

## “Miracles, Mystery, and the Ministry of the Spirit” (Pt. 2)

**The Ministry of the Spirit**

May 10, 2026

**INTRO ...**"The IN and the UPON of the Ministry of the Spirit"

### **THE IN**

The Key Location for the Inward is THE HEART!

#### **Matt 15:1-20**

##### v. 1-9

...THIS, is their significant talking point with this “Jesus of Nazareth”?? ...

...v. 7-9 ...the Key Landing Pad for Jesus Response & Concern—the “INNER SPACE” of the HEART!

##### v. 3 ... **"for the sake of YOUR TRADITIONS"**

-- These **"Traditions"** have a rather **Significant Presence in people's lives**

(these recognized and appropriated rituals, routines, patterns, and ways of life!

...community & generationally recognized) ...What's the Point of These 'HUMAN TRADITIONS'?

### **Human Traditions – And the Needs of the HEART**

...The **INSIGHTFULNESS** of the Creator is on display in this passage! ...You don't realize it—but your “Human Traditions” are trying to solve a HEART Problem!

##### **v. 2, 10-11** ...They're trying to fix a “DEFILEMENT ISSUE”—by cleaning their hands!

“defile” = Gk. koinoō; to make common, defile, pollute, unclean; to pronounce unclean

...it is a Human Attempt at experiencing or creating "CLEANNESS"

**?? – Where does this idea & effort come from?** ...Quite simply—an **abiding awareness of our**

**"uncleanness"** ...the abiding/haunting thought about me that "I'm not what I should be" ... "that I'm guilty" ... "that I'm WRONG in some way" ... "that my I'm FAILING to live up to a standard or expectations

SO... we invent some kind of "TRADITIONAL Obstacle Course" that we CAN run, that we CAN do, ...in the Hopes that Doing These Traditions will Keep our sense of UNCLEANNESS at bay or make us feel better about ourselves!

**Humanity is Plagued with Various Traditions!** ...Sub-groups with 'their obstacle course' that you run—and you feel better about yourself, you feel affirmed, you feel included, you feel validated!

**?? – What happens when you fail to come to grips with the "Source" (the 'Uncleanness') of YOUR TRADITIONS?** ...You spend your life chasing a "Self-Fix" ...relentless effort to "measure up" or find a satisfying sense of "approval"

##### v. 15-20

...Jesus (the Creator) explains something about us ...the problem is NOT your externals, your behavioral adjustments, your club rule-keeping, your meeting someone's standard (your own, your families, your church's, your community) ...The problem also is NOT the need to eliminate any sense of "Right vs Wrong" in your world!— "Oh, and don't think that your "quest for cleanliness" is due to some "Culture of Guilt" heaped on you by some little group in your world! ...NO, the reality is—YOU ARE UNCLEAN!!

...The PROBLEM is .....Your HEART!!

**v. 18-19** ...the source of "uncleanness" (things like 'evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander) is THE HEART!

**Matt 12:33-34** <sup>33</sup> "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

...**The Heart Has Been Given a Clear Theological Diagnosis** ..... **Jer 17:9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

...**The Heart has a rich and long history** ..... **Gen 6:5** The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**Sobering Thought** - Does the Bible ever describe that "The Flood" fixed the Human Heart?? ...Millenia Later - **Jer 4:14** O Jerusalem, wash your heart from evil, that you may be saved. How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you?

"O that this morning the gracious Spirit may teach us our depravity, that we may thereby be driven to seek the fulfillment of this mercy, which is most assuredly and abundantly necessary, if we would be saved. You will notice that in my text God does not promise to us that he will improve our nature, that he will mend our broken hearts. No, the promise is that he will give us new hearts and right spirits. Human nature is too far gone ever to be mended. It is not a house that is a little out of repair, with here and there a slate blown from the roof, and here and there a piece of plaster broken down from the ceiling. No, it is rotten throughout, the very foundations have been sapped; there is not a single timber in it which has not been eaten by the worm, from its uppermost roof to its lowest foundation; there is no soundness in it; it is all rottenness and ready to fall." **Charles Spurgeon**, "The New Heart"

...A Sobering and Saturating Truth—These Theological Descriptions of the Human Heart describe EVERY PERSON in Every Place at All Times!!

- It's NOT Human Traditions that I need!! ...I Need the Ministry of the Spirit!!

