Half-washed Dishes
Matt. 23:25-26

Introduction:

A. The Pharisees were like half-washed dishes (text).
   1. Not condemned for strict tithing, but for neglecting “weightier matters.” (v. 23).
   2. Not condemned for straining out the gnat, but swallowing the camel. (v. 24).
   3. Not condemned for outward appearance of righteousness, but their private ungodliness (v. 27-28)

B. The Pharisees may have their counter-parts among us.
   1. Elder in church, many good deeds, but “don’t trade horses with him.”
   2. Gospel preacher, sound in doctrine, but treats family like dirt.
   3. Business man, a pillar in the church, but business practices stink.
   4. Sister with covering as symbol of her subjection, but dominates her husband at home.
   5. Strict in church affairs, but very loose in personal conduct - vice versa.

C. Jesus teaches us that the dish needs to be washed on both sides:

Discussion:

II. The “Religious Affairs” Side the Dish—Outside.
   A. One should be very exacting in his religious activities.
      1. Insist on doing everything just like the Bible says. (Jas. 2:10; cf. Lev. 10:1; Gal. 3:16).
      3. Insist on details in worship to God — exact items, exact day (cf. Mt. 15:9-14; Acts 20:7)
      4. Insist on details for work and organization of church.
      5. Why? Because that’s what the Lord wants (Eph 5.1, 2, 10, 15-17)
   B. Many feel that this side is not important, if one is a good person at heart. (cf. Cornelius).

III. The “Personal Affairs” Side of the Dish — Inside.
   A. One should apply the same strictness here (v. 23).
      1. In day to day personal affairs: Business, family, community, morals (cf. Preacher in motel).
      2. In one’s basic personality — attitudes and dispositions.
   B. One may be outwardly and publicly sound in faith and still wash only one side of the dish:
      1. In church matters pious and devout—in other matters rotten in attitude.
         a. Empty of compassion, patience, love, justice, mercy, real faith.
         b. Filled with envy, selfishness, backbiting, rudeness, etc.
      2. In church finances careful and generous — in other matters greedy, debt dodging, shady dealing.
      3. In church matters “speak Bible ... do Bible thing ...” — in other matters rude, vulgar, profane, immodest, lewd.
      4. In church matters hold brethren to high standard — in other matters much lower standard.

Conclusion:
A. Let us cleanse both sides of the dish and cup.
B. Let us not emphasize either side to the exclusion of the others.