

Matthew 23:25-26 Woe to Those Who are Not Pure in Heart

Introduction This is the sixth woe pronounced by Jesus on the scribes and Pharisees. This one is because they were not pure in heart. This is in contrast to Matthew 5:8. Jesus used a cup and a platter to represent the spiritual condition of man. The text reveals three conditions of man.

I. The condition of man after the fall.

- A. In this condition man was not clean on the outside or inside.
 - 1. The inside of the cup and platter is full of extortion and excess.
 - 2. The outside of the cup and platter is likewise unclean.
(In order for it to be clean, it must be made clean.)
- B. This represents the condition of all mankind after the fall.
 - 1. Man's sin started on the inside with a decision to disobey.
(From the moment he made that decision, he was filthy and vile inside.)
 - 2. Then when he put that decision into action, he was unclean outside. (Unclean in action.)
 - 3. God had created man clean inside and out.

II. The condition of reformed man.

- A. The scribes and Pharisees are an example of man who has been reformed but not reborn.
- B. Reformation is an attempt on the part of man to clean up his act, to mend his ways, to make himself acceptable to God, to win God's favor, to stay out of hell, to get to heaven.
- C. One is not to be blamed for wanting to get right with God, stay out of hell, and go to heaven.
(We all want that.)
- D. The problem is not the desire but the method of trying to achieve the desire.
 - 1. He turns over a new leaf, stops bad habits, does good deeds, and tries to score points with God.
 - 2. He keeps his outward conduct in check, but inside he is full of extortion and excess.
(Robbery and unchecked sin.)
 - 3. He is still headed for the fires of hell.
 - 4. All the reformation in the world won't help.

III. The condition of regenerated man.

- A. When one is born again he is made spiritually clean on the inside.
 - 1. He repents of his sin and trusts Jesus as his Savior.
 - 2. It is as though the old sinful man inside dies and a new sinless man is born within.
 - 3. The new nature within is born of the Holy Spirit and takes on the sinless nature of the Holy Spirit.
 - 4. All sin is forgiven.
 - 5. From that moment onward the inward man is clean.
- B. This inward cleansing produces a change in one's outward conduct.
 - 1. The new sinless nature within virtually demands a change in one's conduct.
 - 2. It wages war on the sinful flesh nature which was not changed in the new birth and produces a remarkable change in conduct.
 - 3. The change in conduct is not 100% perfect, but it is a vast change.
 - 4. This change comes not by being reformed but reborn.
- C. But this is not the full story; God has plans for a 100% change even on the outside.
 - 1. The 100% change will never come while we live in sinful flesh.
 - 2. For most saved people it will come at the resurrection when the fleshly body is raised and changed.

3. Some will be raptured and changed because they will never die the physical death.
- D. But the change must begin on the inside. (It can never work by starting with the outside.)

IV. The condition of men today.

- A. Some so-called Christian religions offer nothing more than a superficial change.
 1. Their whole message is designed to clean up only the outside of the platter.
 2. It may be called “Christian”, but it is no better than the religion of the scribes and Pharisees.
 3. It leaves men still lost and on the road to hell.
- B. Some even in Baptist churches have nothing more than reformation.
 1. God does not let folks into heaven because they are Baptist.
 2. Nor does He let them in because they are reformed.
 3. He lets them in only if they are reborn.
- C. Some who are saved have not made the change in their lives that God would have them make. (To some measure that includes all of us who are saved.)

Conclusion

1. Are you really saved? – born again?
2. Through Jesus Christ, God offers you a pure heart.
(You must trust Jesus Christ to save your soul.)
3. You who are saved have the power to live a life that honors and glorifies God if you will let Him have His way with your life.
4. What change in your life needs to be made?

Preached at Pleasant Hill 6-8-86 P.M.