



Dealing with Defilement Pt 4: Oh LORD, Give us a Clean Heart!

March 28, 2021, Palm Sunday

Happy Palm Sunday! Today, most churches remember our LORD's triumphal entry into Jerusalem:

Mark 11:1-11 (KJV) *And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, **2** And saith unto them, **Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. 3** And if any man say unto you, **Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. 4** And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. **5** And certain of them that stood there said unto them, **What do ye, loosing the colt? 6** And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. **7** And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. **8** And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. **9** And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, **Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: 10** **Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. 11** And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.*

Just a few days from this event, the crowds who hailed Jesus as King and Messiah turned on Him, choosing instead a robber and murderer.

As we consider today's Text, may we be reminded of how fickle the human heart can be, often turning one way or the other based on human machinations and the moods of men.

Today, let us unify around one simple prayer: **Oh LORD, Give us clean, undefiled hearts!**

Holy Text: Matthew 15:10-20 (emphasis: vv15-20)

- Over the last three messages, we've learned a few things about defilement and our hearts:
 1. "Defilement" in Scripture speaks to the corrupting nature of sin; how transgressing God's Law taints, spoils, and degrades that which God intended for good.
 2. That God, even "under grace," still wants there to be "difference" or "distinction" between His people and pagans/unbelievers. This can only be achieved in Christ! We must repent and believe!
 3. That we should examine ourselves to ensure we've been planted by God!
 4. That we are easily led and must strive to avoid the ditch!
- In our Text, we read of Jesus' desire to ensure His disciples understand this very critical lesson: **those things that really defile a person come from the heart!**
 1. In verse 15, Peter recognized that our LORD is teaching something important, though perhaps in his mind it felt like a parable...something figurative.
 2. To a 1st century Jew, some foods were clean and some unclean. Peter and the rest of the disciples knew that one could in fact be defiled by eating the wrong thing per the OT dietary laws.

3. William MacDonald says on verses 16 and 17:

“The Lord first expressed wonder that they were so slow to understand, then explained that true defilement is moral, not physical. Edible foods are not intrinsically clean or unclean. In fact, no material thing is evil in itself; it is the abuse of a thing that is wrong. The food man eats enters the mouth, goes into the stomach for digestion, then the unassimilated residue is eliminated. His moral being is not affected—only his body.”

4. The real issue was not food, and never has been. God declared some foods clean and unclean primarily to ensure there was a distinction between His people and the pagans around them. (Lev 20:22-26)
5. The NT orders are different:

1 Timothy 4:4-5 (KJV) *For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

Acts 15:29 (KJV) *That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.*

- **The real issue again, is the heart! (v18). From our 2019 message, “A Heart Check:”**

1. So what is the heart?
2. “A muscle in your chest that pumps blood!” – Voddie Baucham
3. In my Bible software, a search for “heart” produced 833 hits!
4. Vine’s Dictionary of the Bible: From the Greek word *Kardia*. “The word came to stand to stand for man’s entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life. The Bible describes human depravity as in the “heart” because sin is a principle which has its seat in the center of man’s inward life, and then defiles the whole circuit of his action.”
5. The Webster 1828 gives a 15-part definition to include “the seat of affections and passions,” “the seat of understanding,” and “the seat of the will.”
6. The heart as used in Scripture points to “the seat of man’s emotions; his feelings and thoughts; his soul.”
7. *In summary, the heart is the core our being, the inner man. (Eph 3:16) By way of analogy, if our soul or spirit is the car, the heart is the engine.*

- Sin originates in the heart; the heart is where the decision is made to rebel against God...

James 1:14-16 (KJV) *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.*

- In verse 19, our LORD gives a list of such devastating defilements:

1. *Evil thoughts.* Any accepted thought that does not correspond to God’s Law.
2. *Murders.* Any unchallenged desire or decision to either hate one’s brother or do him harm.

3. *Adulteries*. Any unchallenged desire or decision for marrieds to lust or commit adultery.
4. *Fornications*. Any unchallenged desire or decision for unmarrieds to lust or have physical relations.
5. *Thefts*. Any unchallenged desire or decision to steal.
6. *False witness*. Any unchallenged desire or decision to lie.
7. *Blasphemies*. Any unchallenged desire or decision to speak profanities, particularly against God.

- Such lists are common in the New Testament as admonitions to the churches:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (KJV) *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Galatians 5:19-21 (KJV) *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

- These lists are hard to read because they point us...to us! **But they are good for us; they show our great need for cleansing and hopefully cause us to flee to and cling to Christ!**
- In the light of our LORD's very simple but serious teaching about the nature of defilement, let cry out...

Oh LORD, Give us a Clean Heart!

- How is defilement fixed? How can we walk in a greater "purity of heart" (Matt 5:8) and godly desire? (Ps 37:4)
- Ultimately, defilement is fixed by Jesus alone through His great salvation, and will be fully manifest in a day yet to come through our glorified bodies.
- Yet the believer is commanded unto sanctification. Positionally, Christians are accounted as righteous before God because of Christ sacrifice; practically, we still sin and should desire greater holiness!
- So what must we do? Here are five encouragements...

1. Pray for open eyes, that we might see the state of our hearts.

Genesis 6:4-6 (KJV) *There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

Jeremiah 17:9 (KJV) *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

2. Acknowledge the wickedness of our hearts before a holy God.

Jeremiah 14:20 (KJV) *We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee.*

Psalms 32:5 (KJV) *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

Romans 7:14-25 (NLT) *So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. 15 I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. 16 But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. 17 So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. 18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. 19 I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. 20 But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. 21 I have discovered this principle of life —that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God's law with all my heart. 23 But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.*

3. Often confess our depravity and utter need for His day-to-day cleansing.

Daniel 9:5-11 (KJV) *We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: 6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. 8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; 10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.*

Daniel 9:17-19 (KJV) *Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our*

desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. **19** O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

4. Thank the LORD for His amazing grace upon sinners!

Proverbs 28:13 (KJV) He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Isaiah 44:22-23 (KJV) I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. **23** Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

1 John 1:8-9 (KJV) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

5. Recommit to a sin-aware, grace-filled, Spirit-sanctified life!

Hebrews 3:12-13 (KJV) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. **13** But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Romans 5:20-21 (KJV) Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: **21** That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:1-2 (KJV) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? **2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Romans 6:11-14 (KJV) Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. **12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. **13** Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. **14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (KJV) But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

Prayer:

Thank you Father, for sending Thy Son. Thank you LORD Jesus for living and dying for us. Thank you Holy Spirit for teaching us Thy Word and convicting us of sin.

LORD, please cleanse and purify our hearts before Thee. Change us from the inside out. We pray like David prayed "when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba..."

Psalms 51:1-10 (KJV) *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10 **Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.***

Please LORD Jesus!

Amen!