what may enter it's a matter of the heart and what comes out of the mouth will show what is in the heart because that's the root that's the center as the old school rap song goes see what's in my heart will soon come out now this is a radical statement for them to hear their whole lives were about keeping this ritual we'll talk about it in a moment what that meant how this was a wash their hands as a ritual ceremonially type thing not because you're afraid of germs like me but they're supposed to do this every time they ate every single time so to say what goes in doesn't defile you was diametrically opposed to what they were taught by the Pharisees true ethical purity starts from within to truly respond in word obeying

God submitting faith bowing worship it must start from within not by keeping some ridiculous external human made tradition it's about God's word and welcoming it to change you notice the disciples kind of got a little nervous here there's 12 disciples came and said you know the Pharisees were offended by this word now offended or stumbled either they were fearful of this because they feared his words would intensify the opposition that was against him from the Pharisees or they feared it because they were nervous about Jesus confronting these guys see these guys were the rock stars of the day you didn't do that with Pharisees well either way Jesus didn't care if you want to see sarcasm from Jesus here's where you see sarcasm from

[14:52] Jesus first he says verse 13 but answering he said to them every plant my heavenly father did not plant shall be uprooted guess what guys I don't care Jesus didn't care because God did not plant these fakers and they will inevitably be uprooted anyways at the last judgment they'll be held accountable for these actions see they proudly appealed we know the ways of God and yet they were far from it far from it and here's the sarcasm verse 14 leave them alone they're blind guides leading the blind one writer called this quote biting sarcasm language end quote don't let yourselves be concerned about them they haven't got a clue don't worry about offending them because guess what their opposition against me is permanent so who cares a blind man leaves another blind man guess what they're both gonna fall into a pit they can rocket science to figure that out guys instead of leading people to truth and the true worship of God they led them far away from

God and they would cloud the truth they were blinded to the truth themselves they thought they could see John chapter 9 but they were blind well notice what Peter does Jesus is teaching on true purity and worship confused the disciples so the spokesman he speaks up verse 15 explain the parable to us it was so much part of their everyday life it threw them off Jesus we don't understand and notice Jesus his question it's almost a rebuke are you still lacking in understanding is how it's translated in numerical standard but literally is it's like this are you still senseless are you still foolish Jesus was rebuking them eh they should have figured it out by now you guys don't know 17 do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is literally goes into the latrine that's how it is from the

Greek I don't know why it says eliminated it's just weird it's literally goes into the latrine that's how it's actually translated what goes into your mouth clean or unclean passes through the body what does your body do it uses what it needs and the rest becomes waste and it's emptied into the latrine we all know how that goes whether you're the president of the United States or some dude in Timbuktu this is how it goes nothing remains to defile the person verse 18 but that which proceeds out of the mouth come from the heart and those defile the man what comes out of the heart out of the mouth comes out of the heart because the mouth speaks from that which fills the heart chapter 12 verse 34 it's not the first time

Jesus says this the heart is the source of purity or impurity it's the real source of our problem notice what he does he starts to unpack what this means for out of out of the heart come notice how it begins evil thoughts the first one of the seven Jesus listed was evil thoughts from internal thoughts proceed evil words and deeds these are the vices that defile murders adulteries fornications adultery sexual action involving married people fornications adultery sexual action involving singles gossiping which is a bad talking about another that's slander false witnessing testifying telling lies it all starts on the inside it's sad when we cannot trust what people say that's the reason we all take issue with politicians because we can't trust what they say they say one thing to do another so this should not be the case among us as members of

Kotwet Bible Church we should be mindful what comes out of our mouths because it comes from the heart James understood this in his letter James chapter 4 we must not allow certain desires personal desires and lust to be what drives us to action we've been looking at this in James chapter 4 in that book real change we looked at that last Wednesday and actually the cross reference in that chapter was Mark chapter 7 which is the cross reference to here in Matthew chapter 15 we allow desire to grow into something we think we really need and then becomes a matter of entitlement then demand and that's why James mentions in James chapter 1 verse 14 we are carried away by our own lust which starts from within this is why we as

[21:18] Christians need constant transformation real change real change happens for those who are on addiction on the inside out alcohol drugs real change happens from the inside out from those dealing with same-sex attraction from the inside out real change happens from the inside out and there's things that I mean psychologists psychiatrists they will write prescription for drugs and things

like that for people in reference to their depression reference to their anxiety and things like that and for some people that helps them but it doesn't deal with the why the why is this why is that person depressed why is that person dealing with anxiety why is that person dealing with same-sex attraction why is that person dealing with that addiction because it needs to be something where it starts from the heart you have to look at the heart desires that's the whole point of biblical counseling biblical counseling deals with issues of the heart and it's not to say that you don't use certain antidepressants or things like that to help people interesting some of the studies that they did they actually gave people placebos of like certain drugs that are depressed and miraculously it helped them we are in a day and age where when you're given a pill you're thinking it's going to help you interesting article but regardless

