

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).
 - 2. Insist on details of the plan of salvation — not just any plan, any baptism. (cf. Acts 19:1-5).
 - 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.