
Sermon Notes

October 28, 2018

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Come Clean

Psalm 24:3-5, James 4:8

Wash Your Hands!

- ❖ Teaching children issues of personal hygiene
 - hand washing is actually a relatively new practice, even for doctors
 - Ignaz Semmelweis, 1847
- ❖ Clean hands are important not just in hospitals and at the dinner table

Coming Before God

- ❖ A question: *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in His holy place?*
 - *hill of the LORD* and *His holy place* are poetic code words for the Jewish Temple
 - who is fit for worship? who can come near to God?
- ❖ In the OT, priests approached the presence of God on behalf of the people
 - this required preparation (Leviticus 10:3)

- before priests could approach God, they needed to wash themselves, especially their hands and feet
- priests needed to offer sacrifices of purification for themselves before they could offer sacrifices for others
- ❖ In time, the idea/need of being clean and being prepared before approaching the presence of God was extended to include the people as well as the priests
 - preparation involves having not just right words, but right hearts (Isaiah 1:13, 29:13, 1:15-17)
 - God invites us to come near Him with a **true** heart (Hebrews 10:22)

Why Clean Hands and a Pure Heart?

- ❖ Hands symbolize our action, our behavior, the deeds we do
 - **clean** hands means being holy in all we do
 - **clean** hands implies keeping God's commands
- ❖ Heart represents what's going on inside of us (James 4:8)
 - all our inward dimensions, integrity, holiness
 - having a pure heart means the thoughts and affections of our heart will line up with the show we are putting on on the outside (Matthew 5:8)
- ❖ We must turn away from
 - the wrong things we do externally
 - the wrong that runs rampant inside of us (Jer 17:9)

- ❖ True worshipers come to God longing to be delivered from all the wrong they do and from all the "wrongness" deep within them
 - true worshipers have hearts that hunger for righteousness and to have clean hands
 - true worshipers are repulsed by the sin inside of them
- ❖ Are your hands clean before God... do you possess a pure heart?
 - what is not clean in your life before God?
 - where have you grown content with uncleanness?
 - it is not possible to have clean hands and a pure heart without Jesus

Promises, Promises

- ❖ When we put our faith in Jesus and ask Him to clean our hands and purify our hearts, the Holy Spirit moves in on us and gives us the power we need to walk in holiness
- ❖ If we confess our sin, God is faithful to forgive us our sin and **TO CLEANSE** us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)
 - we need to submit ourselves daily to the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit
 - not just once per day, but all through the day
 - do a "deep cleanse" and come clean
- ❖ The only way we can be clean inside and out (clean hands and pure heart) is through the blood of Jesus

A Cautionary Tale

- ❖ Ignaz Semmelweis... the rest of the story
- ❖ Hearing and rejecting God's call to you to come clean
 - locking your mind and heart so that God's Word does not sink in, penetrate and bear fruit
 - *Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* (Isaiah 55:6-7)
- ❖ You cannot be pure in heart, you cannot see God, you cannot worship God without receiving the gift God offers you in Jesus

Personal Reflection

1. What do you do to prepare your heart for coming into the Lord's presence? Is there anything you need to add or do differently so that you will avoid the pitfalls God describes in Isaiah 1:13, 29:13, 1:15-17?
2. Read Hebrews 10:22. What does it mean to draw near to God with a true heart? Does that describe you? Why or why not?
3. How long has it been since you did a "deep cleanse" with the Lord? If it has been "a while" ask God to uncover and reveal to you the areas of your and life that are not clean. Then, spend time in concentrated confession, repentance and renewed intimacy with God.