## The Intrusive Work of the Spirit—IN the Heart

**Ezekiel 36:25-27** <sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

**v. 25** ...**Notice & Welcome the Bible's Angles on LIFE!** ...Ezekiel is NOT coddling or subscribing to some form of "Cultural-Self-Positivity"! ...His language isn't "minimizing", "deflecting", or "making excuses" ...and it is Not concerned about Clarifying Victimhood

- **"Your uncleanness"** ... "uncleanness" is a real thing! It is NOT some man-imposed-guilt-trip! It is REAL—All Human Beings DO 'Fail & Fall Short'!!

...The Bible Doesn't Teach us to DENY This or Find Fault with the "RULE-MAKERS"! ... 1 Jn 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from our unrighteousness... if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

***I don't need to find some earthly philosophy or earthly counsel that "MINIMIZES" my sense of "uncleanness", I need to run toward CLEANSING!!*** ...I don't need to be "talked out of" my sense of "uncleanness", I need to take my uncleanness to be CLEANSED!!

- **"From all your idols"** ...IDOLS are not our "actions" or "decisions" or "behaviors" ... "Idols" are the MOTIVATING REASONS of our actions & decisions—They are the salesman, the advertisement, the dreams that stimulate THE HEART!!

Ez 14:4-5 Thus says the Lord GOD: Any one of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him as he comes with the multitude of his idols, <sup>5</sup> that I may lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel, who are all estranged from me through their idols.

v. 26-27 ... **"I WILL \_\_\_\_\_"** ...I hope you notice (in your Bible reading) **How "GOD-CENTERED" the Bible is!!** How much the REMEDY and the HOPE of our lives find their Force and Power in the Fact that GOD IS DOING THE DOING!!

- **"A new heart"** ...THIS is Not Small News!! ...If everything we've just recounted about the Human Heart is true... If Pr 4:23 is true ("Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.") ...Then God Supernaturally Engaging Our Heart is The MOST HOPEFUL NEWS we could ever hear!!
- **"A new spirit"** ...A New Power Source!! ...A New "Uncorrupted & Uncontrolled & Unbroken" Source of the flow of life!!

"our problem is not just in what we do but in what we are. Apart from new birth, I am my problem. You are not my main problem. My parents were not my main problem. My enemies are not my main problem. I am my main problem. Not my deeds, and not my circumstances, and not the people in my life, but my nature is my deepest personal problem." **John Piper**. Finally Alive (Kindle Loc. 713-716).

"what happens in the new birth is not merely affirming the supernatural in Jesus but experiencing the supernatural in yourself. ...The new birth is supernatural, not natural. It cannot be accounted for by things that are already found in this world." **John Piper**. Finally Alive (Kindle Locations 454-455).

"But forgiveness and cleansing are not enough. I need to be new. I need to be transformed. I need life. I need a new way of seeing and thinking and valuing. That's why Ezekiel speaks of a new heart and a new spirit" ... "Then when Ezekiel says in verses 26–27, "A new spirit I will put within you....And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," I think he means that in the new birth, God puts a living, supernatural, spiritual life in our heart, and that new life—that new spirit—is the working of the Holy Spirit himself giving shape and character to our new heart. The picture I have in my mind is that this new warm, touchable, responsive, living heart is like a soft lump of clay, and the Holy Spirit presses himself up into it and gives spiritual, moral shape to it according to his own shape. By being himself within us, our heart and mind take on his character—his spirit (cf. Eph. 4:23)." **John Piper**. Finally Alive (Kindle Locations 614-615, 625-630).

- ?? – What is your hope, if you find yourself in the throes of inner "hardness", "resistance", "hostility",
- ?? – What's your hope, if your inner temperature feels cold, unresponsive, unmotivated!
- ?? – What if you feel like you are "cemented-in-place" by fear and anxiety?

**Your Hope is in the INNER Working of the Ministry of the Spirit** ...His work to "deharden" your heart and to supply fresh inner shaping and molding of the heart's motives and willingness. ...This is what's behind the phrase—"I will CAUSE you to walk in my statutes and obey my commands"

**"If a Miracle is when God supernaturally inserts Himself into the spaces of earth and the typical lives of man—then THIS ministry of the Spirit IS A MIRACLE!!** [...right up there with "healing" or instant "deliverance"!!]