

Sermon Reflections

Pure, Clean Worship (Matthew 14:34 - 15:20)

Summary: Purify your worship to God. Reject your own efforts and ideas. Worship God only through faith in Jesus Christ.

TO CONSIDER:

What does it mean to worship God and how do we know if our life of worship is pleasing to Him?
What is legalism and why do people find it so appealing?

Five Keys to Pure Worship:

1. Come First To Christ Alone (vv. 34-36)

- After Jesus' rejection by religious and political leaders and those of His hometown, what type of person is still looking for Him? Do you see yourself as someone who “has it bad” like they did? What is their attitude toward Him? Is this your attitude toward Jesus? In a reversal of contagious *uncleanness*, such as in Matthew 9:20-22, Jesus *cleanness* is contagious. Why?

2. Heed God's Word Above All (vv. 1-6)

- What are “hedgies” and why are they so dangerous? In which areas of your life have you adopted “hedgies” around the Word of God, and then created loopholes to avoid obeying the clear intent of God's original command?

3. Engage Your Heart (vv. 7-9)

- What most evidences a heart disconnected from God? In what area(s) of your life are you tempted to prioritize man-made ideas above what God's Word clearly reveals?

4. Listen to Conviction (vv. 10-14)

- What distinguishes man-made conviction and God ordained conviction? Are there any ways in which you are ignoring God's warnings of coming destruction, and thus making yourself blind? How is conviction helpful?

5. See the Real Problem: Your Heart (vv. 15-20)

- Why is our worship subpar? How are you trying to cleanse your outside (cf. Matt 23:25-26) while avoiding dealing with the internal defilement? How can you cleanse your dead heart? True cleansing happens only by faith alone in Christ and His cleansing (see Ezekiel 36).

What this Means for the Christian's Ongoing Battle with Sin:

(1) The issue with sin is you. Don't make excuses or blame other people or your circumstances.

(2) Confess your sins. Own your sins. Don't run away from them or ignore them.

(3) You can't do this alone. You weren't designed to. You've been given Christ's Spirit and cleansing.

Leverage all the grace He gives — Pray. Memorize Scripture. Lean into the fellowship of the church by confessing your sins and encouraging one another. And when a brother or sister confesses their sin to you, don't pretend that you are without sin. Confess that you struggle with sin and need grace, too, and hold out a glorious message of mercy. Next week, we'll see how Christ came for the corrupt and defiled.