I mean using certain drugs psychotic drugs whatever sure if it works great but let's deal with the issue of the heart that's really what we're going to be talking about that's biblical counseling so what was Jesus saying here about these dietary restrictions and purification laws well Jesus came to fulfill the law not to abolish it he fulfilled it by showing that ultimately defilement is a matter of the inside of the heart and when it came to these dietary laws that the Jews had God gave them these laws the laws to Israel as a way for them to display holiness externally which reflected their holiness internally at least that was the idea Israel was called to be different even in the very things that they ate why as a way to reflect to the world they were separate they were different they were set apart they were holy now we think about rituals ceremonial laws type stuff and for some of us who may become from

Roman Catholic backgrounds that's what you think about you have to abide by rituals right and yet the gospel has been lost in Roman Catholicism some might think of Eastern Orthodox Church same thing all these rituals not true worship but this is a great lesson for us as evangelical Protestants even for us as Baptists Southern Baptists this is good for us because we have various denominational traditions that we put in the position of authority over scripture like a certain style of music altar calls that's not that those traditions are wrong since they may have developed as ways we apply scripture right but it can't be about that tradition it has to be about scripture all our ideas practices and traditions must be governed even driven by God's word alone to the best of our ability true worship of God begins from the heart it brings that person to a place where they bow down and worship

Jesus that's why if you're here and you're not a Christian you need to respond by bowing down and worshipping Jesus you need to understand that this is going to start from here not from this speaking and singing and lifting your hands and praying no it doesn't start there it starts down here the heart the centerpiece where you think you feel your will this is where it starts this is where you need to see your need for Jesus and to respond in repentant faith you need Christ respond trust Christ and he will save you so this is this first point how internal impurity starts internally now the next point is this the results of a transformed heart real obedience the result of a transformed heart is real obedience we looked at our need for a transformed heart because there's internal impurity now the result of a transformed heart this is where we go to verses 1 through 6 real obedience notice verse 1 coming to

Jesus from Jerusalem scribes and Pharisees said why your disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders for they do not wash their hands when they eat bread the last time the legal experts were mentioned in Matthew's gospel was back in chapter 12 but now oh they sent big guns the big guns from Jerusalem came down it wasn't just the Galilean Pharisees it was the Jerusalem scribes and Pharisees coming so maybe this was like an official inquiry it tells us the kind of reputation Jesus had and the measure of hostility against him so they accused Jesus disciples of not following the ceremonial oral traditional law to wash their hands before eating a meal so here's the thought process okay you have unclean hands and you're around all these dirty little Gentiles these non-Jews ill you're all non-Jewish so it's okay unclean hands you touch your food and then you're making the food now unclean and then once the food is eaten the person becomes unclean that was their thought process and with all these

[28:06] Gentiles around that's why they called the people to ritually cleanse their hands and the disciples didn't do it because Jesus didn't do it because Jesus didn't care it wasn't so much like an accident oh we shouldn't oh I guess we should have done that no he specifically did not follow it but the attack had nothing to do with following biblical old testament law there was no direct violation of scripture it was about the oral law now there is an old testament law that's written for the priests to

purify themselves the priests were supposed to do this what the pharisees did they made it something binding upon all Jews that's what they did and so the tradition became one writer put it like this a fence around the law the elders they were the great ones of the past who gave them the right way now the

Pharisees they believed that God had also revealed to Moses the traditional oral law to explain the written law now Jesus didn't buy that and the Sadducees didn't buy it either the Sadducees they blew that off just as much as Jesus did but notice how Jesus responds look at verse 3 answering he said to them and why do you yourselves transgress the command of God for the sake of your tradition twice he says your tradition in this passage he answered their question with a question strongly confronting them on how they had transgressed the word of God for the sake of their traditions they were more willing to abide by their traditions than to abide by the word of God they were more willing to break God's word than to break their traditions friends it's scary if churches are more willing to keep their traditions as sacred instead of letting

God's word rule we are in danger of that every week we're in danger that we allow our traditions or how we do things to be sacred instead of letting God's word rule here's the example that he gives look at verse 4 for God said honor your father and mother and the one who speaks evil father and mother shall be put to death honoring your parents positive the forbiddance of slander a negative quotes from the fifth commandment exodus chapter 20 Deuteronomy 5 and then he quotes from exodus chapter 21 excuse me leuiticus chapter 20 about speech towards parents interesting this is what God's word said you honor your parents even in one's speech what comes out of the mouth interesting so this is what God's word says verse 5 but you say whoever shall say to father or mother anything on mine you might have been helped has been literally given or Corbin verse 6 he's not to honor his father or his mother what is Jesus talking about here he's talking about what's known as Corbin which is the word is actually a good thing

