

(Matt. 15:10) – After having exposed the hypocrisy and false gospel of the scribes and Pharisees, the Lord *“CALLED THE MULTITUDE, AND SAID UNTO THEM, HEAR, AND UNDERSTAND.”* We know that apart from the sovereign power and work of the Holy Spirit, no sinner will hear (heed) and understand the Gospel and all the truths of God (1 Cor. 2:14). The Lord often says in His Word, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” The Bible tells us that it is the Son of God Who *“is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life”* (1 John 5:20). All saving, spiritual knowledge, understanding, and faith are given by Christ to His people as He sends forth His Spirit to convince His people of the Gospel which He makes unto them *“the power of God unto salvation”* (Rom. 1:16). Our prayer for ourselves and others is, “Lord, please give us ears to hear; please give us understanding of Your Word of salvation by Your grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Matt. 15:11) – *“NOT THAT WHICH GOETH INTO THE MOUTH DEFILETH A MAN; BUT THAT WHICH COMETH OUT OF THE MOUTH, THIS DEFILETH A MAN.”* This is one of the most profound truths of God’s Word in the Gospel – that sin is a heart problem. False religion teaches that it is our environment and things outside of us that cause us to sin. It teaches that if we isolate ourselves and deny ourselves certain things, we can cure the problem of sin. It teaches that righteousness is found in things like “touch not, taste not, handle not” (Col. 2:21). But Christ taught that sin exists within the minds, affections, wills, and consciences of all sinful persons. It is not things outside of us that cause us to sin and defile us. It is what comes out of us – our thoughts, motives, desires, and imaginations. Christ taught this in His sermon on the mount when He taught now that it is sinful not only to perform a sinful act but also to have sinful thoughts (Matt. 5:21ff.).

It is this truth that shows us what we must have to be saved. (1) We must have a perfect righteousness we cannot produce (Matt. 5:20). We must have the righteousness of God that can only be found in Christ as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. This is Christ’s righteousness imputed to us by God (Rom. 4:6-8; 8:31-34; 2 Cor. 5:19-21). (2) We must have a new heart of grace, faith in Christ, and repentance of dead works and idolatry (John 3:3-7). We must have the life of Christ imparted to us by the Holy Spirit in a new birth from above. (3) We must have Christ to intercede for us before the Father to present both our persons and our works acceptable unto God (Eph. 1:3-7; Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19-24; 2 Pet. 2:1-5), and to preserve us unto glory (Rom. 8:34-39; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 7:24-25; Jude 24-25).

(Matt. 15:12-14) – *“KNOWEST THOU THAT THE PHARISEES WERE OFFENDED, AFTER THEY HEARD THIS SAYING?”* This message of salvation by God’s grace *“OFFENDED”* the Pharisees because it exposed their hypocrisy and their false message of

salvation and righteousness by works. It exposed that their deeds, though religious, sincere, and moral in the eyes of men, were, in reality before God, dead works, fruit unto death, and evil deeds (Matt. 7:21-23; John 3:19-20). It exposed their righteousness was not righteousness at all in God's sight but the filthy rags of self-righteousness (Matt. 5:20; 23:23-28). *"EVERY PLANT, WHICH MY HEAVENLY FATHER HATH NOT PLANTED, SHALL BE ROOTED UP"* – The scribes and Pharisees had planted themselves in Israel as the masters and leaders of the people in the ways of God and the law. But their false doctrines of salvation by works of the law proved that God had not planted or instilled them as true religious leaders. They were false shepherds – *"BLIND LEADERS OF THE BLIND."* They and all who followed them, unless God intervened and saved them out of their darkness, would perish. This is the opposite of God's true shepherds and true people who are *"trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified"* (Isa. 61:3).

(Matt. 15:15-20) – Peter and the others were still unclear on the meaning of this parable, so the Lord, being patient and compassionate towards them, explained it. He told them that it is not what we put into our bodies by way of food or drink that defiles us or causes us to sin. It is *"THOSE THINGS WHICH PROCEED OUT OF THE MOUTH COME FORTH FROM THE HEART; AND THEY DEFILE THE MAN."* Again, sin is an inward heart problem, *"FOR OUT OF THE HEART PROCEED EVIL THOUGHTS, MURDERS, ADULTERIES, FORNICATIONS, THEFTS, FALSE WITNESS, BLASPHEMIES."* There is no sin in substances or things. Sin is in us. We are born in sin, fallen into a state of sin, spiritual death, and depravity. And sin reaches to the very center of our being so that even our best and most sincere efforts to be and to do good are futile as far as attaining a righteousness that God requires and as far as attaining spiritual and eternal life. As stated, before a sinner can believe in Christ and bear forth fruit unto God, he must be given a new heart, a spiritually circumcised heart (Rom. 2:28-29). Then, and only then, will he with the heart believe unto righteousness, which is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Christ alone Who bears away and cures all sin for His people legally, spiritually, and eternally, so that we who are redeemed by His blood are *"freed from sin"* and *"dead indeed unto sin"* (Rom. 6:7,11). This does not mean that sinners saved by grace do not still sin. They do sin (Rom. 7:14-25), but sin cannot condemn them because, as we have seen, God will not charge their sins to them. He charged their sins to Christ Who died to satisfy God's justice in their place, and He has charged Christ's righteousness to them (Rom. 8:33-34). They have been freed from sin and given a new heart of faith, making them servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18), meaning they look to and rest in Christ for forgiveness of all sins. They follow Him in the obedience of faith, looking unto Him as the Author and Finisher of their faith.