

“The Disease That Is Killing America”
Matthew 23: 1 - 39
April 13, 2014

Religion Is A Poison That Blinds Its Followers To Their True Condition Before Christ, (vs. 1 - 39)

Christ Calls Us To See Where True Righteousness Is Found, (vs. 25 - 28)

Message Emphasis: Many today are like the Pharisees of Jesus day; they are attempting to make themselves clean outwardly when what they really need is the removal of their deadness in sin. We must understand that ONLY through the cleansing that Christ provides can we truly be righteous, preventing the infection of religion from spreading.

The beginning of health is to know the disease,” wrote the Spanish novelist Miguel de Cervantes, and every physician would agree with him. After all, how can you prescribe effectively if you don’t diagnose accurately?

...In recent years, we’ve heard a good deal about such an infectious disease - “toxic people” and ...“toxic churches.” ... Most recently a book called Toxic Faith... describes “cultic” churches and the religious addiction they quietly spread among unsuspecting people. The image is a biblical one, for Jesus warned about people like the Pharisees who pretended to be holy but were really transmitting defilement to the people who followed them... Paul wrote about people in his own day whose religion was “toxic.” He says, “Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene”. ~Warren W. Wiersbe

1) Infection Is Spread When We Are Careless About Cleanliness, (vs. 25 - 26)

- It is a matter of life & death who you listen to & what they say about being clean *What are you teaching your children?*
²⁵ **“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** (2x, vs. 25 & 27) *“Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it.” One of the lawyers answered him, “Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also.”” (Luke 11:44-45, ESV)*
- It is a matter of life & death how you define “clean” *Is it good enough just to look clean?*
For you clean (Pres.Act.Ind) **the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full** (Pres.Act.Ind) **of greed** (lit. pillage, plunder) **and self-indulgence** (lack of self control)
- It is a matter of life & death what you allow to be unclean *Could it be that your struggles are because you are not clean?*
²⁶ **You blind Pharisee! First clean** (Aor.Act.Imprv) **the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be** (Aor.Mid.Subj) **clean.**
 - Christ’s cleansing brings confidence - *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,*
 - Christ’s cleansing brings full assurance - *and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,*
 - Christ’s cleansing brings purity - *with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*
 - Christ’s cleansing brings hope- *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*
 - Christ’s cleansing brings loyalty - *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,” “not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:19-25, ESV)*

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (Luke 6:45-46, ESV)

2) Infection Is Spread When All We Do Is Mask The Symptoms Instead Of Cutting Out The Disease, (vs. 27 - 28)

Ring-a-round the rosie, A pocket full of posies, Ashes! Ashes! We all fall down (Asserted by some)

- A diseased heart seeks only to paint over the rotteness *To cover over what is rotten requires constant vigilance*
²⁷ **... For you are like** (Pres.Act.Ind) **whitewashed** (Perf.Pas.Part) **tombs, which outwardly appear** (Pres.Act.Ind) **beautiful,**
- A diseased heart does not just affect one person; it infects everyone *We eradicate disease because it spreads from person to person*
but within are full (Pres.Act.Ind) **of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.**
- A diseased heart will show itself as being outside Christ *This is why cleanness is a matter of life & death*
²⁸ **So you also outwardly appear** (Pres.Pas.Ind) **righteous to others, but within you are** (Pres.Act.Ind) **full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.**

My faith looks up to thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour Divine; Now hear me while I pray, Take all my guilt away, O let me from this day Be wholly thine.

*****What Must I Do To Be Saved? ****

Message Directive: Look to Christ for the salvation of your soul ONLY in Christ do you have any hope of being clean.

7. Christ Calls Us To See Where True Love Is Found, (vs. 29 - 36)
8. Christ Calls Us To See Where True Belief Is Found, (vs. 37 - 39)