Corbin came to mean setting aside something to be given or dedicated to God that's what Corbin meant Hebrew word which included funds that were pledged pledged to the temple so a child could claim the inability to an obligation to the parents because she or he pledged it to God yet there was no money that was exchanged in other words they rashly vowed X amount of resource to God but not really given anything so here's the idea funds that be given to help them oh sorry mom and dad can't help you Corbin sorry can't help you that's Corbin I know this was to help you in your old age can't do it it's Corbin and what happened here the Pharisees they honored this rash vow someone like someone that said oh I vow these things to God and oh that was a rash vow well you made that vow so you have to keep that vow the Pharisees honored this rash vow and notice

Jesus says they neglected the word of God one writer put it like this pious fraud that's why Jesus says here in verse verse six and you invalidate the word of God for the sake of your tradition you nullify God's word and this is a huge contrast between God's word and human tradition in that their tradition rendered void the word it was about their rules not God's word it was about their rules not the truth it was about their traditions not what the word of God says and here in verses seven through nine is what I call the nexus the connection between verses one through six and verses ten through twenty you have this connection here between the worship of the heart and how the internal impurity of heart the impurity starts from the internal aspects of the heart notice the nexus verses seven through nine look at what he says hypocrites rightly

[34:19] Isaiah prophesied of you saying this people honors me with their lips but their heart is far far far away from me they had external obedience to the law all the while they were internally disobeying the truth they would say all the right things but they didn't really mean it it was an outward show it was all a sham here is the crux here's the connection we need a transformed heart and when you have a transformed heart it will result in obedience if you don't have a transformed heart you will not obey God that's what Jesus is saying and he points it out here it's not a matter of some behavioral violation it's a violation of the heart deep down inside the center of your being Isaiah spoke this of the people back then and here you have greater fulfillment even in the day of

Jesus this people honors me with their lips but their heart is far far away from me it was all about empty worship stemming from their own traditions they disobeyed God's authority of word they only gave lip service to God and his word but the truth was their hearts were far far away they worship God in vain they just went through the motions and their worship was empty because they needed a transformation Corbin was false piety engaging only a mere lip service not true worship of God God's word deals with the heart and our response to it should come from the heart in true heartfelt

worship and when God does a transformation will produce that a word obeying God submitting Jesus devoted worship I can give you all the different aspects for you but I cannot make you worship God I cannot make you respond in submission to God I've never been able to do that in the 13 years I've been here I've never been able to do that for you and I never will I can give you vehicles through this through this through this through this through this but I cannot change your heart I can't I can't change my own heart God needs to do a work where I work through him he works in me one writer put it like this quote punctilious performance of rites and ceremonies is no substitute for genuine inward devotion just because you come to church you should even say that anyways you don't come to church we are the church people just because you come to church that doesn't mean anything who cares because your heart could be far away why do you come here why do you come why are you here what's the point of you coming what's the point of us coming why do you do this because you're supposed to because it's your tradition notice what Jesus says in verse nine in vain do they worship me teaching as teachings the precepts of men look people who truly worship Messiah King will teach others God's word not their traditions to direct them to Christ and the truth not to their man-made laws or rules that focuses on the heart or rather for God to transform the heart so that we might fear him worshiping God starts in the heart we need God to change our hearts so we have true word obeying God submitting Jesus devoted worship I can't do that for you I can't I can give you ways by which you can do that our mouths speak what fills our hearts what's filling your heart is Christ filling your heart is the gospel filling your heart is the truth filling your heart we need God to bring a transformation in our hearts to our hearts only a transformed heart can bow down and word obeying God submitting Jesus devoted worship and only God can change it only God can do it now I say I said earlier we can't change our hearts it's true and yet as Christians we work with the spirit to change us that's true but it still takes us and many of the things are happening in our heart because it starts here that's where true change happens may Jesus our king be the one to transform us we need transformation we need transformation I'll end with this did I tell you [40 : 45] I was talking to a guy who's an atheist did I tell you about this this was hilarious he was an atheist and I was talking about how the evidence was all there in front of him and blah blah blah and then within the conversation I can't remember but I do remember he said this what's like you need to have a transformation and I said why yes that's exactly what the Bible calls it he said it not me and that's what triggered my thinking this past week that's exactly what this passage is talking about we need transformation that's exactly what we need God we pray by the power of the spirits as we've seen from the word of God we've seen the living word Jesus in the written word your written word transform us may it start from our hearts so we will be a people who truly worship who have word obeying

God submitting Jesus devoted worship that's what we pray and for those who don't know Jesus only you can do that and for those of us who do know Jesus only you can do that as well and we work with you give us grace to submit ourselves to your work by the power of the spirit bring real change in us we pray I want to encourage you as we do each week to take a few moments let your mind think dwell ponder on these things these things that we've seen in Matthew's gospel we'll do our time of giving afterwards we'll sing a couple songs closing prayer those things that we do our traditions and even this is a tradition I want to encourage you to make this tradition meaningful at which you can sit and think and ponder and let the word of Christ richly dwell within you just a few moments to think of these things words And now we'll be going to give it to Thank you. Thank you.